

MISHRA'S TRAVELS ■ CHESS18 ■ DING LASSO ■ CORR CHESS

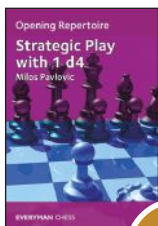
CHESSLIFE

AUGUST 2023 ■ USChess.org



THE SPRING SCHOLASTICS

B0566EM OPENING REPERTOIRE - STRATEGY PLAY WITH 1. d4



by Milos Pavlovic

In this book, the highly experienced author outlines a powerful repertoire for White based on 1. d4. The variations are very much based on strategic themes where an understanding of plans is far more important than memorisation of lines and move orders. Nowadays many strong players try to beat opponents by learning sharp lines in the opening. However, it is also possible to do the same by obtaining positions where you have a great understanding of how to conduct the middlegame and thus can consistently outplay your opponent. This book guides the reader through the chosen variations and carves out a complete repertoire for White.

\$28.95

B0144RE THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED

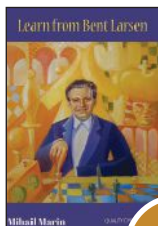


by Max Dlugy

The Queen's Gambit Accepted is one of the oldest known openings in chess. It was first mentioned in chess literature in the late 15th century. Over 500 years later, American Grandmaster Max Dlugy demonstrates in this groundbreaking work that the QGA is still a fighting, uncompromising opening that allows Black to play for a win from the very first move. This book will teach you not just the QGA, but chess strategy in general. It will teach you how to play solid yet lively positions and allow you to take something away from the author's classical style and lucid explanations.

\$29.95

B0220QT LEARN FROM BENT LARSEN

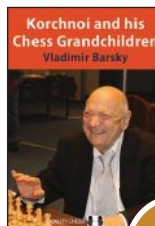


by Mihail Marin

Bent Larsen is one of the most celebrated chess players of the twentieth century. The Danish grandmaster had spectacular results, but chess fans appreciated even more his creativity and fighting spirit. For Larsen, a drawish-looking position was no reason to halt a game, as he had the ability to create magic out of thin air. This book was a labor of love by the author, who originally planned it as a chapter in a different book but as more gems emerged, realized that Bent deserved his own book.

\$32.95

B0221QT KORCHNOI AND HIS CHESS GRANDCHILDREN

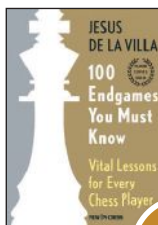


by Vladimir Barsky

Korchnoi and his Chess Grandchildren features 25 of Viktor Korchnoi's best games from the latter stages of his glorious career. The latest game is from 2011, when Korchnoi was still potent enough to defeat Fabiano Caruana. The annotations are mainly in Korchnoi's own words, with insightful additions from other top players and the author. Between the annotated games are numerous articles and interviews – some with Viktor, and others featuring top players talking about the great man.

\$32.95

B0288NIC 100 ENDGAMES YOU MUST KNOW - 6TH EDITION

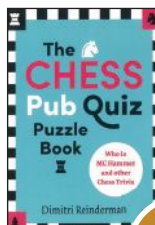


by Jesus De La Villa

This special hardcover edition of 100 Endgames You Must Know celebrates the sale of more than 25,000 copies of this modern chess classic. The book's success since its first publication in English in 2008 can be explained by its simplicity, its accessibility and its great instructive value. This book contains only those endgames that show up frequently, are easy to learn and contain ideas that are useful in more difficult positions.

\$32.95

B0289NIC THE CHESS PUB QUIZ PUZZLE BOOK

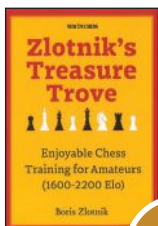


by Dimitri Reinderman

The most famous team ever participating in a chess pub quiz was MC Hammer. The team members are pretty decent chess players and happened to know their bit of chess trivia and chess history. Do you know or can you guess their names? This book offers a collection of hundreds of chess trivia and chess-related trivia. You can use it by yourself, solving puzzles. Or you can use the book for multiple thematic pub quizzes at your local chess café or chess club. Enjoy. The best game ever.

\$17.95

B0290NIC ZLOTNIK'S TREASURE TROVE

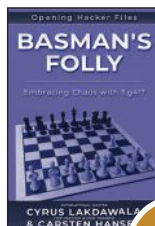


by Boris Zlotnik

Boris Zlotnik is an extraordinary trainer and coach. He was the director of a legendary chess school in Moscow before he emigrated to Spain in 1993. Ten years later, the super talent Fabiano Caruana moved to Madrid with his entire family to live near his trainer Zlotnik. He knows how top players work on their chess improvement and his experience with club players allows him to translate that understanding into practical lessons for amateurs about highly original subjects like creativity or 'putting up resistance'.

\$27.95

B0039CH BASMAN'S FOLLY



by Lakdawala & Hansen

Is the Grob/Basman a con artist's bogus-operandi, or is the line actually sound? The truthful answer is that the opening is a bit of both! In this volume, the authors take the Basmanic plunge and examine some of International Master Michael Basman's most remarkable victories with 1.g4 or 1...g5, along with some of his less successful tries, as well as some games by other occasional adherents, like Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura. This should not become a cornerstone of your repertoire, but you are guaranteed a bunch of fun and entertaining games

\$24.95

CHESSLIFE

August

20 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Ding Lasso

The unlikely kinship between the new World Champion and everyone's favorite football coach

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Streamers descend on a giant log cabin to try their hands at an interesting variant.

BY GM LARRY KAUFMAN

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Team USA wins Olympiad Bronze; plus, results from the Golden Knights and Absolute.

BY ICCF-GM JON EDWARDS AND JOHN HARTMANN

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BY IM SANDEEP SETHURAMAN

42 EVENTS Back in School

The world's youngest Grandmaster passes key tests in his personal and professional life.

BY GM ABHIMANYU MISHRA

ON THE COVER

Three national scholastic championships. More than 5,000 players, accompanied by many more parents and friends. How to tell that story on just one cover? With the famous cherry blossoms of Washington, D.C., the fabled Round Rock of Round Rock, Texas, and a Baltimore Oriole, we did our best.

ART BY ROSIE WOODS



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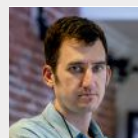
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GM DARIUSZ SWIERCZ

CONTRIBUTORS



IM SANDEEP SETHURAMAN
(Cover Story) is a rising senior at BASIS Chandler High School in Chandler, Arizona, and the 25th rated American junior as of the June 2023 US Chess rating list.

The founder of The Chess Effect, a chess teaching non-profit, he is the current 11th Grade National Champion. He became an IM in late April of this year.



FM MIKE KLEIN
(Ding Lasso) is an award-winning player, coach, and journalist. He is also the voice of

ChessKid.com and its Chief Chess Officer. This is why he is now much better known as "FunMaster Mike." A three-time Chess Journalist of the Year winner, his chess writing and other travels have taken him to more than 90 countries.



ICCF-GM JON EDWARDS
(Correspondence Champions) is the 32nd World Correspondence Chess

Champion. After learning chess from his uncle, Dr. Joseph Platz, he took up correspondence chess in 1986, seeing immediate success. After his retirement from Princeton University in 2010, he took on the challenge of playing for a correspondence world championship. He is the author of more than 40 chess books, and is a columnist for *American Chess Magazine*.



GM ABHIMANYU MISHRA
(Back to School) is the youngest grandmaster in the world, a title

he earned at the age of 12 years, four months, and 25 days in June 2021. This accomplishment came after breaking records for youngest US Chess rated expert and master along with youngest international master. Recent achievements include winning the 2023 Spring Classic B Group (see our June issue for more) and placing second (as discussed in his article) at the 2023 TePe Sigeman tournament. He is the author of an autobiography with *New in Chess*.



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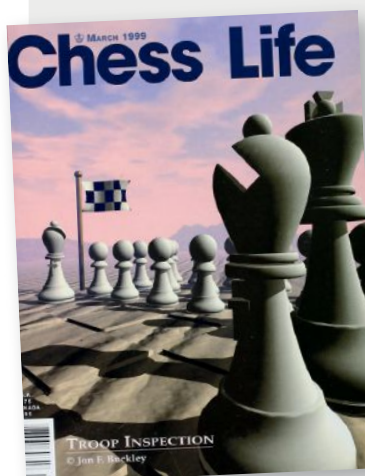
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Kaufman!

I have just rediscovered GM Larry Kaufman's remarkable article "The Evaluation of Material Imbalances" from the March 1999 issue of *Chess Life*.

Kaufman analyzed a database of 300,000 master-level games to investigate the relative value of pieces. He reported some surprising findings, such as the relative value of knight and bishop varying with the number of pawns on the board (knights prefer to have more pawns). A queen and pawn are equal to two rooks when no minor pieces are on the board, while with two or more minors, a queen equals two rooks. This only touches on the richness of his analysis and discussion.

I have been reading *Chess Life* for over 40 years, and this article has been far and away the most outstanding. It was published over 20 years ago, so there must be many members who have never read it or could read it again. I think it well worth reprinting, perhaps with an update and commentary by Kaufman. Perhaps someone might test his conclusions against subsequent data available since 1999. In any event, I strongly urge readers in the interim to look at this article.

Ernest B. Hook
Via email

COUNTERPLAY

John Hartmann responds:

Kaufman offers an updated version of his piece values in Kaufman's New Repertoire for Black and White, while those interested in the original text can find it in the US Chess Digital Archives, where older issues of *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Kids* are available for anyone to download, completely free of charge.

More!

More articles like the two-part account (May and June, 2023) of Isaac Lipnitsky and his chess career, please! I quite enjoy reading fresh stories about chess history.

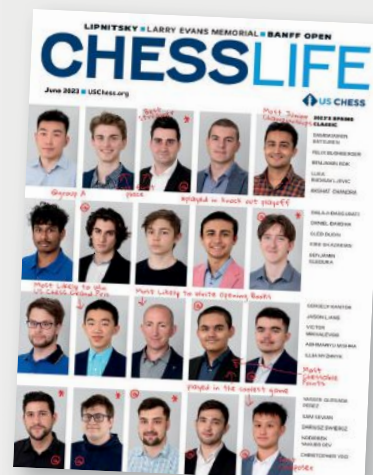
David G. Arganian
Via email

In Memoriam

Thanks to IM Anthony Saidy for the lovely obituary (June 2023) for FM Orest Popovych, and for suggesting the Volodymyr Foundation for humanitarian donations to Ukraine. I made a small contribution.

Every nation is entitled to independence and self-determination. No country is truly free until all countries are free. No individual is truly free until all individuals are free.

Mike Maloney
Via email



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



The **FIGHT** **OF HIS LIFE**

Facing huge health challenges, New York legend Juan Sena carries on.

BY “RHSCOOTER” AND
BRUCE PANDOLFINI

Editor’s note: We received an email from an eight-year-old New Yorker who wanted to honor his coach. That, in itself, is interesting, especially when you take into account how lucid this young person’s words are.

But when we realized that he was talking about Juan Sena, we knew we wanted to publish this as soon as possible.

Juan Sena is one of the unsung heroes of New York chess. A beloved chess teacher, a stalwart of the city’s chess scene, and a strong player in his own right, Sena has been living with ALS — amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or “Lou Gehrig’s disease” — since 2019. He has carried on to the best of his abilities, despite the progression of his disease, including continuing to coach some of New York’s future champions.

“RHSCooter” (not his real name) is one of Sena’s current pupils. What follows is his way of honoring his mentor, followed by some comments by Bruce Pandolfini, who has known Sena for years.

There is a GoFundMe page set up to help Juan and his family deal with the costs associated with his illness. To contribute, visit www.gofundme.com/f/juan-sena-medical-support-fund.

I always liked the saying by Maya Angelou, “Nothing can dim the light which shines from within,” but I think I began to understand its meaning when I met Juan. There are unique traits and characteristics within each of us that cannot be taken away as long as we stay true to ourselves. Juan is a true example of this.

Born on Feb 17, 1961, in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Juan was the youngest of seven children. He was a passionate student of the world but struggled in school. Instead, he taught himself English using library books, and at 16, he fell in love with chess. Juan joined the Dominican chess team and earned his national master’s title.

In his 20s, Juan moved to New York in search of better opportunities. He took any odd jobs he could, gradually getting into the chess community and settling in a chess-teaching job. From an unprivileged background, Juan always tried to support talented children with limited financial capabilities by teaching them for free. Eventually, he met his future wife, Ketty, through training one of the chess prodigies.

An overnight tragedy changed everything. Juan was diagnosed with an incurable disease called ALS. It is a degenerative disease

where the brain gradually stops controlling muscles starting from the neck down. While the person keeps a clear mind, he cannot move or lift his arms or legs, and currently, there is no cure. In less than three years, Juan, a physically powerful, energetic man, went from an active lifestyle to nearly complete immobility in a nursing home.

I met Juan about two years ago when he was already very sick, but he never told me, and I never felt it through our online lessons. It was a strong, positive, and confident man who met me online; his only concern was how to improve my chess and share the importance of the right values.

I felt really compassionate when I learned about his disease. Juan couldn’t move by that time, but we never stopped our lessons because his mind was crystal clear, and his character hadn’t changed. In no way did Juan ever show me the physical pain and suffering that he endured constantly. He never let the severe mental pressures of why it happened to him affect our sessions.

I keep having lessons with Juan twice a week, and every time before I push the Zoom button, I think how much I admire the strength, soul, and spirit of this man — a regular man with a light that shines from within.

At the most important test of his life, Juan shows enormous dignity, humbleness, and

humanity, being in a league of his own. Of all the lessons he has taught me, this is the most valuable.

BRUCE PANDOLFINI WRITES:

What an incredible letter written by an eight-year-old student about his extraordinary chess teacher. The youngster is obviously gifted, with a writing style mature beyond his years. His concern for his teacher's well-being is commendable.

Still, Juan Sena is no ordinary chess teacher. Colleagues, me included, have always admired his teaching magic. Whether lecturing to spellbound students in a classroom, giving a one-on-one lesson, or holding court analyzing at a tournament, Juan's stellar advice can be mesmerizing. Sometimes he'll embed a surprising principle within a charming story or instill focus with a colorful maxim.

Case in point: to describe connecting the rooks, he'll say "rooks need to look at each other." Even common words take on energy when Juan says them. "Develop," for example, becomes "DEE Velop!" There are dozens of other verbal tricks that infuse his teaching with life.

Here are two nicely conducted games

Left and below: Juan Sena playing chess and teaching children at his beloved Marshall Chess Club.

from 2004 won by Juan Sena with the Black pieces against fellow Marshallites. In the first encounter, Sena defeats Nick Conticello in a New York Futurity. Conticello sacs a pawn early, but crisp countermoves and prudent trades put Sena's dominant rook and knight on top of his opponent's rook and bishop.

In the second encounter, played in the 88th Marshall Chess Club Championship against IM Jay Bonin, Sena defends admirably until White's discombobulated pieces become too difficult to rescue. In the final position, Bonin must save his bishop and still cope with the possible loss of his rook after 43. ... Kf7.

ENGLISH OPENING (A12)

Nick Conticello (2134)

Juan Sena (2200)

15th Marshall Fall Futurity (4), New York, 11.14.2004

1. b3 d5 2. Bb2 Bg4 3. g3 Nf6 4. Bg2 e6 5. Nf3 Nbd7 6. c4 c6 7. 0-0 h6 8. d3 Bf5 9. Nbd2 Qb6 10. a3 a5 11. Qc2 Bc5 12. b4 axb4 13. axb4 Rxa1 14. Rxa1 Bxf2+ 15. Kh1 0-0 16. e4 Bh7 17. Rf1 Be3 18. Qc3 d4 19. Nxd4 Bxd4 20. Qxd4 Qxb4 21. Bc3 Qb6 22. Qxb6 Nxb6 23. Nb3 Nfd7 24. Na5 Na4 25. Ba1 Ndc5 26. d4 Ra8 27. Nxc6 bxc6 28. dxc5 Nxc5 29. e5 Be4 30. Bd4 Ra2 31.

Bxe4 Nxe4 32. Rf4 Re2 33. Kg1 g5 34. Rf3 Nd2 35. Ra3 g4, White resigned.

ENGLISH OPENING (A25)

IM Jay Bonin (2432)

Juan Sena (2206)

Marshall CC Ch (1), New York, 12.11.2004

1. c4 g6 2. Nc3 Bg7 3. g3 Nc6 4. Bg2 e5 5. d3 h6 6. Rb1 a5 7. a3 Nf6 8. e3 0-0 9. Nge2 d6 10. b4 axb4 11. axb4 Ne7 12. b5 d5 13. cxd5 Nexd5 14. Nxd5 Nxd5 15. 0-0 Bg4 16. f3 Be6 17. Bd2 Ra3 18. Qc2 Qa8 19. Nc1 Qa7 20. Re1 Rc8 21. Kh1 c6 22. b6 Nxb6 23. Bb4 Ra1 24. Rxa1 Qxa1 25. Ne2 Qa4 26. Qb1 Qb3 27. Ba5 Qxb1 28. Rxb1 Nd7 29. Rxb7 Nc5 30. Ra7 Nxd3 31. Nc3 Ne1 32. Ne4 Nxd3 33. Kxg2 Rb8 34. Bc3 Rb3 35. Kf2 Bd5 36. Ba1 Bxe4 37. fxe4 h5 38. Ra5 Rb5 39. Ra8+ Bf8 40. Re8 f6 41. Re6 Ra5 42. Bc3 Rc5, White resigned.

Juan is an exceptional teacher, one who loves the beauty of chess, and who knows how to impart it. As a master player, he also knows how to fight. But now he's involved in a different kind of fight, one against the greatest opponent he's ever faced, a chronic, usually fatal illness. As RHScooter earnestly tells us, this remarkable, deserving educator needs our help. ♠



NATIONAL CHESS DAY



HIS YEAR'S NATIONAL CHESS Day falls on Saturday, October 14. For any event that includes "National Chess Day" in the event title and is held on October 14, US Chess is offering:

- A free email blast. Make sure that "National Chess Day" is part of your subject line. On the payment screen, select "No charge." Also, make sure the demographic you are sending this to is reasonable; generally, this will be local or regional. Do not send to the entire membership.
- Free ratings fees. Use the payment code **NCD2023FREE**. This is case sensitive.
- Free online TLA. Online TLAs are always free, of course, not just for National Chess Day. But we want to make sure you are aware of this option too as you promote your event. See "How to Create a TLA" at new.uschess.org/information-new-members

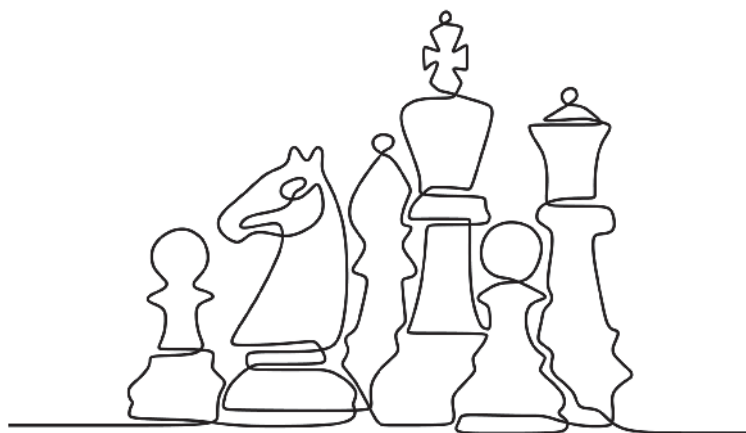
Another way to celebrate National Chess

Day is by making a gift to US Chess! What better way to celebrate National Chess Day than by sharing your passion and love for the game? Your donation will help ensure that the chess programs and events that you care so much about will continue for years to come and advance our mission to "empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess." To make a tax-deductible gift to US Chess, just click on DONATE at uschess.org, and choose the program or fund that you would like to support.

Thank you for the impact you are making on so many lives, and for your commitment to US Chess!

Please feel free to send your best photos to our Communications team through John Hartmann <john.hartmann@uschess.org> for possible use in *Chess Life*, *Chess Life Kids*, and *Chess Life Online*. On social media, use the hashtag **#NationalChessDay**.

Please direct any questions to Dan Lucas <dlucas@uschess.org>. Here's to a successful National Chess Day for all!



MEMBERS SANCTIONED BY US CHESS NOW PUBLIC INFORMATION

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, US CHESS IS publishing the names of US Chess members who have been sanctioned by our organization. This decision by the Executive Board was reached via an 8-0 vote.

Minors will not be named, but their sanction will be listed.

Here is the text of the Executive Board motion:

Publish Snapshot of US Chess Member

Sanctions

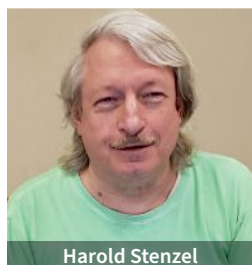
The Executive Board votes to publish the names of US Chess members who have been sanctioned by the organization for violations related to the Code of Ethics, Safe Play policies, Tournament Director Certification requirements, Rules of Chess, FIDE Events, and obligations of State Chapters and Affiliates. The list will name adult members only.

Rationale: US Chess previously pub-

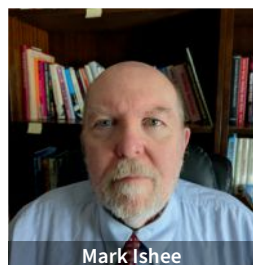
lished a list of suspended members and Tournament Directors who were sanctioned. This practice ended some time ago (more than 10 years) and in the interest of transparency, the Executive Board will again publish a list that will be regularly updated on the US Chess website.

The list can be found on our US Chess Governance Hub under the heading "Sanctioned Members."

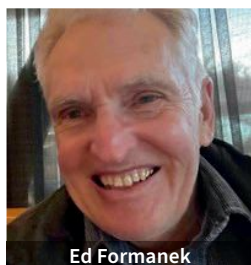
2023 US Chess Awards



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Mark Ishee



Ed Formanek



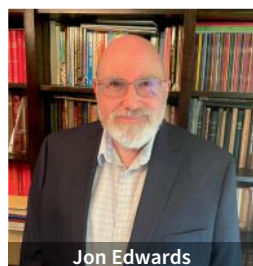
Christopher Yoo



Martha Underwood



Jay Stallings



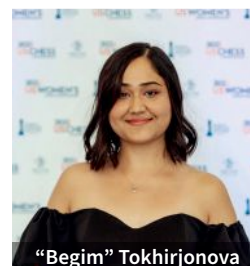
Jon Edwards



Larry Paxton



Jeff Aldrich



"Begim" Tokhirjonova

The US Chess Federation is pleased to announce the 2023 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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GRANDMASTER OF THE YEAR

ICCF-GM Jon Edwards (NJ)

WOMAN PLAYER OF THE YEAR

WGM Gulrukhbegim "Begim" Tokhirjonova (MO)

OUTSTANDING PLAYER ACHIEVEMENT

George Kramer (NJ)

Dr. Neil McKelvie (NY)

FM Dr. Orest Popovych (NJ)

FM Tibor Weinberger (CA)

OUTSTANDING TEAM ACHIEVEMENT

2022 U.S. Women's Olympiad Team

2022 U.S. NATO Military Team

YOUNG PLAYER OF THE YEAR

GM Christopher Yoo (CA-N)

CHESS CITY OF THE YEAR

Seattle, Washington

KOLTANOWSKI GOLD

Dr. Jeanne & Rex Sinquefield (MO)

KOLTANOWSKI SILVER

John D. Rockefeller V (MD)

Lin & Robert Johnson (NC)

David & Maureen Grimaud (SC)

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Super Sam Sevia

GM Sam Sevia, 22, has long been one of America's top young talents, and with his recent results, we may be witnessing the next step in his chess evolution.

After tying for first in the 2023 Spring Classic (see our June issue for the details), Sevia's next tournament was the Stepan Avagyan Memorial, held May 3-11 in Jermuk, Armenia. Scoring three wins in the first five rounds, Sevia then coasted to an

undefeated 6/9, taking first place by a full point ahead of four grandmasters.

Here are two games from that event, showcasing Sevia's preparation and skill.

CATALAN OPENING (E04)

GM Andrey Esipenko (2679)

GM Samuel Sevia (2684)

Stepan Avagyan Mem (2), Jermuk, 05.04.2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. g3 dxc4 5. Bg2 c5 6. 0-0 Nc6 7. Qa4 Bd7 8. Qxc4 cxd4 9. Nxd4 Rc8 10. Nc3 Nxd4 11. Qxd4 Bc5 12. Qh4 h6 13. Bxb7 Rb8 14. Bg2



Previously seen in Sevia's games were 14. Bf3, played by Maghsoodloo, and 14. Ne4, which was tried by Svane. Here White tries to prove that the pawn is worth more than Black's activity.

14. ... Rb4 15. e4 Bd4 16. a3 Rc4 17. Bd2 0-0 18. Kh1 Bc6 19. f3 Qb8 20. Rab1 Nd7 21. Ne2 Bf6 22. Qf4 Rc2



23. Rfc1

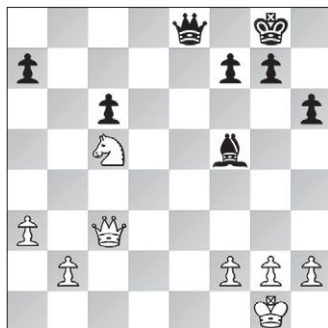
Now White miscalculates and allows a blistering attack. Black emerges from the melee a clean pawn up.

23. ... Rxb2 24. Rxb2 Qxb2 25. Rxc6? Ne5! 26. Rc1 Rd8 27. Bc3 Qxe2 28. Bf1 Qxf3+ Stronger was 28. ... Qf2 and then ... Ne5xf3.

29. Qxf3 Nxf3 30. Bxf6 gxf6 31. Be2 Nd4 32. Bh5 Rd7 33. Rd1 e5 34. Rc1 Kg7 35. h4 Rb7 36. Rc5 Nb5 37. a4 Nd6 38. Bf3 Kg6 39. Rd5 Nc4 40. Rd8 Rb4 41. Rg8+ Kh7 42. Rd8 Rxa4 43. Bh5 Ra1+ 44. Kh2 Ra2+ 45. Kh3 Rd2 46. Rc8 Nb6 47. Rc6 Kg7 48. Bg4 Rd4 49. Rc7 Nc4 50. Be6 Nd6 51. Rd7 h5 52. Kg2 a5 53. Kf3 a4, White resigned.

WATER FROM A STONE

GM Samuel Sevia (2684)
IM Artur Davtyan (2506)
Stepan Avagyan Mem (5), Jermuk,
05.07.2023



WHITE TO MOVE

The engines say this position is dead equal, but White's better pawn structure and the minor-piece imbalance are enough to play on.

31. h3 Qd8 32. Qe5 Bg6 33. b4 Kh7 34. Kh2 Qd2 35. f3 f6 36. Qc7 Bf5 37. Nb7

Sevia continues to maneuver, keeping the dark squares guarded and avoiding an immediate draw with something like 37. Qxc6 Qf4+ 38. Kg1 Qe3+ etc.

37. ... Qe3 38. a4 Qd4 39. Qd6 Qb6?

A key error, right before time control.

I'm not sure why Black passed up the queen trade. With pawns on both sides of the board the bishop makes up for the weak queenside pawns. For example: 39. ... Qxd6+ 40. Nxd6 Bc2 41. a5 (41. Kg3 allows 41. ... Bxa4 but the b4-pawn holds the black pawns back) 41. ... Bd3 42. Nc8 a6 43. Ne7 Bb5 44. Kg3 g6 and as soon as the black king gets into the fray, the draw is fairly clear.

40. Nd8! Qa6 41. Qxc6

Without counterplay against the enemy king, Black is lost.

41. ... Qd3 42. Qc7! a6 43. Nb7 Qd4 44. b5 Qxa4 45. b6 Qh4

Threatening to steal a pawn with 46. ... Bxh3, as 47. gxh3 Qf2+ would be a draw.

46. Qg3 Qb4

Now White must decide how to make progress without allowing Black checks on the dark squares.

47. Nd6?!

Too early, and nearly costing Sevia the victory. Perhaps best is 47. Qd6 (or 47. Qc7)



Sevia (R) at the Stepan Memorial

47. ... Qh4 48. Qc5! Qf4+ 49. Kg1 and the white queen covers c1 and e3. Now comes Nb7-d6 and the b-pawn starts to move.

47. ... Bd7! 48. b7?!

A better alternative was trying to hold the pawn with 48. Nc4 Bc6 (48. ... Qxc4? 49. b7) 49. Qc7 Qb5 but now there's no way to make progress, and trying to force things with 50. Na5 Qxa5 51. Qxc6 leads to an immediate draw with 51. ... Qe5+.

48. ... g5?

Missing White's next move due to time pressure. After the correct 48. ... Bc6 Black picks up the pawn without difficulty, and can even dream about grinding out a win with his extra pawn.

49. Nb5!, Black resigned.

A nice way to end the game, as the knight cannot be taken by the pawn, queen, or bishop!

A week later Sevia was in Sharjah, UAE, to participate in the 6th Sharjah Masters. (See Abhi Mishra's travelogue beginning on page 42 of this issue for more on that event.) Ranked 11th entering play, Sevia finished at an undefeated +3 (6/9) to grab a piece of the seven-way tie for second place behind winner GM Arjun Erigaisi.

Speaking to ChessBase India after the event, Sevia mentioned his round four win over Yakubboev as his favorite game from the tournament.

KING'S INDIAN, SEMI-AVERBAKH VARIATION (E73)

GM Samuel Sevia (2684)
GM Nodirbek Yakubboev (2630)
Sharjah Masters (4), Sharjah,
05.20.2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. Be2 0-0 6. Be3 Nc6 7. d5 Ne5 8. f4 Neg4 9. Bd2 Nh6 10. Nf3 c6 11. a4 e6 12. dxe6 Bxe6 13. 0-0 Nd7 14. Ng5 a5 15. g4 Nb6 16. b3 d5 17. cxd5 cxd5 18. e5 d4 19. Nb5 Bd7 20. Bf3 f6 21. exf6 Qxf6 22. Rc1 Rac8 23. Rxc8 Nxc8 24. Bxa5 Ne7 25. Bc7 Nf7 26. Nxf7 Qxf7 27. Be5 Bxb5 28. axb5 Rd8 29. Be2 Kh8 30. Bc4 Qf8 31. Qd3 Nc8 32. Qe4 Qe7 33. Rd1 Bxe5 34. Qxe5+ Qxe5 35. fxe5 Kg7 36. Kf2 Nb6 37. Ke2 Re8 38. e6 Nxc4 39. bxc4 Rxe6+ 40. Kd3 Kf6 41. c5 Kg5 42. Kc4 Kxg4 43. Rxd4+ Kh3 44. Rd7 h5 45. Rxb7 Kxh2 46. c6 g5 47. Rh7, Black resigned.

In a sign of the times, Sevia's attention was divided while in Sharjah, as he was also playing in the online ChessKid Cup from his hotel room!

That's IM Alice Lee

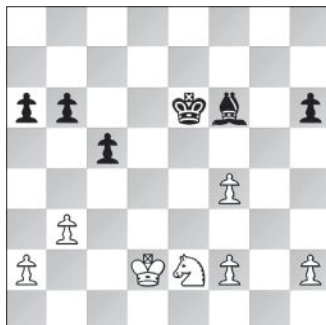
Congratulations to Alice Lee, who earned her third and final IM norm on June 11th at the Canadian Transnational Open in Montreal, Canada.

We profiled Lee in the April issue of *Chess Life Kids*, and noted that she was working to become an international master. Playing against eight grandmasters and one international master, she scored 4½/9 to notch her final norm. Here's one of her two wins from that event.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D37)

WIM Alice Lee (2390)
GM Bator Sambuev (2448)
Transnational Classic (6), Montreal,
06.10.2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 a6 5. cxd5 exd5 6. Bg5 Be6 7. e3 Nbd7 8. Bd3 h6 9. Bh4 g5 10. Bg3 Nh5 11. Be5 Ng7 12. e4 dxe4 13. Bxe4 g4 14. Bxg7 Bxg7 15. d5 Nc5 16. dxe6 Qxd1+ 17. Rxd1 Nxe4 18. Nxe4 gxf3 19. Rd7 Be5 20. Rxf7 Rf8 21. Rxf3 Rxf3 22. gxf3 Ke7 23. b3 Rg8 24. Ke2 b6 25. Ke3 Rf8 26. Ng3 Kxe6 27. Ne2 Rd8 28. f4 Bf6 29. Rc1 c5 30. Rc2 Rd1 31. Rd2 Rxd2 32. Kxd2



32. ... Kf5?!

The first step down a wrong-headed path. It seems that Sambuev wanted to channel Rubinstein and his famous king march here, but he forgot that in that game, there were no minor pieces!

Correct was 32. ... Kd5 33. Kd3 b5 and White's extra pawn is meaningless.

33. Ke3 Kg4 34. Ke4 h5?

Simply too slow. Even now Black could save himself with 34. ... b5, generating counter-play on the queenside.

35. f5! b5 36. Nf4! c4 37. bxc4 bxc4 38. Nd5

The king cannot stop the f-pawn, leaving the bishop to do the dirty work.

38. ... Bh8 39. f6 h4 40. f7 Bg7 41. Nf4 c3 42. h3+ Kg5 43. Ne6+ Kg6 44. f8=Q Bxf8 45. Nxf8+ Kf7 46. Nd7, Black resigned.

Lee has been on quite a roll in recent months. She was the runner-up at the American Cup this April in St. Louis, and in May, she drew against GM Hikaru Nakamura in a rapid game for the PRO Chess League.

DUTCH DEFENSE, LENIN-GRAD VARIATION (A88)

WIM Alice Lee (2391)

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2775)

PRO Chess League, Chess.com, 05.12.2023

1. d4 f5 2. c4 Nf6 3. g3 g6 4. Bg2 Bg7 5.



Alice Lee at the 2023 Transnational Classic

Nf3 d6 6. 0-0 0-0 7. Nc3 c6 8. d5 e5 9. dxe6 e.p. Bxe6 10. b3 Re8 11. Bb2 Na6 12. Ng5 Nc5 13. b4 Ncd7 14. Nxe6 Rxe6 15. Qb3 Better still is 15. b5! Ne5 16. Qb3.

15. ... Kh8 16. Rad1 Qe7 17. e3 Ne4?



A rare mistake from the current world number two, one which Lee does not fail to take advantage of.

18. Nxe4 fxe4 19. Bh3!

White wins material as the e6-rook lacks safe squares.

19. ... Bxb2 20. Bxe6 Qxe6 21. Qxb2+ Ne5 22. Qd4

With weak light squares, Lee lets Nakamura off the hook. But she could have pushed for the win with 22. f4! exf3 e.p. 23. Rxf3 Kg8 24. Rf2 Nxc4 25. Qd4.

22. ... Qf5 23. Kg2 Qf3+ 24. Kg1 Qf5 25. Kg2 Qf3+ 26. Kg1 Qf5, draw.

Once her title is approved, Lee will be the youngest American female to become an IM, and at time of writing she is the sixth-rated girl in the world according to FIDE.

New Titles

Congratulations to these new American FIDE titleholders, awarded between March 7 and June 16, 2023.

- IM: Nico Chasin, Ryo Chen, Mark Heilmann, Sandeep Sethuraman, Jason Wang
- WIM: Omya Vidyarthi
- FM: Andrew Guo, Harshid Kunka, Pranav Sathish, Zoey Tang, Brian Xie
- CM: Rohan Rajaram, Joseph Wan, Stephen Willy, Gordon Xu
- WCM: Cristal Jiuzhou Gu, Iris Li, Elizabeth Wiley, Julia Wiley
- IA: Andre Harding
- IA D to IA C: David Hater, Peter Giannatos, Michael Kummer
- FA: Karl T. Heck, James Hodina, Bryan Tillis. ♡

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Equal but Superior

What do you call a position that is half-full?

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

G

RANDMASTERS OFTEN USE simple words in ways that baffle amateurs. But one common term has become mysterious

even to masters. It is describing a position as “equal.”

Of course, you know the dictionary definition: Equal means White and Black have equivalent winning chances. No more, no less.

So, you are bound to be confused when Magnus Carlsen says some positions are “a little more equal for White” than for Black. Or when another elite grandmaster, Anish Giri, speaks of being “on the good side of equality.” Let’s see what they mean.

QUEEN’S PAWN GAME (D02)

GM Magnus Carlsen

GM Ding Liren

Tata Steel Masters (3), 01.16.2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. Bf4 c5 4. e3 e6 5. c3 Bd6 6. Bb5+ Nc6 7. Bxc6+ bxc6 8. Bxd6 Qxd6 9. Qa4 O-O 10. O-O cxd4 11. cxd4 c5 12. Rc1 c4 13. b3 Bd7 14. Qa5 cxb3 15. axb3 Rfb8 16. Nbd2



After the game Carlsen said positions like this are “sort of equal” but “more equal for White.” The reason is Black “has to be

a little more careful.” He would be worse after 16. ... Rb7? 17. Ne5 or 16. ... Ne8? 17. e4, for instance.

16. ... Rb5! 17. Qc7 Ne8 18. Qxd6 Nxd6

Carlsen thought he would get the advantage with 19. Rc7. But now he saw that Black’s knight would protect his rook after 19. ... Rb7!. Instead, he tried:

19. Ne5

But then came:

19. ... Be8 20. Nd3 a5 21. f3 Rb7 22. Ra2 Rba7 23. Kf2 a4!



This is what grandmasters call “fully equal.” Black no longer needs to find the best move to avoid disadvantage. He would have the upper hand after 24. b4? a3. Instead, a draw was agreed soon after an exchange of the queenside pawns.

This talk of equal but favorable positions sounds like the language parodied in *Animal Farm*. In that classic book, the animals pledge their brotherhood, overthrow their farmer and declare, “All animals are equal.” But eventually the pigs take control of the farm, saying “All animals are equal but some are more equal than others.”

In chess, we’ve struggled with the concept of equal chances since Domenico Ponziani

described it in the 1700s. In the next century, some annotators used an equal sign to mean neither side had a forced win, while others used it to mean neither player had a material advantage.

World Champion Emanuel Lasker may have been the first to explain a balanced position as an equilibrium with off-setting assets. “If the advantages held by my opponent are compensated by my advantages, the position is balanced,” he wrote in his *Manual of Chess*. In today’s grandmaster jargon this is “dynamic equality.”

It is a highly useful concept but rarely used outside chess. You won’t hear a sportscaster say, for example, “The Yankees trail by one run but they have the bases loaded and no one out. Chances are equal.”

Today we have computers that routinely evaluate a position with “0.00,” plus or minus some small numbers, even when one of the players is on defensive. The engines assume he will find the best moves as play continues.

For humans, this “computer equality” can mean practical inferiority, as in the next diagram.

PETROFF DEFENSE (C42)

GM Anish Giri

GM Jeffrey Xiong

FTX Road to Miami Prelims, 07.10.2022

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nxe5 d6 4. Nf3 Nxe4 5. d4 d5 6. Bd3 Be7 7. O-O Bf5 8. Re1 O-O 9. Nbd2 Nd6 10. Nf1 Bg6 11. Ne5 Bxd3 12. Nxd3 Re8 13. Ng3 Nd7 14. c3 Nf8 15. Qb3 c6 16. Bf4 b6 17. Qa4 Nb5 18. Ne5 Qc8 19. c4 dxc4 20. Qxc4 Qe6

(see diagram top of next column)

Modern engines all call this position equal.

QUIZ FOR AUGUST

THIS HAS BEEN A YEAR when future international stars sparkled from the very start. In January a cast of young hopefuls, including two women, gathered in Wijk aan Zee, the Netherlands for the traditional Tata Steel Challengers section. GM Alexander Donchenko, 24, took first prize. In each of the six diagrams from the tournament 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 rook or minor pieces. But keep an eye out for forced mates. Solutions on Page 63.

PROBLEM 1
GM Javokhir Sindarov
WGM Ramesh Vaishali



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2
GM Luis Supi
GM Baskaran Adhiban



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3
GM Baskaran Adhiban
IM Eline Roebers



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4
GM Baskaran Adhiban
GM Jergus Pechac



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5
GM M. Amin Tabatabaei
GM Mustafa Yilmaz



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6
GM Max Warmerdam
GM Jergus Pechac



WHITE TO MOVE



They don't agree on why. Some prefer 21. d5 when 21. ... Qxd5 22. Qxd5 cxd5 23. Nc6 leads to a drawish endgame. Others see a meaningless edge for Black after 21. Qa4 Qd5 followed by 22. Rad1 Ng6 23. Nxc6 hxc6.

What a human might conclude is there are more scenarios in which Black gets a winning advantage. Or, as Giri said, "He's on the good side of equality."

In the game, the position was transformed by trades:

21. Qxe6 Nxe6 22. Nxc6 Nbx6 23. Nxe7+ Rxe7 24. Rac1 Rd7 25. Be3 Rad8 26. Kf1 f6 27. b4 Kf7 28. a4 Rd5



Computers still see the position as equal. But Giri said, "I didn't quite see how exactly to fully equalize." His problems mounted after:

29. Ne4 Nf5 30. Rc4 Nxe3+

If 31. Rxe3 Rd4 32. Rec3? Rd1+ 33. Ke2 f5!.

Giri lost in 59 moves.

Matters are moving so quickly that "computer equality" is becoming out-of-date. Some engines use a Monte Carlo type of tree search and appreciate that even a position that seems like a certain draw is still favorable to one side.

GM Larry Kaufman, a computer chess authority, gives the example of a position in

which White is a rook down but can deliver a somewhat difficult-to-find perpetual check.

Stockfish, for example, will evaluate the position as 0.00, he said. But Monte Carlo engines factor in the difficulty in finding the perpetual and may say Black has a slight edge.

In any case, there are always going to be optimistic players. They see a glass as half full: An equal position means their chances of winning are just as good as their opponents'.

But to the "glass is half empty" people, it means equal chances to lose. That may have been what Geoffrey Chaucer had in mind when he introduced a new term, "le-upardyes."

Chaucer helped mold the modern English language in the 14th century. He tweaked a French chess term, "jeu parti," which meant a divided game, or what we would call "double-edged."

Chaucer was a chess player and he used "leupardyes" to mean both sides have losing chances.

Today, we spell the words differently and nobody recognizes it as a chess term. It is "jeopardy." ♠

Now for the Endgame

What to know, and why, in king and pawn endings.

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

E

NDGAMES ARE THE FOUNDATION of chess. If you are serious about chess improvement, you must know key endgame

positions and concepts, and you must know them cold.

This is especially important in this era of ever-faster time controls. By the time you reach the last phase of the game, you will likely be tired and low on the clock. You will need to rely on your endgame knowledge in order to play well. In this column, we will sketch a few key concepts in king and pawn endings, while the focus of the next one will be on rook endings.

My favorite book for basic endgames is GM Yuri Averbakh's *Chess Endings: Essential Knowledge*. It breaks down endgames into logically ordered chapters, and it discusses practical endgames that every chess player must know.

GM Jesus de la Villa's *100 Endgames You Must Know* is another comprehensive book for all types of endgames. However, this book goes into quite complex endgames that may not yet be useful for the reader; for instance, knowing how to perfectly defend with a rook against a rook and a bishop should not be your top priority when studying endgames just yet. I would recommend studying the first 4-5 endgames of each chapter as those endgames are practical and useful. You can always come back to the more complex endgames as you become stronger. This is an excellent book to have as a reference.

While they are rightfully popular, I would recommend staying away from Dvoretsky, Nunn, and Aagaard for now, as their books (while excellent) are written for very strong

players. It's important to study material that is appropriate for your level to maximize comprehension and recall.

Another great tool is the various drills on *Chess.com*, where you can practice endgames by playing them out against the computer. There are two relevant drills for these purposes: "Endgame Fundamentals," which offer theoretical knowledge, and "Endgame Practice," which allows you to put this knowledge to use. The direct link is www.chess.com/practice/drills. Lichess also has an endgame puzzle database broken down to categories, such as rook and pawn endgames. Visit that at lichess.org/training/themes.

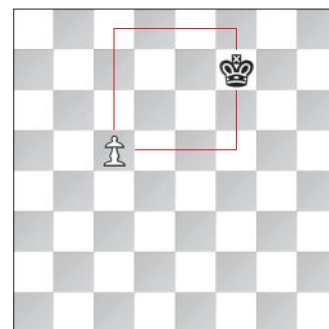
There are several theoretical positions — positions where you know the correct evaluation just by looking at them — that you need to know by heart. I can't emphasize enough the importance of practicing these endgames and executing them with accuracy each time. You want to get to the point where you convert the winning positions, and defend the drawn ones, 100% of the time.

Among the most fundamental of these positions are king and pawn endings. Invest time in studying them. King and pawn endgame puzzles are also great for working on calculation. Due to the limited number of moves, we can calculate them out to their final result.

Here are some key concepts of king and pawn endings.

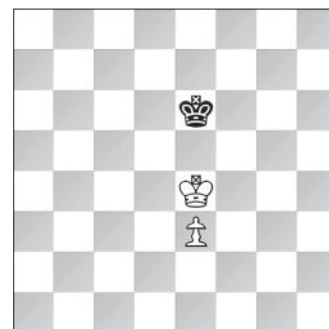
(see diagram top of next column)

The rule of the square is a fundamental concept in king and pawn endings. Draw a diagonal line from the pawn to the end of the board, creating an imaginary square



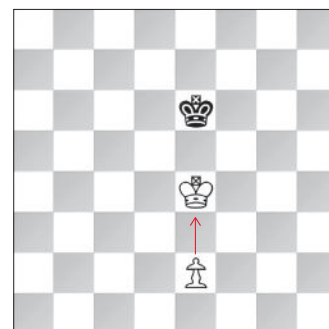
RULE OF THE SQUARE

from the two ends of the diagonal. If the king can enter the square, then the king can catch the pawn.



THE OPPOSITION

The opposition occurs when two kings oppose each other with an odd number of squares between them. Whoever is on turn must give way, allowing the other king to pass. Generally you want the opposition, and not to lose it.

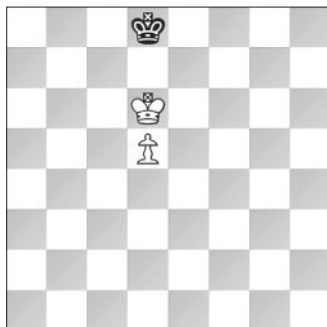


SPARE TEMPO

The "spare tempo" is a situation where the side on turn can "pass the move" to the opponent by moving a pawn that does not change the nature of the position. This puts the opponent in *zugzwang*.

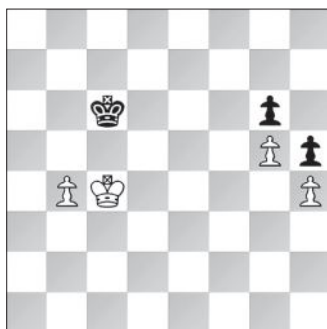
(see diagram top of next column)

If the white king is on the 6th rank in front of its pawn, the position is winning regardless of whose turn it is and where the pawn is.



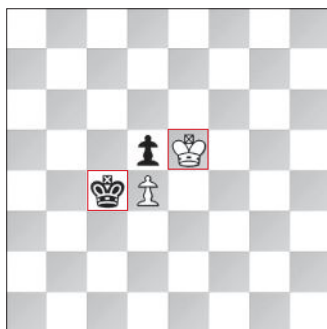
KING ON THE 6th (OR 3rd)

The same rule applies when the black king is on the 3rd rank. Note that the rule does not apply to a- or h-pawns.



OUTSIDE PASSED PAWN

An outside passed pawn is separated from the rest of the pawn islands by several files. It can be hard for a king to catch in a race.



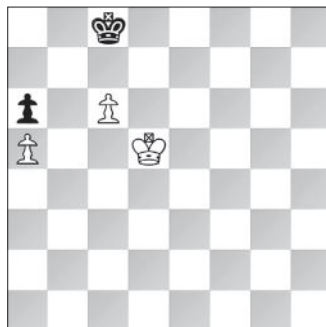
CORRESPONDING SQUARES

Corresponding squares are squares of mutual *zugzwang*. If one player moves to a square, then the opponent must be able to move to the corresponding square to force a *zugzwang*. This is a very complex topic.

Let's see how some of these ideas work in practice with a few examples.

(see diagram top of next column)

Triangulation is a technique designed to lose a move and put the opponent in *zugzwang*.



WHITE TO MOVE

The winning idea is to get the king to b6 and capture the a6-pawn. The corresponding squares are (a) c5 and c7, and (b) d6 and d8. This means that when the white king goes to c5, Black must be able to play ... Kc7 to hold a draw, and when the white king goes to d6, Black must be able to meet this move with ... Kd8.

1. Kc4

White is going to lose a move by triangulation, passing the move to Black. After 1. Kc5 Kc7 White can't make progress, i.e., 2. Kd5 Kc8 3. Kd6 Kd8 4. c7+ Kc8 5. Kc6.

1. ... Kd8 2. Kd4

Steady on. Black must not play ... Kd8-c7, and instead has to wait on the back-rank.

2. ... Kc8

Of course 2. ... Kc7 will lose immediately to 3. Kc5 as in this position Black cannot prevent entry on the b6-square.

3. Kd5!

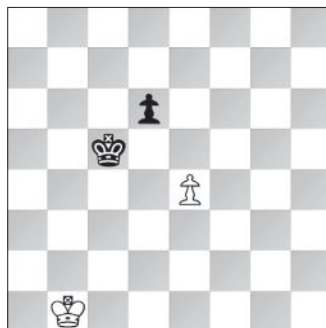
We reached the same position where we started, but it is Black to move!

3. ... Kc7

Or 3. ... Kd8 4. Kd6 Kc8 5. c7 Kb7 6. Kd7 and wins.

4. Kc5 Kc8 5. Kb6

Winning the second pawn and the game.



WHITE TO MOVE

Here we must combine knowledge of the opposition and the importance of the 6th rank to find the right answer.

1. e5!

After 1. Kc2 Kd4 2. Kd2 White can try to hold the opposition. However, after 2. ... Kxe4 3. Ke2 Kd4 4. Kd2 Black has a spare tempo with 4. ... d5. This forces White to give up the opposition after 5. Ke2 Kc3 6. Kd1 Kd3 7. Kc1 Ke2 and now Black will promote.

What about 2. e5? White can try giving up the pawn now, but after the correct 2. ... Kxe5 (not 2. ... dxe5? 3. Kd2 Ke4 4. Ke2 when White will get the opposition and hold the draw) Black holds the opposition. Every move makes a difference in this simple endgame!

1. ... dxe5 2. Kc1

The key to this position is to hold the distant (kings facing off at five or seven squares instead of three) opposition. If 2. Kc2? Kc4 3. Kd2 Kd4 4. Ke2 Ke4 Black gets the opposition and wins.

2. ... Kd4 3. Kd2 Ke4 4. Ke2

White holds the opposition and saves the game.

4. ... Kd4 5. Kd2 e4 6. Ke2 e3 7. Ke1 Kd3 8. Kd1 e2+ 9. Ke1 Ke3, stalemate.

You may wonder how often these basic ideas become relevant at the board. My answer? More often than you'd think!

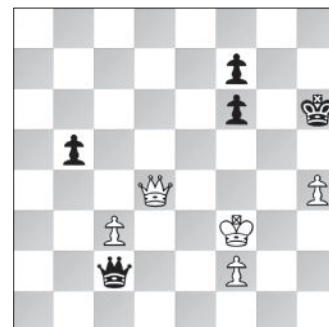
Here's an example of what I mean.

TRANSITIONS

GM Magesh Panchanathan (2466)

Eshaan Hebbar (2057)

2023 Carolinas Classic (4), 06.10.2023



BLACK TO MOVE

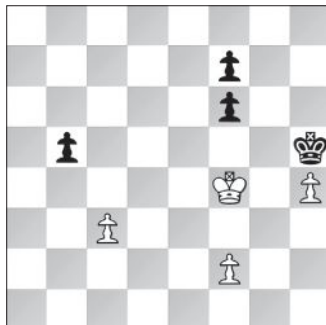
I recently played in the 2023 Carolinas Classic when the game at the adjoining board

caught my attention. It's a perfect example of how experienced grandmasters defeat young up-and-comers in endgames where the young opponent runs out of patience and tries to force matters.

45. ... Qf5??

This normal looking check costs Black the game! One takeaway: do not enter king and pawn endgames unless you are absolutely sure of the result.

46. Qf4+! Qxf4+ 47. Kxf4 Kh5



48. Ke4!

This must have been the move that Black overlooked. White goes for the b-pawn, as capturing the pawn and promoting will take nine moves, while Black will need 10

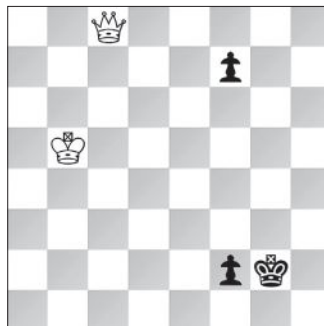
moves to capture both h- and f- pawns and then promote. Remember to always begin with candidates when calculating!

The natural 48. Kf5 leads to an easy draw by force as all the pawns will come off the board: 48. ... Kxh4 49. Kxf6 Kg4 50. Kxf7 Kf3 51. Ke6 Kxf2 52. Kd5 Ke3 53. Kc5 Kd3 54. Kxb5 Kxc3.

48. ... Kxh4 49. Kd4 Kg4 50. Kc5 Kf3 51.

Kxb5 Kxf2 52. c4 f5 53. c5 f4 54. c6 f3

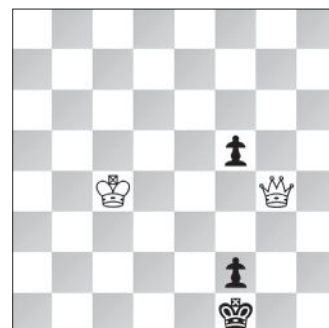
55. c7 Kg2 56. c8=Q f2



This queen against bishop pawn endgame would be a draw were it not for the extra f-pawn! Having it removes Black's hopes of stalemate through giving up the f2-pawn, because the second pawn can move, burning a tempo. We can really appreciate the

depth of White's calculation to correctly force a queen trade and enter this king and pawn endgame.

57. Qg4+ Kf1 58. Kc4 f5



59. Qf3

Of course not 59. Qxf5?? Kg2 60. Qg4+ Kh2 61. Qf3 Kg1 62. Qg3+ Kh1.

59. ... Ke1 60. Qe3+ Kf1 61. Kd3, Black resigned. ♡

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



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MAKE YOUR MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

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

The puzzles start from easy and gradually move toward being difficult. It is worth noting that "easy" is a relative term. If you are new to the game, the easy ones can also represent a challenge.

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

TACTIC 1.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 2.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



WHITE TO MOVE

Position 1: PINS AND NEEDLES

Position 2: DISCOVER FRESH THREATS

Position 3: CANNONS ARE ALREADY AIMED

Position 4: ADD FUEL

Position 5: CREATE SOME THREATS

Position 6: CLEAR THE PATH

Position 7: KASPAROV'S CHESS CULTURE

Position 8: FORCING SEQUENCE

Position 9: THIS IS SPARTA!

DING LASSO



The unlikely kinship between the new
World Champion and everyone's favorite football coach

BY **FM MIKE KLEIN WITH WFM KINGA POLAK**

COMPARED TO THE past decade's matches, a large swath of fans went into this world championship feeling tepid interest.

The match was not in a major world city, and many regarded it as a battle for the world's second-best player. That slowly changed over the course of April. At first, the flurry of decisive results piqued interest. Then, slowly, the candor of the eventual winner won over fans both on-line and in-person. When we see the current champion, we now see ourselves.

Ding Liren was much more forthcoming and candid than any other world championship player in our lifetime. Gone was the mercurial Magnus; in his place was the thoughtful, quiet Ding, a player that few had heard speak in depth before this match. And what we heard, we liked.

Ding's traits were our traits. For the first time in a long time, chess amateurs could actually relate to a 2800 — the fear, the uncertainty, the disappointment, and ultimately, the triumph. (Now, of course, it occurs to me that if Ding had lost the tiebreaker, that might have produced an even more apt mirror of ourselves, depending on current feelings about one's own life and chess abilities.)

I was on-site for the match, doing live reporting for *Chess.com* and *ChessKid.com*, and as a globetrotter with an Apple+ subscription, some of my evenings were spent in search of new entertainment. (Not to say anything bad about the nightlife in Astana, of course.) Some friends suggested I check out "Ted Lasso," whose third and final season had premiered a few weeks before Nepomniachtchi's e-pawn made its first venture forward.

Suddenly I found myself confusing the soon-to-be world-champion with the eponymous "football" coach from Kansas.

What the world saw in those emotional games and plainspoken press conferences was certainly Ding Liren, but to me, plowing through episodes on sometimes-questionable wifi, it was also Ted Lasso castling and charming the room.

The surface-level similarities are plain. (Don't worry — we will minimize serious spoilies for those who haven't seen everything yet.) Both become known to the world after a romantic breakup — Ding split with his girlfriend before the match, while Ted slogs through an emotional divorce. Both are also trying their best in press conferences using a version of English that sometimes bewilders them. For example, recall this trans-Atlantic linguistic mashup from the second episode:

Ted: "If I were to get fired from my job where I'm puttin' cleats in the trunk of my car?"

Coach Beard: "You got the boot from puttin' boots in the boot."

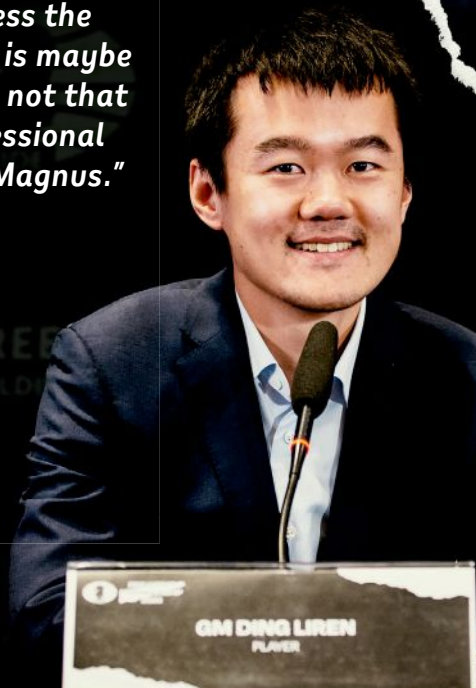
But the television show serves as a much deeper allegory to what we saw unfold in Astana. The reason audiences engage with Ted is the same reason we feel an affinity with Ding. It's not the results, but the process, the struggle, and the willingness of the protagonists to be open about everything they are experiencing. Ted uses intuition and emotional intelligence to make his decisions, and so too does Ding, his real-life counterpart.

Witness some of the overlap between Ted Lasso and Ding Liren, as seen in quotes from the show and the post-match press conferences:

Ted: "You know what the happiest animal on earth is? It's a goldfish. You know why? Got a ten-second memory. Be a goldfish."

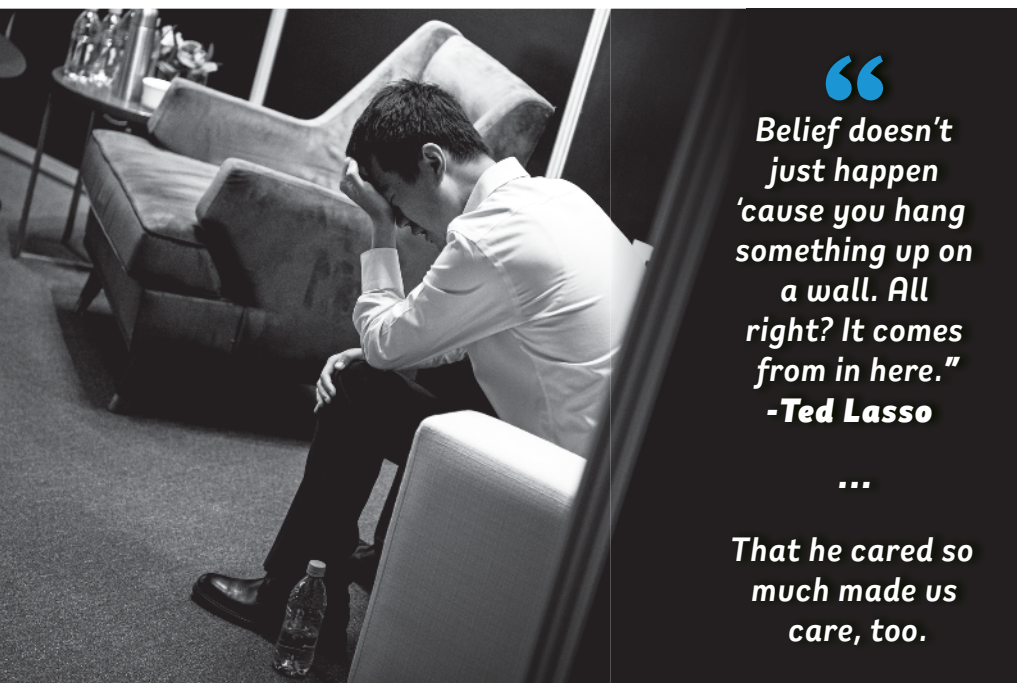
Ding: Not only did he recover immediately from losses and multiple match deficits to continuously get back to even in the match, but he also said, "I thought... at one point I feel it's totally silent in the playing hall and ... I didn't feel anybody watching the games. It seems to be a very important game but I didn't feel it at all."

“
I guess the reason is maybe we are not that professional than Magnus.”



“
You know what the happiest animal on earth is? It's a goldfish.”





“
Belief doesn't
just happen
'cause you hang
something up on
a wall. All
right? It comes
from in here.”
-Ted Lasso

...

That he cared so
much made us
care, too.

Ted: “Hey, here’s a little trick of the trade. Just make fun of yourself right off the bat, a little joke. Folks will love that.”

Ding, explaining why there were so many more decisive games than in recent world championships: “I guess the reason is maybe we are not that professional than Magnus.”

Ted: “I want you to be grateful that you’re going through this sad moment with all these other folks. Because I promise you, there is something worse out there than being sad, and that is being alone and being sad.”

Ding, who was visibly unfocused during his pitiful round two loss: “Yeah, I would like to say to my friends, they helped me to deal with my ... emotional problems. Now I feel more comfortable ... One of my friends said to think about the things from the positive side. I think that’s the best advice for me during this tournament.”



Anxiety is a major theme in “Ted Lasso,” and both Ted and Ding originally dealt with their anxieties in similar ways: by running from the source in the middle of the competition. For Ted, this meant leaving the playing field. Ditto for Ding, who played much of the first two rounds from the player’s rest area.

In fact, Ding looked about as uncomfortable in the first two rounds as you will ever see a world-class player. (Here I recalled Ted on challenges: “Taking on a challenge is a lot like riding a horse, isn’t it? If you’re

comfortable while you’re doing it, you’re probably doing it wrong.”) Ultimately, both learned coping mechanisms, and how to face their fears head-on. Not only did Ding camp out at the board much more in the remaining rounds, but after leaving the site hotel after round one, Ding returned to the St. Regis Astana, despite knowing he was greatly outnumbered there by Team Nepo.



But what about getting professional help?

Ted, when initially asked for his thoughts on therapy: “General apprehension and a modest Midwestern skepticism.”

Ding: “[My friends] talked to me and even suggested if I need a doctor, but maybe it’s not that serious.”



What about the “leaked” openings, where internet sleuths found games on *Chess.com* and *Lichess.org* remarkably similar to some of Ding’s world championship efforts? The eventual world champion was not fazed by the discovery at all, downplaying their importance. Ted also has nothing to hide, asking some unhappy fans, “Why don’t you come watch training tomorrow? See for yourselves. We ain’t running a chocolate factory or Deutsche Bank. We got nothing to hide from y’all.”



Both use decision making that is much at least as intuitive as analytical.

Ted: “You just listen to your gut, OK? And on your way down to your gut, check in with your heart. Between those two things, they’ll let you know what’s what.”

Ding chose a large number of openings while at the board, which is almost unheard of at the world championship level. He even spent time on move number one in several games; for example, he only decided to play the French after the clock started and 1. e4 was on the board.

Ted: “Belief doesn’t just happen ‘cause you hang something up on a wall. All right? It comes from in here. You know? And up here. Down here. Only problem is, we all got so much junk floating through us, a lot of time we end up getting in our own way. You know, crap like envy or fear, shame.”

Moments after winning the title, Ding had to let go of all he had been bottling up inside: “I cannot control my emotions at that point. And I know myself, just before the tournament I have told somebody: ‘If I win, I will cry.’” Indeed, Ding did cry at the board. Chess audiences have almost never seen that from a professional. That he cared so much made us care, too.

Ted: “Just going from position to position until positions don’t really, um, even exist anymore. It’s fast, fluid, free.”

Ding: “Before the tournament I said to Richard, ‘I’d like to play something new and the good things will happen then I’m right at that point.’ I played something new, and in the end, the good things really happened ... I wanted to play something but I don’t have this kind of creativity so that’s why I saw Rapport is a very good player to work with because he has such interesting ideas over the openings ... He has this kind of artist’s character, not like me.”



This brings us to Richard Rapport, Ding’s second with strengths and weaknesses that perfectly augment those of his boss.

Think of him as a beardless Coach Beard.

Coach Beard’s season three idea to open up the pitch by playing “Total Football” yields success in the same way that Rapport’s unique style does. As Beard explained, “Players are no longer in set positions. Defenders are free to attack. Attackers are trusted to defend. It’s about taking risks and supporting each other’s choices.” Sounds a lot like how Rapport plays chess.

And for those that thought it weird that Ding’s former rival in the Candidates’ Tournament suddenly became his partner, Coach

Beard has an answer for that, too. “You know, we used to believe that trees competed with each other for light ... We now realize that the forest is a socialist community. Trees work in harmony to share the sunlight.” Chess fans suddenly had three daily events to follow — the game itself, the post-match press conference, and the daily Ding-Rapport embrace.

This was more than just a second. This was a quirky but heartfelt fraternity of two. Ruff ruff — Ding had found his Diamond Dog.

There’s much more to the friendships than work talk, of course. Ding/Rapport and Ted/Coach Beard also share a fondness for classic bands when talking to each other. Musical references fly fast and furious on Ted Lasso, and just like Rapport’s daily fashion statements, Trent Crimm’s t-shirts were the stuff of Reddit legend. (Unassociated: do I have to forever announce myself as “Mike Klein, Chess.com” now?) Similarly, Ding and Richard share a fondness for “80s music;” Ding also specifically mentioned “Blowin’ in the Wind” by Bob Dylan as a Team Ding favorite.

Could Nepomniachtchi be included in this Lasso-look-alike analogy? Although in some hair styles he looks a little like Zava, perhaps he is more closely aligned with Nate, at least in one way. While Ted’s fellow Premiership manager tries to out-duel him on the field, away from the stadium Nate shows clear fondness for the man he is

trying to beat. So too did Nepomniachtchi: following round five, Ian admitted about Ding, “After the rest day, I al-

“
Chess fans suddenly had three daily events to follow — the game itself, the post-match press conference, and the daily Ding-Rapport embrace.”

ready missed him.” When have you ever heard *that* at a world championship?



So where are we now? The world no longer has Magnus, perhaps the greatest player of all time, as the title holder. Many thought we’d inherit a paper champion, but Magnus’ departure actually helped pave the way for an even more relatable king. A king who bucked all the world championship norms, like secrecy and insularity. A king who reads Michel Foucault and channels Albert Camus in times of distress. A king who admits his weaknesses, a king who fails, a king who needs encouragement, a king who needs his friends.

In short, a king like Ding. ♦



Chess18

Streamers descend on a giant log cabin to try their hands at an interesting variant.

BY **GM LARRY KAUFMAN**

R

ECENTLY I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to participate, at least for a bit, in a fun chess event at the Timber Moose Lodge in Timber Lakes, Utah,

along with some of the most popular chess streamers around.

It wasn't a world championship, but it was the first master-level Chess18 tournament, and it was watched by chess fans around the globe.

Chess18 is a subset of Chess960, or as it more popularly known, "Fischer Random" chess. It uses the 18 positions of Chess960 where the kings and rooks begin on their normal squares — the upshot is that no special castling rules are needed.

This is a variant with a history. "Shuffle chess" was played more than two centuries ago. The pieces on the back rank were shuffled randomly, although certain variants specified White/Black symmetry, no bishops of opposite colors, and castling being allowed when legal. The idea was to force players to think for themselves from the first move — no memorizing openings.

As computers started becoming strong enough to influence opening theory, this became a greater concern. In 1996, Bobby Fischer announced his "Fischer Random" chess, which was basically shuffle chess, except Fischer added two stipulations. First, the kings always started between the rooks. Second, castling was still allowed, and with the kings and rooks ending up on g1/f1 or c1/d1 as they would in standard chess.

Chess960 nearly eliminates the need for opening memorization, avoids computer opening preparation, and forces the players to think for themselves almost from move one. It also reduces the draw percentage in grandmaster play, since the players must find many more moves in a game without computer preparation; hence, they have many more chances to make mistakes.

Chess960 is the also only chess variant recognized by FIDE, with two official world championships now played. GM Wesley So won the first edition in 2019, while GM

Hikaru Nakamura took the crown in the 2022 event. In 2010 I won the U.S. Open Chess960 championship. Since another one hasn't been held since, I suppose I'm still technically the current U.S. Open 960 champion!

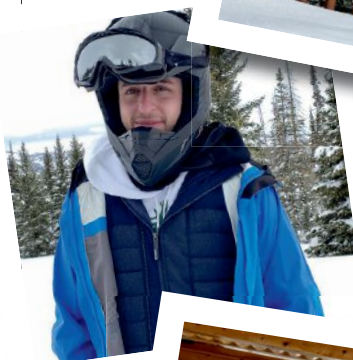
That's not to say that this variant is perfect. Perhaps the biggest issue is that castling often feels weird under these rules. For example, a king can move from b1 to g1 to castle! Even the world's top players may sometimes forget about castling or get confused about the rules.

Others complain that some positions just look or feel bizarre, that games may be lost in just a few moves even by grandmasters, and that in some positions White's advantage is relatively large. And some players prefer having opening knowledge play some role in the game, as long as this doesn't mean memorizing thousands of long computer lines.

Chess18 aims to address these issues. It is true chess — only the initial position is changed, not the rules — with normal castling. The positions feel much more like normal chess than do most 960 positions. There are no positions with a significant advantage for White, and the chance of early blunders is much reduced since bishops are unable to attack an undefended pawn on move one. Opening knowledge will play a role — a master should be able to remember a few short lines from each of the 18 positions — but it is unlikely that anyone will remember enough about each position for this to have a decisive role in practical play.

I have long liked the concept of Chess18, so in 2020 I organized a four-game Chess18 Rapid match between the Komodo chess engine and 2018 Reykjavik Open Chess960 champ GM Alex Lenderman, with Komodo giving knight odds. The idea was that while knight odds in Rapid are too much of a handicap to give to a strong GM in standard chess, it might be fair in 960 since he'd have to think for himself from the first move — but at least he wouldn't have to think about the castling rules. It proved to be quite competitive and interesting.

This page and facing: scenes from the inaugural Timber Moose Chess18 event in Timber Lakes, Utah. Was this the most streamer-dense event in chess history?



The first Chess18 tournament for FIDE-titled players was held March 20-22, 2023, at the Timber Moose Lodge in Utah. Lodge co-owner Matt Evans was the principal sponsor, with chess streaming channel "ChessDawgs" providing additional support. I served as a technical advisor.

We originally talked about just inviting grandmasters and perhaps strong IMs to make for a competitive event, but Evans was convinced by "ChessDawgs" streamer Matt Crossette to invite prominent streamers "since the objective was to expose Chess18 to a broad audience."

A bout with COVID-19 kept me from traveling to Utah, but I did feel well enough at the start to participate online on Chess.com. However, during my final pairing of the day — against FM James Canty — I got violently ill. After somehow managing to get half a point out of the two games, I was then promptly hospitalized for a few days, but made a full recovery soon after my release. I very much regretted having to withdraw after the first day, but fortunately GM Kayden Troff of ChessDawgs took my place, switching from commentator to participant!

One consequence of the decision to switch from playing strength to streaming popularity as the primary invitation criteria was that the event became a more informal event that introduced Chess18 to the world, rather than a true competition. Although all the players were FIDE titled, the range in playing strength was enormous, so it was decided that some sort of handicapping was needed to avoid a runaway. The basic time limit was G/12+5, but when the players were a class apart, time odds were supposed to be given. Some of the stronger players decided not to accept the time odds from GM Daniel Naroditsky, with the expected result occurring. (They lost.) In four games played at knight odds, he still scored 3½ out of 4!! Quite a performance from Danya!

Regarding results, I managed an even score in my six games before falling ill against Canty — not too bad, given that most of the

players probably have grandparents my age. Kayden got three wins and three draws in his six games, so he filled in for me admirably.

Final standings, excluding these games and using “football” scoring (3 for a win, 1 for a draw), were: Naroditsky (30 points), FM Gauri Shankar (26), WGM Nemo Zhou (17), IM Eric Rosen (16), IM Kostya Kavutskiy (14), FM James Canty (9), and WFM Anna Cramling (8). Both Canty and Shankar were treated as IMs for the handicapping system, meaning that Canty’s result was better than it appears, and Shankar clearly exceeded expectations.

Here’s one of my games played before I was forced to withdraw. It demonstrates how easy it is to get a lost game in just a few moves in Chess18 without the benefit of memorized opening theory.

FRC POSITION 533

GM Larry Kaufman

WFM Anna Cramling

Timber Moose Chess18, 03.20.2023



1. e4 e5 2. f4! exf4?!

Since this “King’s Gambit” is not really a gambit with the queen on f1, Black should decline with 2. ... d6.

3. Qxf4 Qc5?! 4. Nf3 Nf6?

Here 4. ... Nc6 is needed to prevent 5. d4.

5. d4 Qe7 6. Nc3 d6 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Be2 Nc6 9. a3?!

I think 9. Bd2! planning Ra1-e1 was better.

9. ... d5? 10. e5 Nh5 11. Qe3 Be6 12. Qf2?! White is winning after 12. Ne1 g6 13. Bxh5.

12. ... f6 13. Qh4?

Better was 13. Ne1 Qe8 14. Nd3.

13. ... fxe5??

Black had to sac a piece, but this was the wrong way. Instead 13. ... Qe8! 14. g4 fxe5 15. Qxh5 exd4 gives enough compensation for the knight.

14. Qxh5 Rf5?

This looks good, because after 15. Qh3 Nxd4 Black has decent compensation.

15. Bg5! Rxg5 16. Nxg5 g6

Probably Black didn’t notice on move 13 or 14 that now 16. ... Qxg5? would allow mate on e8.

17. Qh6 Nxd4 18. Rf8+ Qxf8 19. Qxh7, mate.

To conclude, some may be wondering exactly how this event came together, so I asked Matt why he decided to organize it, and I’ll give him the final words:

“I’ve played chess my whole life, and I

think it’s great. I run a small casual club in the suburbs of Salt Lake that’s completely free, and I love seeing people play. Part of the reason I love chess is that every position is basically an analytical puzzle — what’s the best move here? And I see almost everything that way, as an endless stream of problems and challenges for us to analyze and figure out how to make things better.

“One of the problems with chess is that it’s easy to blitz out the early moves without thinking, out of habit, and get into the same patterns over and over again. Games are more fun when they’re novel and unique. The problem is most acute at the elite level, with players regularly in their preparation through move 15 or 20 or 25. All games — not just chess — are more interesting when they’re a battle from the beginning, not just the second half.

“[I enjoy Fischer Random for the reasons above, but] I’m sympathetic to the criticism of Fischer Random that some of the positions are too different from [“traditional” chess], and some of the castling patterns are gimmicky... So I came to believe that the 18 positions from Fischer Random with the rooks in the corners and the kings on the e-file are the best form of chess. The castling patterns are preserved, the resulting positions after a handful of moves are novel, but they still feel familiar. ... After years of wishing for an event focused on this format, which I call Chess18, I decided to organize an event myself to start the conversation.”

Left: IM Kostya Kavutskiy makes friends everywhere he goes. Right: A murderer’s row of streamers and chess personalities!



C O R R E S P O N D E N C E C H A M P I O N S

E

everyone is talking about blitz and rapid chess, but what about slower versions of our game? Perhaps you'd like to try tournaments that stretch on for *years*?

Correspondence chess is alive and well in 2023, and US Chess offers tournaments for players of all ages and strengths. Visit new.uschess.org/correspondence-chess to learn more, and check out the ad for correspondence play on page 62 of this issue.

In what follows, meet 11 American correspondence champions, and learn a little bit more about what elite correspondence chess looks like. ~ed.

FIND OUT MORE

For more on the 2022 Absolute Championship, visit www.iccf.com/event?id=96982. The Golden Knights champions are listed at new.uschess.org/correspondence-chess/golden-knights.



MICHAEL BUSS
2014 GOLDEN KNIGHTS
CHAMPION



RICK JOHNSON
2016 GOLDEN KNIGHTS
CHAMPION



GARY ADAMS
2015 GOLDEN KNIGHTS
CHAMPION



TIM CORKUM
2022 ABSOLUTE CO-
CHAMPION

GOLDEN KNIGHTS

Buss, Adams, and Johnson add to their trophy cabinets.

BY **JOHN HARTMANN**

The 2014, 2015, and 2016 Golden Knights have concluded. Congratulations to Michael Buss of Indianapolis, Indiana, who won the 2014 Golden Knights — his third clear victory in the Golden Knights, and fourth victory overall.

Second place in the 2014 Knights went to



JOHN WALTON
2022 ABSOLUTE CO-
CHAMPION

Gary Adams, and this minor disappointment apparently was enough to drive him forward to victory in the 2015 Golden Knights! Adams, from Mesa, Arizona, is now a two-time winner.

As we go to press, Rick Johnson has just been announced as the winner of the 2016 Golden Knights. Hailing from Fremont, California, this is Johnson's first Golden Knights Championship. Ferdinand Burmeister finished second, while Gary Adams had to content himself with third.

The Golden Knights, along with its email-based cousin, the Electronic Knights, is open to all US Chess members who live in the contiguous United States, Alaska, Hawaii, or have an APO/FPO postal address. Players move through three rounds of pool play and 18 games. Because it follows US Chess correspondence rules, no chess engine use is allowed in the Knights, and books and periodicals may be consulted, but not other humans.

ABSOLUTE CHAMPIONSHIP

Corkum and Walton tie for first place.

BY **JOHN HARTMANN**

If the Golden Knights are the correspon-

dence equivalent of the U.S. Open, the Absolute Championship is its version of the Closed. The best American correspondence players are invited to participate in an elite round-robin with their peers.

The 2022 US Chess Absolute Correspondence Championship has also concluded, with CCMs Tim Corkum (Wisconsin) and John Walton (Washington) as deserving co-champions. Both finished with 7½/12; while there are four games still ongoing at time of writing, their scores cannot be caught.

The Absolute Championship is played on the International Correspondence Chess Federation (ICCF) server, and it is unique among US Chess rated correspondence events in that it allows engine consultation.

STRIKING BRONZE

Team USA third in 21st Correspondence Chess Olympiad

BY **ICCF-GM JON EDWARDS**

The 21st ICCF Correspondence Chess Olympiad has ended after nearly a decade of play, and after thousands of moves and hours upon hours of analysis, the members of Team USA

— ICCF-GMs Stephen Ham, Dan Fleetwood, Tim Murray, Jon Ostriker, Jason Bokar, and Jon Edwards, along with team captain Tom Biedermann — take home the bronze.

In the 70+ years of the Correspondence Chess Olympiad, which started in 1949, we are just the second American team to win a medal, and this is just the third time ever that a non-European team has medaled in this ICCF event. Our achievement also automatically seeds us into the 22nd Olympiad final, which means we get to do it all over again!

Perhaps the most interesting result is how far back the teams from Russia and Belarus finished, and it is worth speculating as to why this is the case. Economists often tell us that embargoes and economic sanctions rarely work, but I suspect that correspondence chess players in these countries are having a very hard time acquiring the powerful workstations required to compete effectively at this level.

Many readers believe that correspondence chess is dead, dying, or at least in hospice, but the following two games from this event tell a very different story. Humans armed with high performance set-ups were able, in these two games and in many others, to overcome the recommendations of the machines alone.

In the past computer chess experts recognized that engines sometimes experienced a

2022 Absolute Championship

			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
1	CCM Tim Corkum	2323	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	1	1	7½/12
2	CCM John C. Walton	2373	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	1	7½/12
3	IM Keith A. Rodriguez	2362	½	½	*	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	7/12
4	John Millett	2392	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	1	7/12
5	Johnny Owens	2105	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	7/12
6	CCM David Sogin	2326	½	½	0	½	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	6½/12
7	CCE Timothy Harris	2165	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½	½	½	1		½	6/11
8	SIM Harry Ingersol	2426	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½		½	½	1	6/11
9	CCM Gordon Magat	2334	0	½	½	½	½	½	½	½	*	½		½	1	5½/11
10	CCM Ferdinand Burmeister	2315	½	0	½	0	½	½	½		½	*	½	½	1	5/11
11	Gregory W. Cross	2101	½	½	½	½	0	0	0	½		½	*		1	4/10
12	Joel Levine	2157	0	0	0	½	½	½		½	½	½		*	½	3½/10
13	CCE Patrick J. Ryan	2198	0	0	½	0	0	0	½	0	0	0	0	½	*	1½/12

horizon effect. While rarer, these situations still occur today — engines see ever more deeply, but little or nothing beyond the limits of their vision. Humans can exploit the limitations of the machines by entering into fixed structures that involve long-term maneuvering. Both of the following games from this event illustrate the point.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, BAYONET VARIATION (E97)

GM Tim Murray (USA, 2562)
SIM Dmitrijus Chocenska (LIT, 2475)
21st ICCF Olympiad, 01.13.2020
Annotations by Tim Murray

I am an old school CC player. I began playing back in the 1990s when it was called “postal” chess and we were mailing postcards around the world. As a carryover from those days, I often exchange text messages with all my opponents while transmitting my moves.

During my pre-tournament research and preparation, I wanted to avoid drawish variations. I knew that wins would be at an extreme premium in the Olympiad because 95% of high-level international games end in a draw. With White, I therefore tailored a mixture of 1. d4, 1. e4, and 1. Nf3 openings to my specific opponents. Like all the other Olympiad competitors, I used Stockfish 11 and 12 (released September 20, 2020) during this three-year event.

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. d4 0-0 6. Be2 e5 7. 0-0 Nc6 8. d5 Ne7 9. b4 Nh5 10. Re1 f5 11. a4

In master-level CC games before 2020, 11. Ng5 was played 80+% of the time and 11. a4 only 9%. With this move I was embarking on a “road less travelled” strategy.

11. ... Nf6

Prior to this game, 11. ... Nf6 was the more popular, but today the most popular response in correspondence play is 11. ... a5 12. bxa5 Rxa5 13. exf5 Nxf5 14. Bg5 Nf6 15. Bd3 Nh6 16. Ne4 Nf7 and now either 17. Bd2 or 17. Bh4.

12. a5

There's a bit of psychology behind this move. Influenced by Stockfish 11, the main move in 2019 was 12. ... Nxe4, but White was doing well against that line. I thought “Dima” might try the game continuation, which GM Borstnik had just used to draw two games.

12. ... h6

As mentioned, 12. ... Nxe4 is a move in this position. A more recent game went

12. ... Kh8 13. h3 c6 14. Nd2 cxd5 15. exd5 Bd7 16. Bb2 Rc8 17. Nf3 Nh5 18. Qd2 Nf4 19. Bf1 Bh6 20. Qd1 Bg7 21. g3 Nh5 22. c5 e4 23. cxd6 Rxc3 24. dxe7 Qxe7 25. d6 Qd8 26. Bxc3 Bxc3 27. Rc1 Bxe1 28. Nxe1 Qf6 29. Rc7 Rd8 30. Ng2 f4 31. Nxf4 Nxf4 32. gxf4 g5 33. Bg2 gxf4 34. Bxe4 f3 35. Kh1 Qe5 36. Rc5 Qf6 37. Rh5, Black resigned. (Corkum – Levine, Absolute Corr Ch-USA, 2022)

13. Nd2 Kh7 14. Bf1 c6 15. Ra2



I also considered 15. Qb3. My general idea was to keep maneuvering and repositioning my pieces. My theory at the time was that most chess engines do not excel in very closed and highly positional games. Therefore, I wanted a very positional battle with few exchanges, hoping to reduce the tactical impact of chess engines, and also because Black will have less space. One other note as we proceed: it is well-known that Stockfish hates the King's Indian Defense for Black. So, I had to guard against being lulled into a false sense of security owing to SF's constantly rosy evaluation of White's position.

15. ... Rb8 16. h3 a6 17. Rc2 Bd7 18. Ba3 Be8 19. dxc6

The first capture. As much as I was loath to initiate any captures, I could not find anything better.

19. ... bxc6 20. Qc1 fxe4 21. Ncxe4 Nf5 22. Nxf6+ Bxf6 23. Ne4 Bh4 24. Ra2



My positional maneuvering continues. Try-

ing to find even slightly better squares, while Black remains cramped. SF12 evaluates the position as around +1.3 for White.

24. ... Qc7 25. Rd1 Be7 26. Qc3 Rf7 27. Bc1 Bd7 28. Rb2

Small incremental, positional improvements while I wait to push my position.

28. ... Rbf8 29. Ng3 Rg7 30. Bd2 Qb8 31. Qc1

Here, I listened to my own inner chess muse, and prepared the c4-c5 advance, while the engines preferred Qc3-d3.

31. ... Rff7



32. c5

This is a position where the advances in engine evaluation with the NNUE networks become stark. Both SF11 and 12 think White is better, but 11 shuffles the pieces around in its variations, while 12 likes this break immensely! At the time, however, I found 11's suggestions to be of no help, and I was also concerned that Dima might be using Leela Chess Zero, which at the time had a superior positional sense.

32. ... d5 33. Bxa6 Bf6 34. Bf1 e4 35. Rb3

At this point, I was notified that one of my other Olympiad competitors, SIM Vlad Dubko of Belarus, had passed away due to COVID. Because this is a team event, his game would be finished by SIM Shablinsky. This was the very grim reality of day-to-day life in 2021.

35. ... Be5 36. Nxf5

The engines of the day thought that 36. a6 was also strong, but today's monsters confirm that the game move was needed to press the advantage.

36. ... gxf5 37. f4 Bf6 38. b5

After another four-day computer run — not atypical for elite correspondence play — SF12 has White at +2.41. This evaluation seems stretched, but it confirmed my own chess instinct and analysis.

38. ... cxb5 39. c6! Qa7+ 40. Kh1 Be8

I expected 40. ... Bc8 41. Rxb5 d4 42. Qc4 d3 43. Rb6 Rf8 44. Rc1 Bd8 45. Qc5 Re8 46. Bc3 Rf7 47. Qc4 Qe7 with a great position for White.

41. Rxb5

Stockfish 12 now evaluates the position as +3.65, while 11 thinks White is only slightly better. Meanwhile, the just-released Stockfish 16 takes the middle road, evaluating this at about +2. The point: specific evaluations can change with updated engines in a family, so users need to leaven them with their own insights.

41. ... Rc7 42. Rb6 Bd4 43. Be3 Bxe3

We both needed to examine the very interesting queen sacrifice after 43. ... Rxc6 44. Qxc6! Bxc6 45. Bxd4 Ba4 46. Rdb1 Qxa5 47. Ra6 Qc7 48. Rxa4 Re7 49. Ra8 Kg6 50. Rbb8 and lights out.

44. Qxe3 Qxa5 45. Ra6 Qb4 46. Rxd5 Bxc6 47. Rxf5 Bb7 48. Re6

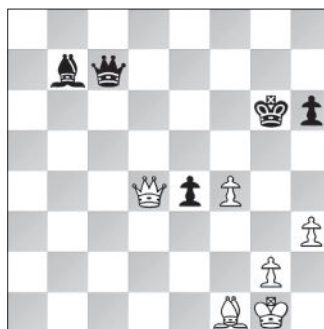
Here, despite being double vaxxed, I caught a very bad case of COVID, and was on the brink of being hospitalized. As this was a team event, I notified our Team Captain Tom Biedermann to be ready to substitute someone should I become hospitalized. I did not want to risk a time forfeit that would ruin Team USA's chances of a medal.

48. ... Qc3 49. Qe2

I also considered 49. Qb6 while I finished this game in bed, where I remained for nearly four months struggling with the effects of long COVID.

49. ... Rc6 50. Re8 Rf6 51. Rxf6

In between marathon sleep sessions, I wrote myself notes to be sure to avoid any of Dima's attempts to land in a drawn bishop and h-pawn ending.

51. ... Qxf6 52. Qe3 Re7 53. Rxe7+ Qxe7**54. Qa7 Qc7 55. Kg1 Kg6 56. Qd4, Black resigned.**

Resignation at this point might seem premature to over-the-board players, but with engines humming away, it is a fait accompli. The sum of Black's weak, isolated pawns and exposed king, White's three connected pawns, and same-colored bishops all together secure the win. My notes from 2021 reflect that one sample line I was expecting was 56. ... Qc6 57. Kf2 Qc7 58. g3 Qc2+ 59. Be2 Bc8 60. Qd5 Kf6 61. g4 Be6 62. Qe5+ Kf7 63. f5 Ba2 64. h4 Bb3 65. Qd6 with White making slow but unstoppable progress. Today's engines also agree that White has a winning position after 56. Qd4, and I think it's a reasonably good training position for students to play out.

SLAV DEFENSE (D11)

GM Jason Bokar (USA, 2526)

CCM Francisco Manuel Fe Castro (POR, 2382)

21st ICCF Olympiad, 01.13.2020

Annotations by Jason Bokar

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. g3

My opponent's history showed that he often played the Slav, and so I moved the game in a direction that suited me.

3. ... c6 4. Bg2 Bf5 5. c4 e6 6. Nc3 h6**7. Qb3 Qb6 8. c5 Qxb3 9. axb3**

So White has doubled pawns, but the rook now has a half-open file and can put pressure on the a7-pawn. One should also be thinking about using the doubled pawns to weaken the queen side more via b3-b4-b5x6 and then b2-b4 etc.

9. ... Be7 10. h3 Na6 11. g4

Claiming space on the kingside too. Black's pieces will be pushed back, and Nf3-e5 is always a possibility now!

11. ... Bh7 12. Bf4 Nd7 13. Ra4 f6 14. b4

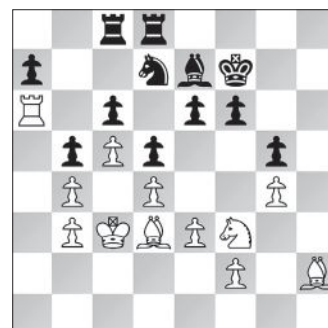
Now it's clear that 11. ... Nb4 (as in Bokar –

Novak, ICCF 2020) should have been played earlier. The pawns are moving forward per our plan.

In over-the-board play, one might be worried about the rook getting trapped, but this is where correspondence chess has its advantages. We can see that White will give up his rook for the knight and keep dominance over the dark squares.

14. ... Bc2 15. Rxa6 bxa6 16. Kd2 Bb3 17.**Ra1 Bc4 18. b3 Bb5 19. Nxb5 axb5**

The position is clarified. White controls the dark squares, but is an Exchange down with a doubled pawn to boot. Black, for his part, has many weak pawns. Given the material imbalance, engines struggle to evaluate the position correctly. For what it's worth, the latest Stockfish gives White a tiny advantage of +0.25, an assessment with which Leela basically agrees.

20. Ra6 Rc8 21. e3 Kf7 22. Bf1 g5 23. Bh2 h5 24. Bd3 hxg4 25. hxg4 Rhd8 26. Kc3

Stockfish 12 evaluates this at +2.5 or so, while the latest development versions of SF are more sanguine, thinking that White has an advantage of around +1.3. This is a hint that it may not be easy to White to break through.

It's important to have a plan in closed positions; here, I have the bishops and space, and the bishops gain in power with more space. So my plan is to push e3-e4 and target the c6-pawn.

26. ... Nf8 27. e4 Rd7 28. Ne1 Rb7 29. Kd2 Ng6 30. exd5 exd5 31. Bf5 Rcc7 32. Ng2 Bf8 33. Bd6 Ne7 34. Bxc7 Rxc7

Material balance has been restored. How to make progress? The engine claims that all moves are equivalent, and this is a sign that despite the positive evaluation, it may be tough to push an advantage.

35. Ne3 Bg7 36. Ra1 Rb7 37. Rh1 Bf8



The computer hasn't changed its evaluation in several moves, and it does seem that White is shifting around without progress. Is everything protected?

Let's try to take stock: the a7- and c6-pawns are weak and need at least the rook to protect both. The f6-pawn is also weak, and the white rook can try to target it. Which piece in White's army isn't doing much? The knight! We need to get it to h5, d6, or f5. My opponent must have thought he was safe despite the computer evaluation, and it does seem like White will struggle to make progress.

38. Nf1 Nxf5 39. gxf5 Re7 40. Ng3 Bg7 41. Kd3 Bf8 42. Ra1 Bh6 43. Ra6 Rc7

The computer's evaluation still hasn't changed, but my plan is now becoming clear. I have to get the king over to the kingside to prevent his g-pawn from moving, while not allowing his rook to penetrate into the position. Once I can get rid of his g-pawn, my rook will simply swing over to the kingside to hit f6 and c6, and all his pawns will fall. Easier said than done, of course!

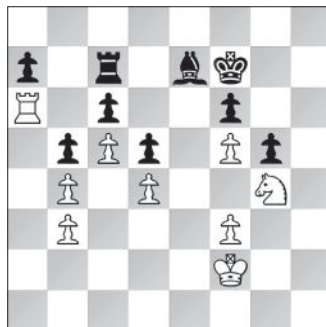
44. f3

Keeping the g-pawn fixed!

44. ... Ke7 45. Ke3 Kf7 46. Kf2 Ke7 47. Nf1 Bf8 48. Nh2 Kf7 49. Ng4

The knight is targeting the f6-pawn and now the king will move up and help exchange off the g-pawn. We just need to make sure that it can't move forward. Finally, the computer sees something changing!

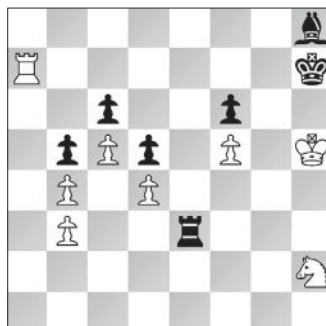
49. ... Be7



Now the computer expects to move the rook around, but it still can't go anywhere. Black can keep it back. The computer also suggests moving the knight around, but it still can't go anywhere effectively. But the one move that breaks Black's position is removing the g-pawn.

Here's where the human still has a role to play in correspondence chess: even with Stockfish 16 at high depths, the right move isn't listed in the top six engine choices!

50. f4 gxf4 51. Kf3 Bf8 52. Kxf4 Bg7 53. Kg3 Bh8 54. Kh4 Kg8 55. Kh5 Kh7 56. Ra1 Re7 57. Nh2 Re3 58. Rxa7+



The first weak pawn falls. Black can take my doubled b-pawn, but I will get to the c6-pawn first, and then walk in my c-pawn.

58. ... Bg7 59. Kh4 Re4+ 60. Ng4 Rxd4 61. Rc7 Rf4 62. Rxc6 Rxf5 63. Kg3 d4 64. Kg2 d3 65. Rd6 Rg5 66. Kf3 f5 67. Nf6+ Bxf6 68. Rxf6 Kg7 69. Rd6 Rg4 70. c6

The c-pawn springs free and the game is practically over! White can stop all of Black's pawns, while there is no stopping the c-pawn.

70. ... Rg1 71. Kf4 Rc1 72. Kxf5 d2 73. Rxd2 Rxc6, White wins.

With seven units on the board, the tablebases show this as a win for White, and it was recorded as such. Many humans would also easily net the full point here. ♠

TEAM USA



GM STEPHEN HAM

Stephen began playing correspondence chess by mail at age 15 (1969), and switched to ICCF play in the 1980s.

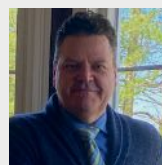
Much greater detail, plus two annotated games, can be found in *Chess Life's* August 2011 coverage of his ICCF GM title.



GM DAN FLEETWOOD

Dan began playing correspondence chess in 1975 and won the USCF Absolute Championship

in 1993. He received his GM title in 2008 as a result of his performances on board three in the Olympiad 14 Final and board one in the Olympiad 15 Final. He is now competing in the 33rd World Final.



GM TIM MURRAY

Tim is a retired Boston police captain and cold case homicide investigator. He was the 11th United States

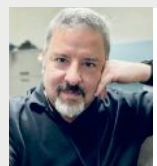
Correspondence co-champion in 1998 and has twice competed in the World Finals, finishing eighth and 12th. For 20 years he has been ranked in the top five on the American correspondence rating list.



GM JON OSTRIKER

Jon finished fourth in the ICCF World Championship 23rd Final and qualified to play in the ongoing 33rd

World Final.



GM JASON BOKAR

Jason gained his GM title in 2007 and has been active in ICCF-US administration since 2002. He currently volunteers

as the ICCF-US National Director.



GM JON EDWARDS

Jon started playing correspondence chess with the USCF in the late 1960s, and thereafter in the APCT before switch-

ing to the ICCF in 1995. Jon won the U.S. Correspondence Championship in 1997 and the ICCF World Championship in 2022, gaining his GM title in the process.

GOING



What it means to win and lose at the National Scholastics.

BY IM SANDEEP SETHURAMAN

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EVERY SPRING THE HIGH school, middle school, and elementary school nationals attract the top scholastic talents from around the nation, creating some of the biggest scholastic chess tournaments across the globe. The 2023 Elementary (K-6), Middle School (K-8), and High School (K-12) Championships saw more than 5,000 players compete for individual and team glory.

But how does it really feel to be in a room with hundreds — or even thousands — of scholastic chess players from across the United States?

While everyone who plays in a national scholastic event has a unique experience, it's safe to say that simply being in this atmosphere is awe-inspiring — especially the feeling of watching hundreds of players pour in through the doors and fill up the huge hall. Going from playing local tournaments

with at most 30 players to a national event filled with thousands of other kids across the country is truly eye-opening.

My history with the spring nationals began when I was eight years old and rated just above 400. At the time, the elementary school national was by far the largest event I had ever participated in. I've since played in these tournaments for eight years and have gained 2000 rating points!

Some say they don't want to attend a national scholastic because they don't feel like they can win, but from my experience, just being surrounded by other kids who are there because they love playing as much as you do makes the trip worthwhile. Before I went to my first nationals, I was a bit nervous because I feared that the tournament was only meant for the top kids and that I wouldn't win any games. Even though I did end up losing almost all of my games in that first event, I went back to nationals

the following year because I'd still had fun playing those games. Plus, watching the kids on the top boards playing to become champion inspired me to start working on my game by doing tactics and maybe learning an opening or two. The thought of being on the other side of that curtain and having my game broadcast live — maybe even having a grandmaster talk about it on the commentary — motivated me to work harder and keep coming back.

However, just having inspiration doesn't change your skill level overnight; you still have to put in the work and the progress will come gradually. I played in the national elementary two more times after that first event, and while I was still nowhere near that curtain, I was beginning to move from the far end of the tournament hall. As I inched closer and closer to the middle, my rating was increasing as well. I was not alone in my journey; some of the first friends I

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made in the chess world were also moving up these boards. The key is to not get discouraged because of slow improvement; instead, use the top players as inspirations rather than as comparisons.

Once I graduated to the middle school nationals, I found myself getting closer to the top boards. I was now playing against competitors who would go on to fight for medals and trophies, but there was still something separating me from those top players on the DGT boards. That “something” was confidence, and the only way to gain this was through the experience that comes naturally with playing in these scholastic events. I eventually learned that I could sometimes hold my own against these players — and maybe even win.

By the time I got to the high school nationals, I had become one of those top players and it was my turn to play on the DGT boards on the stage. It was then that I realized that playing in a national scholastic event has an enormous effect on the highest-rated players as well. Scholastic events, especially nationals, are different from norm events or even most Swiss events because they fea-

ture hundreds of vastly underrated players.

At the 2023 High School Championship, I was held to a draw in round three with the white pieces by Vincent Qin, rated just above 2000. One of the eventual co-champions, FM (and now IM) Jason Wang, survived a scare in the first round against Pranav Shankar, rated just above 1900. Maybe the biggest example of this was Toshinori Underwood’s impressive streak in the 10th grade section at the 2022 National K-12 Grade Championships. It just goes to show that in these tournaments nobody is guaranteed anything, and it’s a great chance for underrated players to show their talent.

Now we get to the most intense part of the experience at nationals: playing for that coveted first place trophy. In the last calendar year, I’ve had a couple of experiences doing this: once with success and once without. I can say without hesitation (having won the 11th grade title at the 2022 K-12s) that there’s nothing quite like winning a national event. While I don’t know what it must feel like to win a national high school championship, I do know that those games, along with your norm games, are among the ones you will never



The author at the 2022 National K-12 Championships

forget. Even when you lose, you still never forget those games. Surprisingly, most of the memories are GOOD ones, though that's not to say that there are no bad memories or embarrassing moments! You'll see quite a few in this game that I lost against 2023 co-champion FM Sharvesh Deviprasath in the final round. I have included both of our annotations with some anecdotes about the games.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, FI-ANCHETTO VARIATION (E68)

FM Sandeep Sethuraman (2466)

FM Sharvesh Deviprasath (2408)

National HS Ch (7), 04.01.2023

Annotations by Deviprasath and Sethuraman

SD: This was a funny pairing for a crucial final round. Sandeep and I are good friends and have played each other many times before, but I had yet to win against him. After prepping a line against his pet Fianchetto variations, I showed up 10 minutes late. **SS:** Sharvesh is always late, so this wasn't entirely a surprise, and I was ready for him to have something prepared. Before this we'd played three times, with two draws and a win for me, so I figured he would show up to the board with revenge in mind.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2 0-0 5. Nc3 d6 6. Nf3 Nbd7 7. 0-0 e5 8. e4 exd4 9. Nxd4 Nc5 10. h3 Re8 11. Re1 h6

SD: A relatively new line. I prepped it for

this game and this was my first time playing it. **SS:** I'd never seen this before, although I probably should have!

12. Nb3

SD: Funnily enough, I didn't bother to look at this move. I was expecting Ra1-b1 and already I'm out of prep. **SS:** This is one of the few moves in this game that I am proud of, because it got him out of his prep into a position that seemed fairly comfortable for me. But then again, maybe it contributed to my false sense of security.

12. ... Nfd7?!

SD: A step in the wrong direction, as I can never play ... b7-b6. It is going to be very hard for me to complete development. **SS:** Sharvesh was critical of this move, but it looks fine to me. The knight is ready to recapture on c5 and the path for the bishop is opened.

13. Be3 Ne6 14. f4 Nb6 15. Qe2 Bxc3?!

SD: The engine hates this move, but I felt I had to create some sort of imbalance as my position felt miserable and passive. By giving up my monster dark-squared bishop, I can play against the doubled pawns. **SS:** I was very happy when I saw this; after all, he could have done this three moves ago and been up a few tempi over the game. My overconfidence was growing here.

16. bxc3 Qf6 17. c5!

SS: A good idea to take control of the center.

17. ... Nxc5 18. e5 Qe7



19. exd6?

SD: I think Sandeep was too eager to win the pawn back, but this gives room for my pieces and allows me back in the game. **SS:** I have to agree with Sharvesh. I thought opening the h8-a1 diagonal would be beneficial for my dark-squared bishop, but this liberated a lot of his pieces. **SD:** After 19. Nxc5 dxc5 20. Qf2! Na4 21. g4 my position is absolutely miserable. White has the bishop pair, more space, and a dominating position.

19. ... cxd6 20. Nxc5 dxc5 21. Qf2

SS: This was what I had seen. I win the pawn back and I am significantly better here, but I still have to convert — which, as you will see, I accomplished the opposite of.

Below: Meyer, Dommalapati, Lu, Yoo, Wang, Guo, and Marinello at the awarding of the 2023 Scholar Chess Player awards.



NHS (K-12) WINNERS

It was a tie at the top of the National High School (K-12) Championship, with FM Jason Wang and FM Sharvesh Deviprasath finishing at 6½/7 to share first place in the Championship section. Both are 11th graders, so they may have to break the tie at the 2024 High School Championship next year in Baltimore!

The team championship went to The Dalton School from New York, New York. Congrats to team members FM Gus Huston, Max Mottola, Iris Mou, Johji Nakada, Ryan Peterson, William Safranek, and Nathaniel Shuman.

Congratulations also to the winners of the Scholar Chess Player Awards, which were handed out on Sunday. These awards, jointly funded by the U.S. Chess Trust and the National Scholastic Chess Foundation (NSCF) and administered by US Chess, went to IM Arthur Guo, Aditya Gupta, IM Maximillian Lu, FM Jason Wang, and Eugene Yoo. The inaugural Chess Ambassador Award went to Gaayathri Binoj. All winners receive a \$1,500 scholarship to the institute of higher learning of their choice!

21. ... Be6 22. Bxc5 Qc7 23. a4 Rac8 24. Bd4 Red8

SD: Finally here I breathed a sigh of relief, as my rooks are centralized and active, but I was still a little nervous due to White's bishop pair and uncontested dark square bishop.

SS: I'm definitely better, but one of Sharvesh's best (and most annoying!) qualities as a chess-player is his defensive resilience, which I didn't give enough credit to here.

25. Be5 Qe7 26. a5 Nd7 27. Bd4

SS: Already this sequence was pretty weird, and I don't know how I decided to play this move after spending only five of my almost 60 minutes.

27. ... Nc5 28. Rad1 Nb3 29. g4!?

SS: I don't regret this move. While it is what eventually cost me the game, I played it because I wanted to complicate and try to win. I can't get mad at the results now. After 29. Bxa7 Rxd1 30. Rxd1 Nxa5 **SD:** I thought this would be a draw. **SS:** Sharvesh said he thought this should be a draw, but I think I am the one pushing here and I shouldn't be in danger of losing.



2023 NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) CHAMPIONSHIP AT A GLANCE WASHINGTON, D.C. | MARCH 31 - APRIL 2, 2023

INDIVIDUAL WINNERS:

K-12 CHAMPIONSHIP: FM Jason Wang, FM Sharvesh Deviprasath, 6½/7. **K-12 U1900:** Chance Nguyen, Harper Wallace, 6/7. **K-12 U1600:** Manuel E. Alvare, Simon Kravitz, 6½/7. **K-12 U1200:** Zachary Nowel, 7/7. **K-12 U800:** Andrew Warmenhoven, 7/7. **K-12 UNRATED:** Mohit Anirudh Pra Maringanti, 7/7. **K-12 BLITZ:** Aarush Vinod, FM Nico Chasin, 9½/10. **BUGHOUSE:** Kitana Olson and Leo Jiang, 10/10.

TEAM WINNERS:

K-12 CHAMPIONSHIP: Dalton (New York, NY), 22. **K-12 U1900:** Thomas Jefferson HS (Alexandria, VA), 20. **K-12 U1600:** Gulliver Prep (Miami, FL), 20½. **K-12 U1200:** Abington HS (Abington, PA), 23. **K-12 U800:** Renaissance HS (Detroit, MI), Northwest HS (Germantown, ND), 19½. **K-12 UNRATED:** New Oxford (New Oxford, PA), 21½.

For complete results, visit www.uschess.org/results/2023/hs/.

NMS (K-8) WINNERS

Seventh-grader Eric Liu is the individual Middle School (K-8) champion after going a perfect 7/7! Eric is from Frisco, Texas, so he may not have had a "home field advantage" at the tournament three hours away in Round Rock, Texas, but he still did his home state proud!

The team champions had a much longer journey. Millburn Middle School brought a national title home to Millburn, New Jersey. Congratulations to team members Bobby Qian, Timothy Xie, David Zhang, Florina Zhu, and Ryan Zhu.

29. ... Nxd4

SD: I offered a draw here knowing Sandeep wouldn't accept it. Board one had already drawn, and we both knew whoever won was going to become a national champion. I felt like this position was objectively equal, but by Sandeep instantly rejecting it, he was forced to play for a win and thereby overpushed. **SS:** Sharvesh has offered me a draw every game we have played and I never accept, so at this point it's more of an inside joke than anything. I'm sure if I offered him a draw as Black in this position, he wouldn't accept either!

He's definitely right that my lack of judgment caused me to overpush and eventually lose.

30. cxd4 Qc7 31. d5 Bd7 32. Qxa7 Qxf4



33. Qxb7?

SD: Objectively this move might be fine, but at the board, I thought it was way too risky, and his king was a little bit exposed. **SS:** I agree with Sharvesh that this is a bad move, at least the way I played it. The

2023 NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIP AT A GLANCE

ROUND ROCK, TEXAS | APRIL 21-23, 2023

INDIVIDUAL WINNERS:

K-8 CHAMPIONSHIP: Eric Liu, 7/7. **K-8 U1700:** Ian Landon Helfing, Srihas Maddipati, 6/7. **K-8 U1400:** Anirudh Kumar, 6½/7. **K-8 U1100:** Raf Goldman, Mateux X. Hendran-to, 6½/7. **K-8 U900:** Rohan Nihal Mahesh, 7/7. **K-8 U700:** Larry Calle Labou, Eser Ren Kilic, 7/7. **K-8 UNRATED:** Chukwuemeka Daniel Agu, Saahas Sreejit, William James Kemp IV, Abhik Rudra, 6/7. **K-8 BLITZ:** FM Brewington Hardaway, 11½/12. **BUG-HOUSE:** R. Wilson and J. Colville, 9/10.

TEAM WINNERS:

K-8 CHAMPIONSHIP: Millburn MS (Millburn, NJ), 19. **K-8 U1700:** Success Academy Midtown West (New York, NY), 17. **K-8 U1400:** P.S. 180 (Brooklyn, NY), 19. **K-8 U1100:** I.S. 318 (Brooklyn, NY), 23. **K-8 U900:** I.S. 318 (Brooklyn, NY), 21½. **K-8 U700:** I.S. 318 (Brooklyn, NY), 24.

For complete results, visit www.uschess.org/results/2023/ms/.

engine doesn't budge, but I completely missed his response.

33. ... Rc2 34. Kh1

SD: I think the right way was 34. Rf1 Qe3+ (**SS:** I missed the simple 34. ... Qg3 35. d6 Bc6 36. Qxf7+. During his commentary, my coach, GM Mesgen Amanov, theorized that I didn't want to go for the draw, but I just missed it!) 35. Kh1 Rxc2 36. Kxg2 Qe2+ 37. Kh1 Qe4+ 38. Kg1 Qe3+ with a perpetual.

34. ... Qg3! 35. Rg1 Rb8!!

SS: Sharvesh only gave this one exclamation, but I'll give it two because of what he calculated. Credit where credit's due: I didn't see half of what he did.

36. Qa6 Rb3

SD: Initiating an unstoppable mating attack.

SS: I'm fine after 36. ... Rbb2? 37. Qd3.

37. Qf1 Bb5 38. Rd3 Bxd3 39. Qe1

SD: Allowing me to play a pretty mate. **SS:** I figure he deserved to be able to end the game off like this. I think I offered a draw somewhere here, mostly as a joke.

39. ... Qxh3+ 40. Bxh3 Be4+ 41. Rg2 Rxh3+ 42. Kg1 Rxc2+ 43. Kf1 Rh1, mate.

SD: With this win I was able to tie with FM Jason Wang, becoming a national high school co-champion. **SS:** I don't think I'll ever hear the end of this game, but congratulations anyway to Sharvesh and Jason for becoming co-champions.

Here are a few more games by some of the winners of this year's Elementary, Middle School, and High School Nationals, including one that didn't make it to the DGT boards.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, TAIMANOV VARIATION (B48)

Donald Johnson (2254)

FM Jason Wang (2526)

National HS Ch (5), 04.01.2023

Annotations by Jason Wang

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 Qc7 6. Be3 a6 7. Qf3 Ne5

This line has worked quite well for me recently; for instance, I used it against GM Balaji Daggupati at the Southwest Class successfully.

8. Qg3 h5 9. h4 Nf6 10. 0-0-0 d6 11. Kb1?!

Although this prophylactic move is a typical idea in such positions, White should play with more dynamic intent here.

Black was already better after 11. Bf4?! Bd7 12. f3?! b5 13. Qe1 Rc8 in Daggupati – Wang, while White's strongest option is 11. Be2! Be7 12. Bg5 with the idea of f2–f4, although Black has won both games in this line in MegaBase.

11. ... b5



12. Bxb5+!?

An interesting idea. While it is a quite common theme in such positions. I had hardly considered this move. Fortunately for me it is not entirely correct! 12. a3 is more controlled.

12. ... axb5 13. Ndx5 Qb8?

This is the start of a series of unfortunate miscalculations on my part. After the correct 13. ... Qc6 14. Bf4 Nfd7 White has very few tricks to compensate for his material deficit.

14. Bf4 Bd7?

Continuing down the wrong path. Black is slightly better after 14. ... Nfd7, and if 14. ... Ra5 15. Nxd6+ Bxd6 16. Qxg7 Rh7 17. Qxf6 Be7 18. Bxe5 Qxe5 19. Qxe5 Rxe5 White has four pawns for the piece, but with two bishops and active pieces, Black is clearly ahead.

15. Nxd6+ Bxd6 16. Rxd6!

For some reason I had only considered 16. Qxg7? Rg8 17. Qxf6 Nc4 when Black wins.

16. ... Qxd6 17. Bxe5

An excellent position to pause and evaluate. At first glance Black is up a rook and White

Top: the key Sethuraman (R) versus Deviprasath (L) battle. Below: Donald Johnson (R) takes on FM Jason Wang (L).



has no direct attack, but I quickly realized that my position was dire.

17. ... Qe7

Trying to at least include the queen in the

game. After 17. ... Qf8 18. Bd6 Qg8 my queen position is unenviable. Now if 19. Bb4 Kd8 20. Rd1 I am utterly stuck.

18. Bd6!

White continues to play excellently and uncompromisingly.

Less strong is 18. Qxg7 Rg8 19. Qxf6 Qxf6 20. Bxf6 Rg2 when, despite the three passed pawns, Black has achieved some activity.

18. ... Qd8 19. e5

Black is helpless because of his terrible pieces. There's no way to save the knight.

19. ... Bc6



Or 19. ... Ng4 20. f3.

20. exf6

This also is winning, but White missed the astonishing 20. Qxg7! Rg8 21. exf6!! Rg7 22. f3xg7 Kd7 23. Bf8!. After the game one of the other players showed us this line — we could not believe it!

Left: Eric Liu studies the board. Below: Millburn Middle School took home top team honors in Round Rock.

20. ... Qxf6 21. Be5?!

White aims to either regain the pawn or trade into an endgame where Black's pawn structure is damaged. This move is still winning for White, but 21. Qe3, bringing the queen to the queenside, is stronger. The black king will be stuck in the center of the board, and Black's extra Exchange is hardly felt.

21. ... Qg6!? 22. Qxg6 f3 23. f3 Kf7 24. Rd1?!

As we'll see, White's rook was doing important work on h1. Preferable was 24. b4 when it's hard to find tricks for Black.

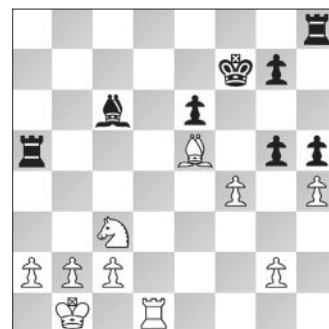
24. ... Ra5

Also interesting was 24. ... g5 25. hxg5 h4!? immediately.

25. f4?

I was hoping that White would play this seemingly logical move, but Black has a hidden idea. Instead 25. Re1 should win.

25. ... g5!



Here's the trick! The idea is to create a passed pawn to generate counterplay.

26. hxg5

Things are unclear after 26. g3!? gxh4 27. gxh4 Rxe5 28. fxe5 g5!.

26. ... Rxe5!

Not 26. ... Bxg2 27. Rd7+ Ke8 28. Rc7 Rh7 29. Bxg7 and g5-g6 next.

27. fxe5 Bxg2

White is two pawns up, but the h-pawn is difficult to contain.

28. g6+ Ke7 29. Rd2 Bc6 30. Ne2?!

Donald told me after the game that he had miscalculated here. White should immediately push the queenside pawns with 30. b4 h4 31. a4 h3 32. Rh2 Be8 33. b5 Bxg6 and the position is unclear, especially in the face of time pressure. The computer says it is equal,



NES (K-6) WINNERS

There are four sections in the Elementary, with players competing in K-6, K-5, K-3, and K-1 groups. Among them we have eight national champions!

Top seed Nathan Yan won the K-6 Championship with $6\frac{1}{2}/7$. That was the same score earned by K-1 champion Asher Kirschbaum.

The K-5 Championship saw a four-way tie at the top of the crosstable, with Anson Leong, Sharath Radhakrishnan, Krishna K. Rallabandi, and Andrew Wu all finishing with six points from seven games. And there are two co-champions in the K-3, with Lev Shanguin and Ted Wang sharing the top spot with $6\frac{1}{2}$ points.

Team champions include The Anderson School in the K-6 Championship (Aidan Erik Amin, Lucas J. Chen, Alice Chovanec, Jesse Han, Braylon Munoz), Tag Young Scholars in the K-5 (Suvan Baranwal, Leqi Han, Aadit Krishna Joshi, Leo Xiaohang Shen), and The Speyer Legacy School in both the K-3 (Ryan Hao, Raza Mikal Patel, Lev Shanguin, Lucas Yang) and the K-1 (Alexander Eli Okon, Ian Avery Singh, Winnie Tsuchida-Tomashevsky, Robert Fanjun Wei, Abigail Zhou). Fun fact — all four schools are from New York, New York!

but the term hardly has meaning here — it is intensely complicated.

30. ... h4 31. Nf4?

The losing move for White. After 31. Nd4 Be4 Black wins the pawn under more favorable conditions.

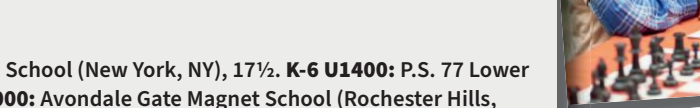
31. ... h3 32. Rh2 Rf8!

This was the move Donald missed. Now White loses his piece under unfortunate circumstances, and his queenside pawns have yet to advance!

33. Rxh3 Rxf4

Although I still had to be careful about White's queenside pawns, I converted the position reasonably cleanly.

34. b3 Rg4 35. c4 Rxc6 36. b4 Rg2 37. Rc3 Be4+ 38. Ka1 g5 39. a4 Rc2 40. Rg3 Rxc4 41. Rxc5 Rxb4 42. Rg7+ Kd8 43. Ra7 Bb7 44. Ka2 Kc8 45. Ka3 Re4 46. Ra5 Bd5 47. Rb5 Bc6 48. Rc5 Rxa4+ 49. Kb3 Ra6 50. Kc3 Kd7 51. Kd4 Ra4+ 52. Kd3 Rb4 53. Ra5 Ra4 54. Rc5 Rb4 55. Ra5 Rb5 56. Ra7+ Bb7



2023 NATIONAL ELEMENTARY CHAMPIONSHIP AT A GLANCE

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND | MAY 12-14, 2023

INDIVIDUAL WINNERS:

K-6 CHAMPIONSHIP: Nathan Yan, $6\frac{1}{2}/7$. **K-6 U1400:** Colin Hu, $6\frac{1}{2}/7$. **K-6 U1000:** Wailea Schroffner, $6\frac{1}{2}/7$. **K-6 UNRATED:** Aarin Sahota, $6\frac{1}{2}/7$. **K-5 CHAMPIONSHIP:** Sharath Radhakrishnan, Krishna K. Rallabandi, Anson Leong, Andrew Wu, $6/7$. **K-5 U1200:** Elias Chu, $7/7$. **K-5 U900:** Jonah Finkelstein, $7/7$. **K-3 CHAMPIONSHIP:** Ted Wang, Lev Shanguin, $6\frac{1}{2}/7$. **K-3 U1000:** Liam Kim, Emmett Bates-Callaghan, $6\frac{1}{2}/7$. **K-3 U700:** Grace Levri, $7/7$. **K-3 UNRATED:** Avery Bear Van Arman, Daniel Li, Dalton Sheehan-Bowen, $6/7$. **K-1 CHAMPIONSHIP:** Asher Kirschbaum, $6\frac{1}{2}/7$. **K-1 U500 AND UNRATED:** Elias Crowder, Calvin Teitler, $7/7$. **K-6 BLITZ:** Vihaan Jammalamadaka, $11/12$. **K-3 BLITZ:** Linxi Zhu, $10\frac{1}{2}/12$. **BUGHOUSE:** B. Lin and T. Yue, $8/10$.

TEAM WINNERS:

K-6 CHAMPIONSHIP: Anderson School (New York, NY), $17\frac{1}{2}$. **K-6 U1400:** P.S. 77 Lower Lab (New York, NY), 19. **K-6 U1000:** Avondale Gate Magnet School (Rochester Hills, MI), 20. **K-5 CHAMPIONSHIP:** Tag Young Scholars (New York, NY), 18. **K-5 U1200:** Success Academy Union Square (New York, NY), $19\frac{1}{2}$. **K-5 U900:** P.S. 130 The Parkside School (Brooklyn, NY), $23\frac{1}{2}$. **K-3 CHAMPIONSHIP:** The Speyer Legacy School (New York, NY), 21. **K-3 U1000:** P.S. 77 Lower Lab (New York, NY), $18\frac{1}{2}$. **K-3 U700:** P.S. 130 The Parkside School (Brooklyn, NY), $21\frac{1}{2}$. **K-1 CHAMPIONSHIP:** The Speyer Legacy School (New York, NY), 20. **K-1 U500 AND UNRATED:** Dalton (New York, NY), Idlewild Elementary School (Memphis, TN), $20\frac{1}{2}$.

For complete results, visit www.uschess.org/results/2023/elem/.

57. Kc4 Kc6 58. Kd4 Rd5+ 59. Kc4 Rxe5 60. Ra1 Re4+ 61. Kd3 Rh4 62. Ke3 Kd6 63. Ra5 e5 64. Rb5 Bc6 65. Rb4 Rxb4, White resigned.

A rollercoaster of a game indeed!

OLD INDIAN DEFENSE (A54)

Lucius Melillo (2096)

Eric Liu (2310)

National MS Ch (5), 04.22.2023

Annotations by Eric Liu

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 d6 3. Nc3 e5 4. dxe5

With this it seems like White wants to head for an endgame, but he doesn't have any advantage there. Instead 4. Nf3 is better, keeping all the pieces on the board.

4. ... dxe5 5. Qxd8+ Kxd8 6. Bg5 Be6 7. 0-0-0 Nbd7

Both sides are developing their pieces. Black's king may look misplaced, but after ... c7-c6 and ... Kd8-c7, it will be perfectly fine.

8. e3 c6 9. Nf3 Kc7 10. Be2 Bb4

Threatening to double the pawns by taking on c3.

11. Bxf6

White usually shouldn't give this bishop away, as the dark squares will be weaker, but other options didn't look that good for White either. For example, after 11. Kc2 Bxc3 12. Kxc3? Ne4+ I win material.

11. ... gxf6

The doubled pawns aren't bad because they help control the center, and they can't be easily attacked. Here 11. ... Nxf6 is a decent option too.

12. Ne4 a5

I think this is inaccurate. Probably better was 12. ... Be7, because now his idea of Nf3-h4 is met with ... f6-f5 and he loses a piece.

13. Nh4

His plan is to play g2-g4 and jump his knight to f5, which will be annoying for Black.

13. ... a4

Gaining space on the queenside for lack of better options.

14. g4 Nb6

Leaving the f6-pawn hanging, but his c4-pawn is also attacked.

15. a3

After 15. Nxf6 Be7 was my idea, pinning his knight on f6. Things are good for Black after 16. g5 h6.

Left: Sharath Radhakrishnan in his round five game at the K-5. Below: GM Ben Finegold played a lot of blitz at the Elementary.

15. ... Bf8

Worse is 15. ... Be7 16. Nf5 when the bishop is attacked with tempo.

16. Nf5 Nxc4 17. Bxc4 Bxc4 18. Nxf6



Material is equal, but Black might be slightly favored because of the bishop pair.

18. ... Be6 19. Rd2

Inaccurate, as it allowed my next move. Something normal like 19. e4 was better.

19. ... h5 20. f3

If the d2-rook was on d1, he could play 20. h3 because the h1-rook would be defended, but as it stands, this is impossible.

20. ... hxg4 21. fxg4 Bc5 22. Rc2 b6 23. e4 Rh3 24. Rg2 Rah8

Doubling rooks on the h-file to pressure the pawn.

25. g5

Losing a pawn. I think 25. Nh5, closing up the h-file, was better.

25. ... Bxf5 26. exf5 Rf3 27. g6 fxg6 28. Rxc6

Perhaps White was planning to play



PHOTOS: CAROLINE KING

28. fxc6 in his move 25 calculations, but the f6-knight is hanging.

28. ... Be3+ 29. Kb1 Rxf5 30. Re1 Bd4



I'm up a pawn, and my bishop is very strong on d4.

31. Re2 Rf1+ 32. Kc2 Rh1 33. Ng4 Rh3

Preparing to swing the rook to b3.

34. Rg7+ Kc8 35. Rg2 Rb3 36. Nf6 Rxb2+ 37. Kd3 Rb3+ 38. Ke4 Rf1

With two mate threats, the game is over.

39. Rg8+ Kb7 40. R2g7+ Ka6 41. Ra8+ Kb5 42. Ng4 Rf4, mate.

RUY LOPEZ, DELAYED EXCHANGE (C77)

Eden You (1717)

Sharath Radhakrishnan (2099)

National Elem K-5 Ch (4), 05.13.2023

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. Bxc6!?

The delayed Exchange Variation of the Ruy Lopez. White argues that despite the extra tempo spent on Bb5-a4xc6, Black's knight is misplaced on f6.

5. ... dxc6 6. d3 Bd6

The "Fishing Pole" is a popular idea, but here it doesn't work: 6. ... Bg4 7. 0-0 Bd6 8. h3 h5 and now the f6-knight impedes the queen.

7. h3 h6 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Re1 Be6 10. Be3 Nd7 11. Nbd2

(see diagram top of next column)

So far both sides have been developing normally and the game is about equal. White has better pawns, but Black has the bishop pair.

11. ... Qe7 12. c3 Rad8 13. Qe2 f5!

Black has to open up the position to make use of his bishop pair, and this is the best



way to do it. There will be an isolated e-pawn, but the d3-pawn is also weak

14. exf5 Bxf5 15. Ne4 Nf6 16. Nxf6+?

I think this is a mistake. Trading is usually a good idea when your opponent has an isolated pawn, but here the d3-pawn is even weaker, and the knight was an indirect defender of it.

16. ... Qxf6 17. d4!

Trying to trade the weak pawn before it falls.

17. ... e4!

Now Black gets strong initiative on the king-side.

18. Ne5 Bxe5 19. dxe5 Qxe5

Black is up a pawn and clearly better. What's the next step?

20. Bd4 Qe6 21. Qe3 Qg6 22. b4 b6 23. Rad1 Rd7

Both sides have been shuffling for a few moves. It seems that for now White has stabilized, but the next move changes things.

24. c4?



This weakens the bishop's d4-outpost without reason. The pawn should have stayed at home. White is almost equal after 24. Be5.

24. ... c5 25. bxc5 Rfd8!?

Interesting, but it did not require the pawn sac on the previous move.

26. c6?

I don't think this was needed, as Black was going to capture the pawn and ruin his pawn structure anyway.

After 26. Rd2 bxc5 27. Bc3 Rxd2 28. Bxd2 the extra pawn is doubled for now.

26. ... Qxc6 27. Re2

If 27. Qc3 Qg6 and with ... c7-c5 being threatened the game is all but over.

27. ... Qxc4 28. Red2 c5!

Simplifying into a winning endgame.

29. Be5??

Making things easier for Black. 29. Bc3 was necessary, but after 29. ... Rd3 30. Rxd3 exd3 White is dead lost.

29. ... Rxd2 30. Rxd2 Qc1+ 31. Kh2 Qxd2, White resigned. ♠





BACK IN SCHOOL

The world's youngest
Grandmaster passes key
tests in his personal and
professional life.

BY **GM ABHIMANYU MISHRA**

You won't find this in a dictionary, but I have learned that "life" and "challenges" are synonyms.

My chess life has been a challenge for the past year or so. I had been steadily working hard to improve, but without the rating points to show my growth. I would perform well in some tournaments, reaching a performance rating of 2700, but there were other tournaments where my performance was way below my standards. The rating points I gained were washed away — easy come, easy go.

When the flicker of doubt seeps in, I believe you must muster all your strength and work harder to ward off all the negative energy. The decisive event that catapults

you forward can come at any time, and you must be prepared for it.

My "jolt" came in the form of an invitation from the organizers of TePe Sigeman; for that, I will be forever grateful.

Sweden is a beautiful country with abundant natural beauty. Even though I was not able to explore the country due to my tight schedule, what I saw in my journey was breathtaking. I would certainly love to go back and visit it again.

This event — my first "super-tournament" — was held in Malmo, one of the largest cities in Sweden, and the organization was impeccable. The eight-player round-robin featured a good mix of veterans like GMs Boris Gelfand and Peter Svidler alongside some of the top young players in the world like GMs Gukesh D and Vincent Keymer. As the lowest seed by over 100 rating points, this was a chance to prove to myself that I could shake my doldrums and play good chess.

In my first round, I played Svidler with Black and held him to a solid draw. I thought this was a good start to the event.

In the second and third round, I was up against GM van Foreest and GM Keymer respectively where I prevailed in both cases. The games were wild and double

edged, and I was happy to prevail in the complications.

After a fourth-round draw with GM Nils Grandelius, it was exciting to play against two of the top rated Indian players, Gukesh D and GM Arjun Erigaisi. In both cases I held solid draws with Black; against Gukesh, I was even slightly better at one point, but did not know how to convert. Such experiences help us grow, and next time I encounter a similar position, I will know how to play it.

This left me tied for first place after six rounds, with a final round pairing against Gelfand ahead. This was a game that will haunt me for a long time.

The opening didn't go as planned, and after a long struggle, we entered a queen and pawn endgame. I had studied lots of these kinds of endgames, and I was confident that I would get a draw out of that position. But after six hours, and a long fight of 125 moves, I lost the game and ended in a tie for second place behind the deserving winner, Peter Svidler.

Playing against Gelfand, a former world championship challenger, was an honor, and once again, I was reminded that what I know about chess is a drop as compared to the ocean of all knowledge. Overall, I had an amazing experience playing in my first

super tournament, and will cherish it for years to come.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT, CLOSED CATALAN (E11)

GM Abhimanyu Mishra (2550)

GM Jorden van Foreest (2689)

TePe Sigeman & Co (2), Malmo,

05.05.2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. g3 Bb4+ 5. Bd2 Be7 6. Bg2 Nbd7 7. 0-0 c6 8. Qc2 Ne4



A rare move in a well-known position. In the short term, Black is going to play ... f7-f5 to fortify the knight on e5. The reason that he played it before castling is that Black will now have more attacking ideas involving ... g7-g5 and perhaps even ... h7-h5.

Modern theory goes along the lines of 8. ... 0-0 9. Rd1 b6 10. Bf4 Bb7 11. Ne5 Nh5 etc.

9. Bf4 g5 10. Be3

Perhaps inaccurate, as the bishop can be caught after Black's knights hop around.

10. ... Nd6 11. Nbd2

The engine suggests the wild 11. Na3 Nf5 12. Bd2 g4 13. Ne1 Nxd4 14. Qd3 Nf5 15. cxd5 cxd5 16. e4 with an unclear mess.

11. ... h5

The "human" move. Also possible was 11. ... Nf5!? directly as Nd2-f1 is not legal here! The engine laughs at my idea of 12. g4 Nxe3 13. fxe3 and claims that Black is better after 13. ... h5 14. h3 hxg4 15. hxg4 Bd6! 16. e4 Bf4! 17. Qc3 f5! which is, of course, not at all easy to see in advance.

12. Rfd1 Nf5 13. Nf1 g4 14. Ne5 Nxe3

Avoiding 14. ... Nxe5?! 15. dxe5 Nxe3 16. Nxe3 which is good for White after 16. ... Bd7 (16. ... Qc7? fails to 17. cxd5 exd5 18. Bxd5 Qxe5 19. Bxc6+) 17. Rd3 with the idea of Ra1-d1 and a potential sacrifice on d5.

15. Nxe3 Bd6 16. Nxd7?!

The engine shows that this trade is not advisable. Instead I should retreat to d3 as the knight covers f4: 16. Nd3 Qg5 (16. ... f5? 17. b4! Nf6 18. b5! Bd7 19. Ne5! with advantage to White) 17. b4 h4 looks scary for White, but the engine gives 18. Qc1 with b4-b5 to follow, leading to a better position.

16. ... Bxd7 17. Nf1

The e3-knight was clumsy, blocking the e-pawn.

17. ... f5



18. b4

Creating counterplay.

18. ... a6

Here 18. ... Bxb4 19. Qb3 Bd6 (worse is 19. ... a5 20. c5! when the bishop is in trouble) 20. Qxb7 doesn't look like an improvement for Black.

19. Rdb1

The alternative 19. a4 Bxb4 20. Qb3 fails to 20. ... a5, leaving Black well ahead.

19. ... Qf6 20. e3 h4 21. a4 Rc8 22. Qe2 hxg3

Natural but mistaken. Black should have made the g2-bishop as useless as possible with 22. ... h3! 23. Bh1 Kf7 and Black is better here, although it still will take great effort to convert this into a win. Now 24. b5? is met with 24. ... axb5 25. axb5 cxb5 26. cxd5 e5 27. dxe5 Qxe5 when Black is in full control.

23. hxg3 dxc4



On first glance the position after 23. ... Kf7 24. b5 axb5 25. axb5 cxb5 26. cxd5 e5 27. dxe5 Qxe5 is similar to the one after 22. ... h3!. The difference is that here White is fine because the g2-square is under control, and the f1-knight is securely guarded by the bishop on g2. For example, 28. Ra7 Rc7 29. Rxb5 Bxb5 30. Qxb5 Rb8 31. Nd2 Rc1+ and White has Bg2-f1. With ... h4-h3 and Bg2-h1 included, the knight would have to retreat.

24. e4!?

Not happy with the game thus far, I decided to change direction. 24. Qxc4 e5 25. dxe5 Bxe5 26. Ra3 also looked quite interesting.

24. ... Be7 25. Ne3 b5?

A mistake. Now my initiative becomes too strong. The engine recommends 25. ... c3!? with a wild game ahead.

26. axb5 axb5 27. exf5 exf5 28. Ra7 Rd8

Dodging 28. ... Qxd4? 29. Nxf5!.

29. d5 c5



30. d6!

A good move, clearing the d5-square for the knight.

30. ... Qxd6 31. Nd5 Rh6

After 31. ... cxb4 32. Ra6 Qc5 33. Re1 it is time to resign.

32. Rd1

Threatening a nasty check on c7.

32. ... Re6

This removes the pin but loses the rook. After 32. ... Kf8 33. Nf4! the black queen has nowhere to go.

33. Qc2 Qe5 34. Nc7+ Kf8 35. Nxe6+ Qxe6 36. Qc3

Here 36. Qd2? fails to 36. ... cxb4 37. Rxd7 Rxd7 38. Qxd7 Qxd7 39. Rxd7 b3 and the black pawns are a match for the rook!

36. ... Bf6 37. Qd2 Bd4

White wins quickly after 37. ... cxb4 38. Qh6+ Ke7 39. Qh7+ Kf8 40. Bd5.

38. bxc5 Be8 39. Qg5 Rd7

Worse is 39. ... Bxf2+ 40. Kxf2 Rxd1 41. Qg7 mate.

40. Rxd7 Qxd7 41. Re1 Bf7 42. Qh6+ Bg7

43. Qf4, Black resigned.

The c-pawn and the constant mating threats convinced Jorden that it was time to throw in the towel.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D30)

GM Vincent Keymer (2700)

GM Abhimanyu Mishra (2550)

TePe Sigeman & Co (3), Malmo, 05.06.2023

1. c4 c6 2. Nf3 d5 3. e3 Nf6 4. d4 e6 5.

Nbd2 Be7 6. b3 0-0 7. Bb2 Nbd7 8. Bd3 b6 9. e4

While this central thrust is common in this line, it is a novelty in the current position.

9. ... dxe4 10. Nxe4 Bb7 11. Qe2 c5



The typical reaction to e3-e4. Black frees his position and opens the diagonal for the b7-bishop, but at the cost of also opening lines for the b2-bishop.

12. 0-0-0!

Ambitious, showing that Keymer is ready for a double-edged game. White's plan is to attack on the kingside, while I prepare queenside operations.

12. ... Qc7

Vacating the d-file.

13. Kb1 Nxe4 14. Bxe4 Nf6?

Conceptually and tactically incorrect. I should have traded the bishop at first sight. During the game I analyzed 14. ... Bxe4+ 15. Qxe4 Nf6 and 16. Qe5 was what I was slightly worried about, but the engine says that 16.

... Qb7 17. d5 exd5 18. cxd5 Rfe8 is fine for Black, with ideas of ... Ra8-d8 and ... Be7-f8.

15. Bc2?

What follows is better for White, but here an opportunity was missed: 15. Bxb7! Qxb7 16. d5 exd5 17. Rhe1! (I missed this intermediate move; 17. cxd5 Nxd5 18. Rxd5 Qxd5 19. Qxe7 Rae8 is fine for Black with ... Re8-e2 coming next) 17. ... Bd8 18. cxd5 and Black's position is in shambles due to lack of coordination.

15. ... cxd4 16. Nxd4 Rad8 17. f3 a6 18. g4

The bishops on c2 and b2 exert enormous pressure on Black's kingside.

18. ... Bc5 19. Rd3



The alternative 19. g5 Nh5 is okay for Black.

19. ... b5

Interesting, but not the best. Correct is 19. ... Nxg4! 20. Nxe6 Rde8! (this is the move I missed at the board!), although it turns out that after 20. ... fxe6 21. Rxd8 Qxd8! (and not 21. ... Rxd8? 22. Qxe6+ Qf7 23. Bxh7+! when White wins) 22. Qxe6+ Rf7 Black has enough counterplay to hang on.

20. Rhd1 bxc4 21. bxc4 Bxd4?!

The counter-intuitive 21. ... h6! is best here. Usually you should not push pawns in front of your king, but in this case, after 22. h4 Bxd4 23. Rxd4 Rxd4 24. Rxd4 Black has the nice 24. ... Qg3! with equality.

22. Rxd4 Rxd4 23. Rxd4

Now White is in the driver's seat once more, so I made the decision to play for complications.

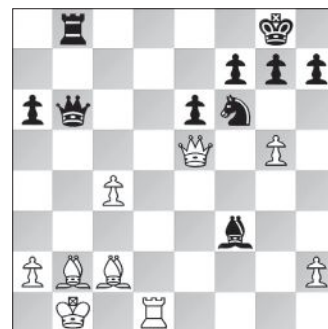
23. ... Rb8!?

If Black does nothing, he will lose. As an example: 23. ... e5 24. Rd1 Re8 25. g5 Nh5 26. Qd3 g6 27. Qd6 Qxd6 28. Rxd6 and White is winning.

24. g5 Qb6 25. Qe5!

Now 25. gxf6 fails to 25. ... Qxd4 26. Bxd4? Bxf3+.

25. ... Bxf3 26. Rd6 Qg1+ 27. Rd1 Qb6



Here 27. ... Qa7 is the engine suggestion, although it still claims White is winning after 28. gxf6 Bxd1 29. Bxd1 g6 30. a3! and hiding the king on a2.

28. Rd3?

After 28. gxf6 Bxd1 29. Bxd1 Rd8 White is for choice, but I thought that things could get messy with my idea of ... Qb6-g1+.

The cleanest winning move was 28. Rf1!. After 28. ... Be2 (28. ... Bg2 was my idea during the game, but I missed 29. Rf2! when White wins a piece) 29. Re1 Bxc4 30. gxf6 g6 White has all the chances, but his weak king means that the game isn't completely over.

28. ... Qg1+

The ending after 28. ... Be4 29. c5 Qxb2+ 30. Qxb2 Rxb2+ 31. Kxb2 Bxd3 32. Bxd3 seemed lost for Black.

29. Bd1?

Repeating the position with 29. Rd1! lets White return to the winning path.

29. ... Rc8!

Now Black is back in the game!

30. Qc7?

The last mistake; after this, I wrapped things up smoothly. The engine claims that 30. Kc1! Bxd1 31. Rxd1 Qg4 32. gxf6 Qxc4+ 33. Kd2 is equal, but it takes nerves of steel to play this with 30 seconds on the clock.

30. ... Re8 31. Rd2 Bxd1 32. gxf6 Bh5+

33. Bc1 Bg6+ 34. Kb2 gxf6 35. h4 Kg7 36.

c5 Qg4 37. Qb7 Qf4 38. Ka3 Qc4 39. Bb2

Qxc5+ 40. Qb4 Rc8 41. Rd6 a5 42. Qxc5

Rxc5 43. Bd4 Rc4 44. Kb3 Bd3 45. h5 a4+

46. Ka3 Be2 47. h6+ Kxh6 48. Bxf6 Kg6 49.

Be7 h5 50. Rd8 Kg7 51. Bf8+ Kh7 52. Be7

h4 53. Bf6 Kg6 54. Be7 h3 55. Rh8 Bg4,

White resigned.

Our journey continued on from Malmo, with travel to Sharjah and Dubai to play in the

Sharjah Masters and Dubai Open respectively. Naturally I was hungry to continue playing after such a solid result, but there was another reason for this itinerary — I had to take my exams for the British Council IGCSE at the Dubai World Trade Center. It was a case, as they say, of killing two birds with one stone.

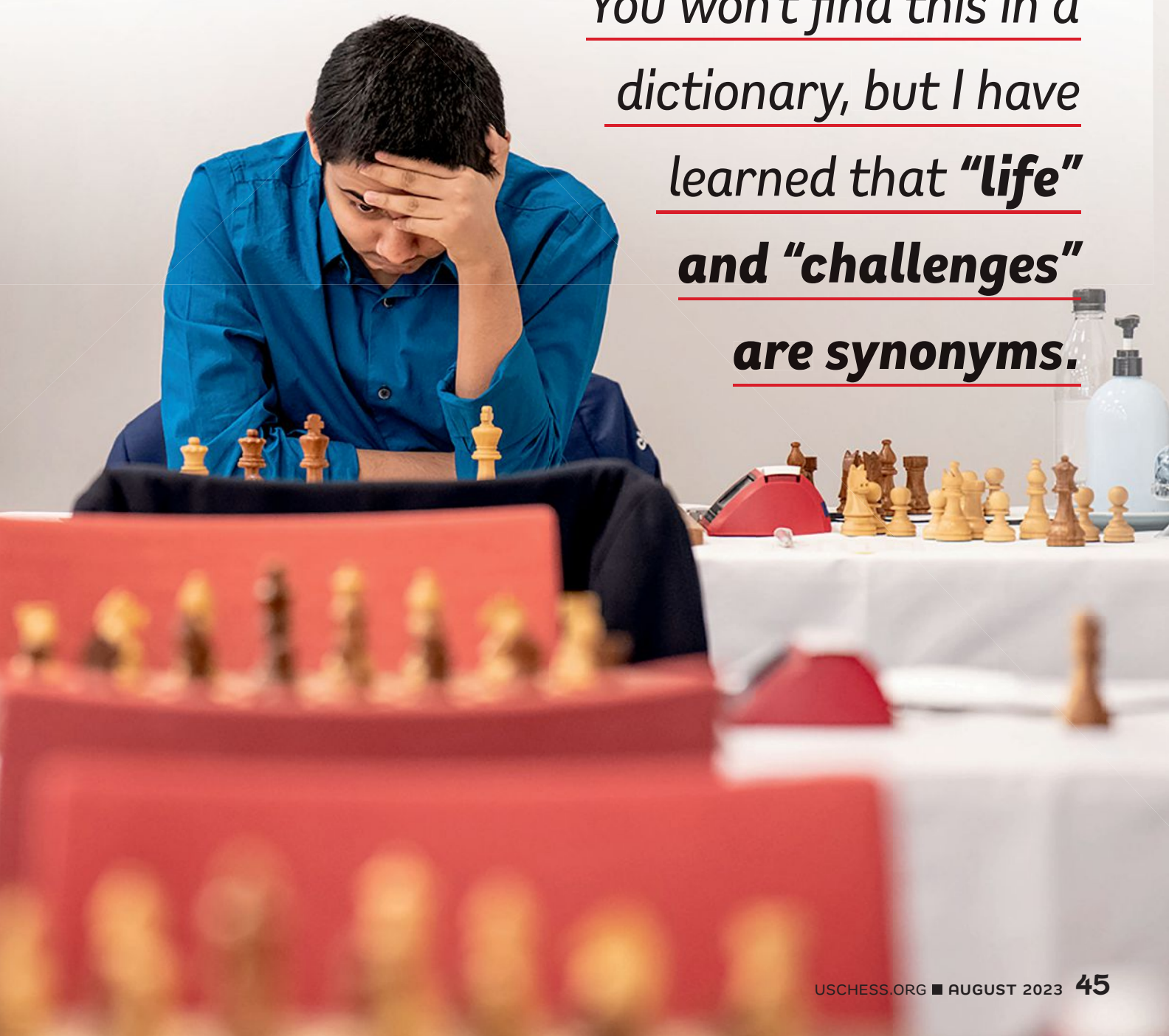
Some might wonder about the wisdom of playing so much high-level chess while also working on my schooling. But I was determined, drawing upon my experiences of back-to-back-to-back events from my

stint in Europe when I was chasing my GM norms. If I could do it then, I told myself, I could do it now.

The Sharjah Masters started on a bad note when I lost my first two games, partially due to time pressure (there was no second time control) and partially due to the rigors of my studies, which culminated in a third-round, zero-point bye to sit for my examination. This left me at 0/3, last in an all-GM field. But with my exam behind me, I decided that I had to step up and take control of the situation. Instead of being

at 0/3, I saw myself as beginning a new, six-round event, and I was determined to show my mettle.

With two wins and four draws, I played well, gaining six rating points in the process. I consider it a satisfactory result. I was able to come back after initial struggles, stop the bleeding of rating points, and as for my exam, it was a success! Congratulations to the winner, Arjun Erigaisi, and also to the three Americans — GMs Hans Niemann, Grigoriy Oparin, and Sam Sevian — who finished tied for second place.



*You won't find this in a
dictionary, but I have
learned that **"life"**
and **"challenges"**
are synonyms.*

MODERN DEFENSE (B06)

GM Abhimanyu Mishra (2550)

GM Vitaliy Bernadskiy (2596)

Sharjah Masters (7), Sharjah,

05.23.2023

1. d4 g6 2. e4 Bg7 3. Nc3 a6 4. Be3 b5 5. Qd2

The point of this setup is to play 0-0-0, h2-h4-h5, Be3-h6 in most cases, trade the g7-bishop, and try to attack Black immediately.

5. ... d6 6. 0-0-0 Nd7 7. h4

Proceeding with my plan.

7. ... h5 8. Nh3 Nb6



9. Bd3

The point of this move is that ... b5-b4 will now be met with Nc3-e2 and I don't have to worry about ... Nb6-c4 anymore.

Another path was 9. Ng5 b4!? and now (a) 10. Ne2 10. ... Nc4 11. Qxb4 Nxe3 12. fxe3 Nh6 doesn't look so clear, as Black sticks the knight on g4 and has the two bishops. (b) 10. Nb1 Nf6!? is another interesting pawn sacrifice. After 11. Qxb4 Ng4 12. Qe1 0-0

the position looks like a clear pawn up for White, but it's hard to start a kingside attack with the knight on g4. Now 13. f3? fails to 13. ... Nxe3 14. Qxe3 e5! when Black opens the long diagonal as 15. d5? is met with 15. ... Bh6! and ... f7-f6, winning a piece.

9. ... Nf6 10. f3

Preventing the knight from landing on g4.

10. ... Bxh3

And Black prevents the knight from landing on g5!

11. Rxh3 Nfd7

Prophylaxis against e4-e5, and preparing ... c7-c5

12. Ne2

With the idea of solidifying the center next with c2-c3.

An alternative way to play this position was 12. f4!?, trying to limit the g7-bishop. Play continues 12. ... c5 13. dxc5 Nxc5 (not 13. ... dxc5? 14. e5 with a great position) 14. Be2 0-0 15. f5 with a very complicated game ahead.

12. ... c5 13. c3 Rb8

Potentially preparing for ... b5-b4 ideas.

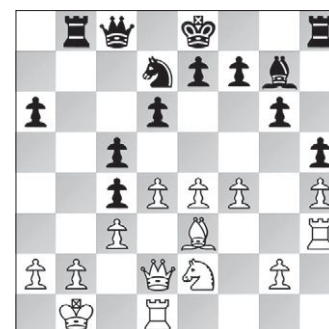
14. Kb1 Qc8

Here 14. ... Nc4 15. Bxc4 bxc4 16. dxc5 would ruin Black's structure.

15. f4

Gaining space on the kingside at the cost of the light squares and flexibility.

15. ... Nc4 16. Bxc4 bxc4



17. e5?!

Premature. Instead 17. dxc5 Nxc5 18. Bxc5 Qxc5 19. Rf3 with the idea of f4-f5 was to be preferred.

17. ... Nb6?

This is inaccurate. Black had to strike while the iron was hot with 17. ... cxd4!.

Compare this with the capture on the next move; here, White does not have the option to capture on d4 with the bishop as he would lose a pawn. So after 18. cxd4 Nb6 19. Nc3 d5 Black can play ... e7-e6 and start attacking the white king along the b-file. It's not simple to find counterplay for White. The best the engine can do is the ridiculous looking 20. f5!? Qxf5+ 21. Ka1 to try to generate any activity.

18. Qc2

Naturally 18. exd6? Na4 is simply winning for Black as there is no defense to ... Rb8xb2.

18. ... 0-0

Now 18. ... cxd4 is much weaker. After 19. Bxd4 dxe5 20. Bxe5 Bxe5 21. fxe5 0-0 White plays 22. Ka1, calmly stepping off the b-file. This is still quite complicated, but I believe White should be a bit better. For example, the natural 22. ... Rd8? is already a huge mistake after 23. Nd4 Qg4 24. Rf1 when Rh3-f3, Nd4-c6, and even e5-e6 are threats.

19. dxc5

Taking my chance to ruin his structure.

19. ... dxc5 20. Qe4

The idea behind this move was to prevent the black queen from reaching c6, but there is a hidden resource lurking that eluded both players.

In this position the computer recommends 20. Bc1! to defend the b2-pawn. This move would not be simple to decide upon at the board, but the idea is 20. ... Qc6 21. g4! hxg4 22. Rh2 with h4-h5 and a huge attack coming.

20. ... f5

Good idea, but played too early. The right



way is 20. ... Re8! 21. Ka1 and only now 21. ... f5! when Black is taking over. If 22. exf6?! e.p. exf6 23. Qxg6? Qg4! 24. Qxg4 hxg4 25. Rg3 f5 and the rook is trapped on g3!

21. exf6 e.p. Rxf6 22. Rg3

Here 22. Bc1!? is also interesting, with the idea to slide the rook to e3.

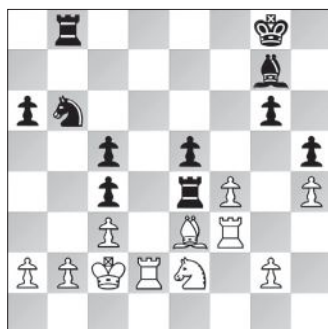
22. ... Qe6 23. Qxe6+?!

The engine points out that 23. Qc2 Qf5 24. Qxf5 is a better way of doing things as after 24. ... Rxf5 25. Kc2 the rook is much worse placed on f5 than it would be on e6.

23. ... Rxe6 24. Kc2 Re4?!

Too direct. Better was a simple move like 24. ... Kf7! 25. Rf3 Bf6 26. g3 Na4 27. b3 Nb6 with an interesting endgame ahead.

25. Rf3 e5 26. Rd2



Now I'm threatening Be3xc5, and it's not easy to make a move for Black.

The alternative 26. Ng3 lets Black off the hook after 26. ... Rxe3 27. Rxe3 exf4 28. Re6 fxg3 with equality.

26. ... Na4?

A blunder. Instead 26. ... exf4 27. Bxf4 Rbe8 28. Ng3 was to be preferred, but Black still faces issues due to his bad pawn structure.

27. b3 cxb3+ 28. axb3 exf4

Perhaps 28. ... Nb6 29. Kd3 is what he missed in his calculations.

29. Bxf4

Winning material by force.

29. ... Rbe8 30. Ng3 Rxf4 31. Rxf4 Nxc3

32. Rd7!

Cleanest. I activate my rooks and bring home the full point.

32. ... Nb5 33. Re4 Rb8 34. Ne2, Black resigned.

Next we headed to Dubai, where the Dubai

Open was held at the Dubai Chess and Culture Club. The club itself features some captivating architecture. The building is shaped in the form of a rook, and has a checkered floor pattern. It also houses a fine library and cafeteria, making it a first-class place to play.

I played relatively well in Dubai, barring early one game that I lost. With draws against strong 2660+ players like GMs Saleh Salem and M.Amin Tabatabaei, and an interesting win against 2618-rated GM Aleksandar Indjic, I was generally happy with my performance, and I gained 17 rating points. At six points from nine games, I finished in a huge tie for second place. Congratulations to GMs Chithambaram Vr. Aravindh, Javokhir Sindarov, Arjun Erigaisi, and Maxim Matlakov, who shared top honors at 6½/9.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, ROSSOLIMO VARIATION (B30)

GM Abhimanyu Mishra (2550)

GM Masoud Mosadeghpour (2479)

23rd Dubai Open | A (7), Dubai, 06.02.2023

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 e6 4. 0-0 Nge7 5. d4 cxd4 6. Nxd4 Qb6 7. Nxc6 dxc6 8. Bc4 Ng6 9. Kh1 e5

I don't want to delve too deeply into the opening theory, but this is an interesting move aimed at preventing f2-f4.

10. Qf3 Qc7 11. Rd1

Threatening 12. Bxf7 Qxf7 13. Rd8+.

11. ... Nf4 12. Bxf4 exf4



13. e5!

This pawn sacrifice is critical, as it opens lines against the king.

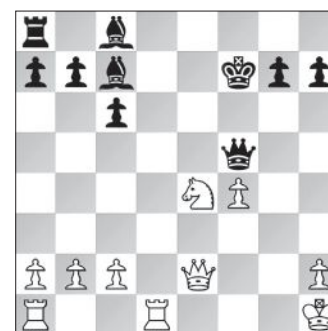
13. ... Qxe5 14. Qb3 Bc5?

Unfortunately, this fails tactically. Instead 14. ... Be7 15. Bxf7+ Kf8 was the right way to go, although I still believe White's play is easier after 16. Nc3 Qf6 17. Bh5.





25. f4 Qf5



26. Ng5+

Here I had calculated till the ending and decided it was winning. But I had missed something much simpler! Just 26. Rd8! and Black has to resign.

26. ... Kf8 27. Re1

The engine claims that 27. Rd2 is easier, but by this point, it does not matter.

27. ... Qd5+ 28. Qg2 Qxg2+ 29. Kxg2 h6
30. Ne6+ Bxe6 31. Rxe6 Bxf4 32. Rd1 Re8
33. Rxe8+ Kxe8 34. h3

The ending is a clear win.

34. ... Ke7 35. Kf3 Bc7 36. Ke4 Ke6 37. Rd3
g5 38. Rb3 b6 39. Rc3 c5 40. Ra3 a5 41.
Rf3 Bf4 42. c4 Bd6 43. a4 Be7 44. Rf5 Bf6
45. Rd5 h5 46. b3 Be7 47. Re5+ Kf6 48.
Kd5 Bd8 49. Re8 Bc7 50. Rf8+ Kg6 51. Kc6
Be5 52. Kxb6 g4 53. hxc4 hxc4 54. Kxa5
g3 55. Rf1 Bd4 56. Kb6, Black resigned.

With the final games of my journey out of the way, the work was not yet done as I still had two more exams to sit for. But soon enough I was boarding the plane to return home, and my travels were coming to an end.

Looking out over the ocean, I could not help but feel some pride and accomplishment, as I had performed to the best of my capabilities. The player who left New Jersey rated 2550 FIDE was coming back with a 2591 rating, and a number of important exams out of the way as well. Now I'm looking to build on what I learned in those games, and to my next tournaments as well. ♠



Top: Mishra does battle with Gelfand and stares down the photographer. Above: In conversation with Jorden van Foreest.

15. Bxf7+ Ke7 16. Nc3

This does win, but things get complicated against best defense.

A stronger version of the same idea is 16. Nd2! as after 16. ... Bxf2 17. Bg8 as 17. ... Kf6 is now impossible due to (while 17. ... Qf5 fails to 18. Ne4! Be3 19. Nd6 and Black is busted.) 18. Qf7+ Kg5 19. Nf3+ and mates.

16. ... Bxf2 17. Bg8 Rxc8

An interesting practical try. I overlooked the more resilient 17. ... Kf6! when 18. Rf1! is the only winning move. The line goes 18. ... Bg4 19. Qf7+ Kg5 20. Ne4+ Qxe4 21. Qxg7+ Qg6 22. Qxh8 when White is up an Exchange.

18. Qxg8 f3



19. Qd8+?

Missing a chance to end the game immediately.

While 19. gxf3?? Bg4 is disastrous, the winning 19. g4!! had completely escaped my attention. Black cannot develop any counterplay and is hopelessly lost: 19. ... Bxg4 (or 19. ... Bc5 20. Re1 Be3 21. Nd1 and wins) 20. Qxa8 Bh3 21. Qxb7+ and White wins.

19. ... Kf7 20. gxf3 Qf4 21. Qd3 Bb6 22. Qe4!

Forcing the queen back to f6, after which Nc3-e4 comes with tempo.

22. ... Qf6

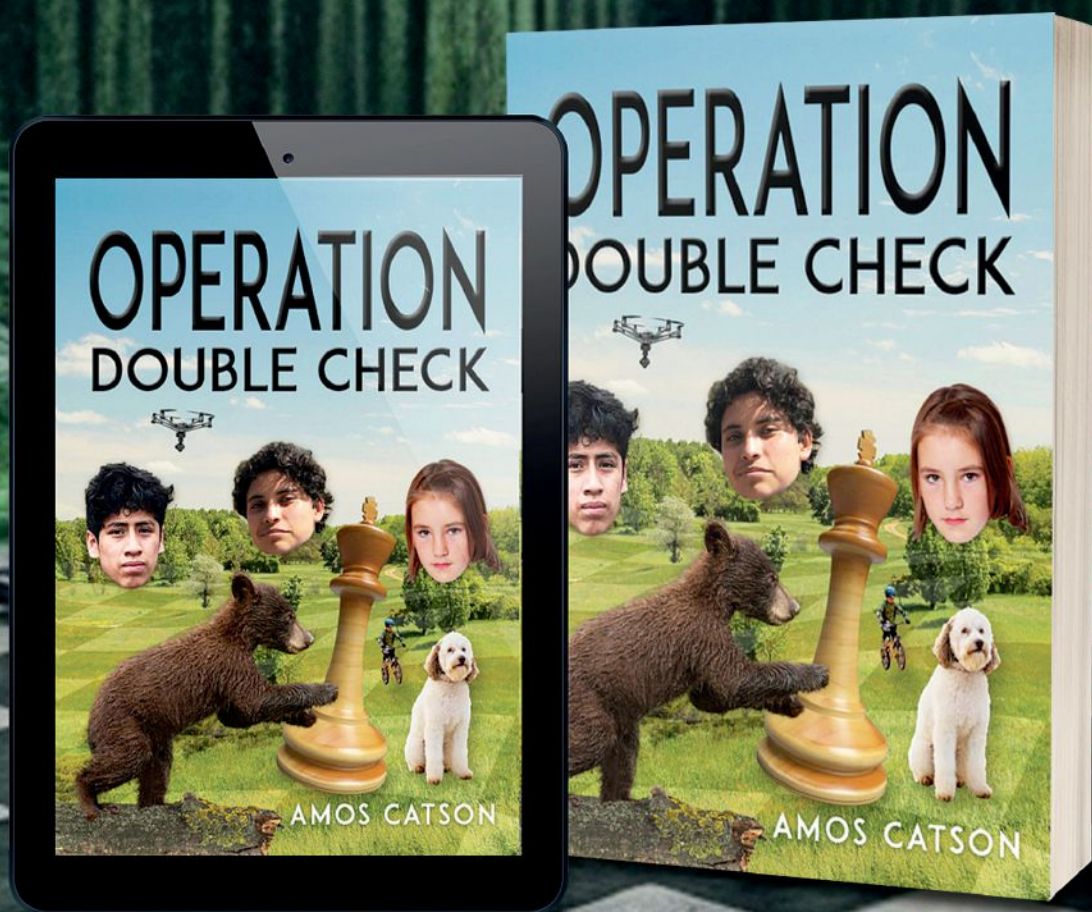
If 22. ... Qh6 23. Qe5! followed by Nc3-e4 is killing.

23. Qe2! Bc7 24. Ne4 Qe5

The alternative 24. ... Qh6 25. Rg1 Bf5 26. Ng5+ Kf8 27. Rae1 should also be technically winning as Black lacks time to coordinate his pieces.

OPERATION DOUBLE CHECK

A novel of chess, intrigue, anthrax, poker, and politics, pitting Kevin, Luke, and Natalie against three Russian diplomats, each named after a renowned Russian grandmaster, in a contest to save the Cherokee National Forest.



SCAN
ME!



AVAILABLE ON **amazon.com**

Individual Dominance

How Botvinnik put the whammy on Paul Keres.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**



SOME GREAT PLAYERS HAVE trouble with certain other great players. Over a 10-year period (1938-48), featuring twelve games, Paul Keres had an abysmal score against Mikhail Botvinnik, losing six and drawing six. He finally won their 13th encounter, but never quite caught up. Here is Botvinnik's (Black's) initial 1941 victory over Keres during the Absolute Championship of the Soviet Union. There's nothing spectacular about it, just a feeling of an unstoppable force juggernauting to victory. It is hard to find another such total bashing of an elite player. The contest began, innocently enough, as a classical Nimzo-Indian Defense.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, CLASSICAL VARIATION (E34)

Paul Keres
Mikhail Botvinnik
 USSR Absolute Championship (3),
 Leningrad/Moscow, 1941

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Qc2



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.**

4. Par Score 5 d5
 This advance stops 5. e4. You may accept *full credit* for 4. ... 0-0, 4. ... c5, or 4. ... Nc6.

5. cxd5
 White plays to fix the center. Both 5. Nf3 and 5. Bg5 were also worthy.**

5. Par Score 5 exd5
 Black takes back, clearing the c8-h3 diagonal, with an equal position. Taking with the queen is fine as well, and earns *full credit*.

6. Bg5
 After this move, White can play e2-e3, without locking the dark-squared bishop inside the pawn chain. Moreover, queenside castling is now possible.**

6. Par Score 5 h6
 Botvinnik puts the question to the bishop. Are you going to take the f6-knight or maintain the pin by retreating to h4? Accept *full credit* for 6. ... 0-0 or 6. ... Nc6.

7. Bh4
 The pin is maintained.**

7. Par Score 5 c5
 Botvinnik chooses a sharp, double-edged variation, playing for attack. You may accept *full credit* for 7. ... g5, 7. ... 0-0, or 7. ... Nc6.

8. 0-0-0
 In turn, Keres plays too generally. With the d5-pawn being potentially weak, and Black uncastled, 8. dxc5 was a more natural continuation.**

8. Par Score 6 Bxc3
 On the surface, a tough move to play, surrendering a bishop for a knight. But Botvinnik has a whole scheme of attack worked out. Accept *full credit* for 8. ... g5.

9. Qxc3
 Keres opts to keep his connected queenside pawns together, taking back with the queen. Nonetheless, White's queen and king are soon assailable.**

9. Par Score 5 g5
 The plan continues, beginning with breaking the pin. Less good would have been 9. ... cxd4 10. Bxf6.

10. Bg3**
10. Par Score 5 cxd4
 The c-file is opened. You may accept *full credit* for 10. ... Ne4, but the text is more consistent, keeping the d5-pawn secure for now.

11. Qxd4
 The queen comes off the vulnerable c-file, but no better was 11. Rxd4, which would still wind up losing time.**

11. Par Score 5 Nc6
 Black develops at White's expense. The White queen must move again.

12. Qa4
 This saves the queen and pins the knight. Given the time, White will safeguard his king and try to proceed against the isolated d-pawn.**

12. Par Score 6 Bf5
 Keres was hoping to play 13. Kb1, but this strong developing move stops it.

13. e3
 White has to get more pieces out. His lack of kingside development is already entailing problems.**

13. Par Score 5 Rc8
 Another strong placement, with a potential to discover against the white king. Fortunately for Keres, the c6-knight remains pinned — for now.

ABCS OF CHESS

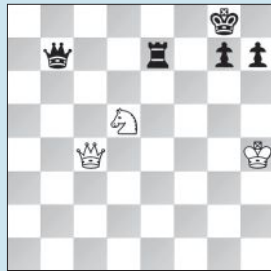
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

AUGUST EXERCISE:

Let's say you're thinking of reading an instructional chess book and can't decide whether it might work for you. Consider the following. Spend 10 minutes or so reading the descriptive comments, without reviewing the analysis. If writers are any good, they will likely spell out their thinking in nice paragraphs and explanatory sections. The analysis will just confirm their ideas. But if the verbal parts are not clear, the book might not be as helpful as you'd like.

PROBLEM 1

Mating net



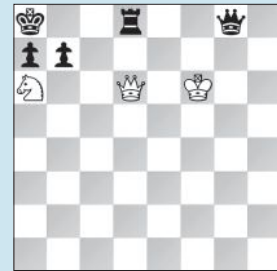
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



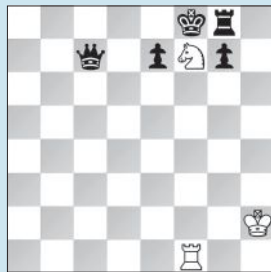
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



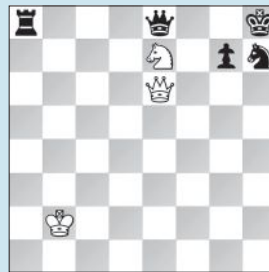
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



14. Bd3

Keres develops the king-bishop and temporarily closes the b1-h7 diagonal. He aims to play 14. Kb1, or as soon as he can.**

14. Par Score 5 Qd7

Another relevant developing move. It defends the f5-bishop and enables the c6-knight to move with discovery.

15. Kb1

Finally, Keres extricates his king from the c-file. But this doesn't save the day.**

15. Par Score 5 Bxd3+

Everything with tempo. Another forced response for White.

16. Rxd3**

16. Par Score 6 Qf5

A very troubling pin for White. Black's pieces are really menacing, and all this without having yet castled! The position is already winning for Black.

17. e4

Keres abandons a pawn, just to survive. Award yourself **1 bonus point** if you planned to answer either 17. Qa3 or 17. Qb3 by 17. ... Nb4.**

17. Par Score 5 Nxe4

The first material gain. Black is up a pawn, still with an overwhelming game.

18. Ka1

The threat was 18. ... Nxe3, unvailing an attack to the pinned d3-rook. Keres must have realized his king was yet in danger. Note he's playing with two kingside pieces remaining on the home rank.**

18. Par Score 5 0-0

Move 18 and Botvinnik finally castles! He has some structural weaknesses, but they are irrelevant. He's now ready to cash in big time.

19. Rd1

Keres saves his rook and tries to secure the home rank.**

19. Par Score 6 b5

An unexpected resource. Botvinnik's brilliant strategy has led to a tactical resolution.

20. Qxb5

This is as good as any of the other "safe" queen moves. Black's harmonious forces now bring home the point.**

20. Par Score 6 Nd4

The knight can't be taken because of the back rank mate.

21. Qd3

Keres tries to obstruct the vulnerable b1-h7 diagonal.**

21. Par Score 5 Nc2+

22. Kb1**

22. Par Score 5 Nb4

Crush!! Either White's queen goes or it's mate. Sheer mastery over a chess giant.

23. White resigned. ♠

TOTAL YOUR SCORE TO DETERMINE YOUR APPROXIMATE RATING BELOW:

Total Score	Approx. Rating
95+	2400+
81-90	2200-2399
66-80	2000-2199
51-65	1800-1999
36-50	1600-1799
21-35	1400-1599
06-20	1200-1399
0-05	under 1200

Step by Step

The Patriarch shows the way in this common rook endgame.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN



CAN'T STRESS ENOUGH how important endgame fundamentals are for amateur players. One of my favorite

technical rook endings was won many years ago by one of the all-time greats, Mikhail Botvinnik. As we break down this endgame piece by piece, we can see that Botvinnik hardly broke a sweat to win; his endgame education took him all the way through.

FRENCH DEFENSE, TAR-RASCH VARIATION (C09)

Mikhail Botvinnik
Isaak Boleslavsky
USSR Absolute Championship (11),
Leningrad/Moscow, 04.11.1941

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 c5 4. exd5 exd5 5. Bb5+ Nc6 6. Ngf3 Bd6 7. 0-0 Nge7 8. dxc5 Bxc5 9. Nb3 Bb6 10. Be3 Bxe3 11. Bxc6+ bxc6 12. fxe3 0-0 13. Qd2 Qb6 14. Qc3 Rb8 15. Rab1 Re8 16. Rfe1 Ng6 17. Nc5 Bg4 18. Nd4 Ne5 19. b4 Rbd8 20. e4 dxe4 21. Rxe4 a5 22. a3 axb4 23. axb4 f6 24. Rbe1 Kh8 25. Kh1 Bd7 26. Nxd7 Rxd7 27. Qxc6 Qd8 28. Nf3 Rc7

STEP 1: SIMPLIFY

(see diagram top of next column)

29. Nxe5!

There is no question that White is winning after the simple retreat 29. Qa4, either here or on the next move. However, there is always a chance for a mistake with a lot of pieces on the board. When you see a chance to simplify into a position you can be certain of winning, go for it.



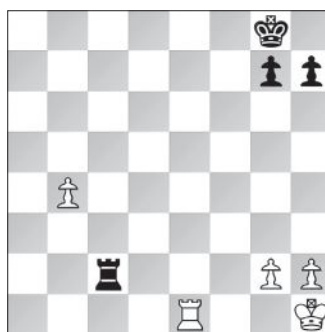
29. ... fxe5

After 29. ... Rxc6 30. Nf7+ Kg8 31. Nxd8 (not 31. Rxe8+? Qxe8 32. Rxe8+ Kxf7 33. Re2 Rc4 with equality) 31. ... Rxd8 32. c4 White keeps two queenside passers.

30. Qxe8+! Qxe8 31. Rxe5 Qg8!

Boleslavsky stays in the game, forcing White to part with the c-pawn.

32. Re8 Rxc2 33. Rxc8+ Kxc8



STEP 2: ROOK BEHIND THE PAWN

34. Rb1!

This is the key to White's combination; it is the superior rook placement that clinches White's victory. As the pawn advances — and it will get at least two squares forward — the Black rook is diminished while the White rook gains mobility. Without this move the extra pawn might not be enough to win.

The following line show the foolishness of trying to force a queen by trickery: 34. h3 Rb2 35. Re8+ Kf7 36. Rb8 h5 37. b5 Kg6 (notice how Black creates counterplay on the kingside by advancing his king there, knowing the rook will take care of the passed pawn) 38. b6 Rb1+ 39. Kh2 Rb3 40. Kg1 Rb2 41. b7 Kg5 and Black, not duped into exposing his king to a killing check, is in no danger.

34. ... Kf7 35. b5 Ke6

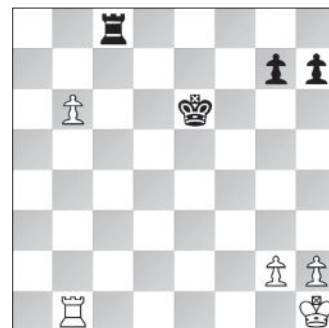
Sometimes the defense is improved by blocking the pawn farther back. After 35. ... Rc7 36. b6 Rb7 37. Kg1 Ke6 38. Kf2 Black has a choice of how to play his king:

Going after the pawn is too slow: 38. ... Kd5 39. Kg3 Kc6 40. Kg4 Rxb6 (40. ... Rf7 41. b7! forces a winning pawn ending) 41. Rxb6+ Kxb6 42. Kf5 Kc7 43. Ke6 and the king feasts on Black's pawns.

Waiting doesn't help either: 38. ... Kd5 39. Kg3 Ke6 40. Kf4 Kf6 41. Ke4 (White can also play directly on the kingside like the game) 41. ... Ke6 42. Kd4 Kd6 43. Kc4 Kc6 44. h4 Kd7 (eventually the king will have to give ground) 45. Kb5 Kc8 46. Ka6 Rf7 47. Re1 and the b-pawn decides the game.

Finally, 38. ... Kd7 39. Kg3 Kc8 is similar to the game, though Black's rook is better placed.

36. b6 Rc8



STEP 3: MAKE SURE THE PAWN ENDING WILL WIN

37. h3!

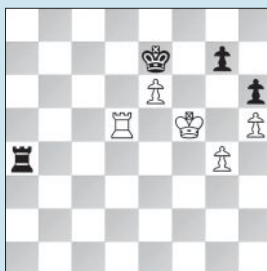
Passed pawns must be pushed, but not without proper consideration. White has to

ENDGAME HOMEWORK

IT WOULDN'T BE ENDGAME School without a bit of homework. Test your mettle on these "all the way" liquidations.

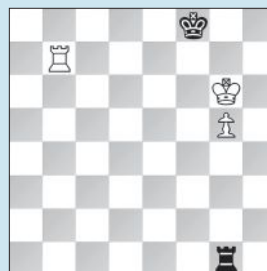
Try your hand at these two problems, which are based on analysis from the game in this month's column. Answers appear on page 63.

PROBLEM 1 How does White break through?



WHITE TO MOVE

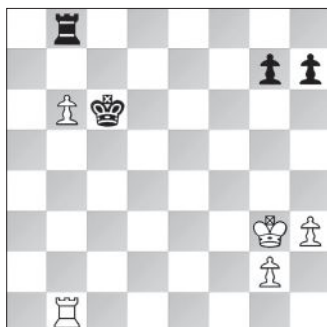
PROBLEM 2 Time to build a bridge.



WHITE TO MOVE

make sure that his b-pawn will do its job of providing entry for his king. After the hasty 37. b7? Rb8 38. Kg1 Kd6 39. Kf2 Kc7 40. Ke3 Rxb7 41. Rxb7+ Kxb7 42. Kd4 Kc6 43. Ke5 Kd7 Black holds.

37. ... Rb8 38. Kh2 Kd5 39. Kg3 Kc6



STEP 4: KEEP THE BLACK ROOK CONTAINED

40. Kg4!

The alternative 40. Kf4 Rf8+ 41. Ke5 Kb7 gives Black some hope that his rook can function, although White should still win with best play.

40. ... Kb7 41. Re1!

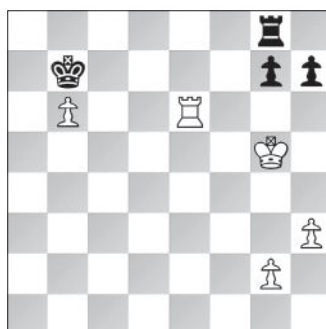
The rook has reaped the benefits of sitting behind the passed pawn, and now looks to attack Black's pawns. The sloppy 41. Kf5? Rf8+ 42. Ke6 Rf2 stumbles headfirst to a draw.

41. ... Rg8

Now 41. ... Kxb6 42. Rb1+ produces a sneaky liquidation.

42. Re6 Ka6 43. Kg5 Kb7

The rook can hardly escape, e.g., 43. ... Rd8 44. b7+ Ka7 45. Re7.



STEP 5: USE THE KING AND ROOK TO MAKE A USEFUL PASSED PAWN

44. h4

With one more piece working in that sector, White should have no problem winning a kingside pawn. Note that White would prefer to retain the g-pawn, as rook pawns are much harder to promote in many endings, including rook and pawn versus rook.

44. ... Ka6 45. h5 Kb7 46. g4 Ka6 47. Kh4 Kb7

Black can eliminate the g-pawn, but the h-pawn will go too fast: 47. ... h6 48. Rg6 Kb7 49. g5 hxg5+ 50. Kg4 Rf8 (otherwise 51. h6) 51. Rxd7+ Kxb6 52. h6 Rf1 53. Rxd7 and the pawn soon promotes.

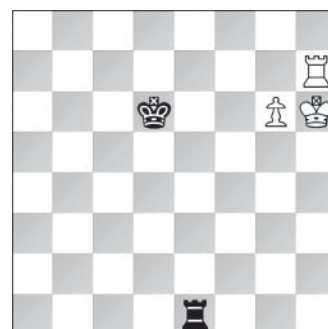
48. h6 gxh6 49. Rxh6 Rg7 50. Kh5 Ka6

The h7-pawn cannot be held: 50. ... Re7 51. g5 Rd7 52. Re6 Rf7 53. Kh6 Rd7 54. Re8 Kxb6 55. Rh8 wins as in the game.

51. Rc6!

This nice finesse reminds Black that he can never enter the pawn ending.

51. ... Re7 52. Rc7 Re5+ 53. g5 Kxb6 54. Rxh7 Kc6 55. Kh6 Kd6 56. g6 Re1



STEP 6: KEEP THE KING CUT OFF AND EXECUTE THE LUCENA METHOD

57. Rf7

Cutting the king off by files is the most familiar pattern, but White can also win by cutting the king by ranks: 57. Ra7 Ke6 58. g7 Rh1+ 59. Kg6 Rg1+ 60. Kh7 Rh1+ (60. ... Kf6 61. Ra6+ Kf7 62. g8=Q+ Rxd8 63. Ra7+ picks up the rook) 61. Kg8 Rb1 62. Ra6+ Ke7 63. Kh7 Rh1+ 64. Rh6 and wins.

57. ... Ke6

It was 1941. Perhaps the Lucena wasn't quite as routine as it is now. Black plays on too long for a grandmaster, but we see the winning plan play out.

58. Rf2 Ra1 59. g7 Rh1+ 60. Kg6 Rg1+ 61. Kh7 Rh1+ 62. Kg8 Ke7 63. Re2+ Kd7

Here 63. ... Kf6 64. Kf8 wins on the spot, so more distance is created.

64. Re4 Rh2 65. Kf7 Rf2+ 66. Kg6 Rg2+ 67. Kf6 Rf2+

If Black waits with 67. ... Rg1, perfecting the bridge with 68. Re5 is the simplest path to victory.

68. Kg5 Rg2+ 69. Rg4, Black resigned. ♠

Streamers on the King's Pawn, Part II

Kraai and Rozman on 1. e4 c5

BY IM JOHN WATSON



LAST MONTH WE LOOKED AT some Chessable repertoires with 1. e4 by Levy Rozman and Jesse Kraai, in particular

their solutions to 1. e4 e5. We saw that, due to their open and often forcing nature, it was a real challenge to find double e-pawn lines that were both interesting and not excessively theoretical. Tackling the Sicilian Defense, 1 e4 c5, is not easy either, but White does have the choice of entering positions that are both less thoroughly worked out and provide playable options throughout. Since the theory of the Open Sicilian, **1. e4 c5 2. Nf3** and **3. d4**, is absurdly extensive and difficult, many anti-Sicilian repertoires use an all-purpose move like **2. c3** (the Alapin), or **2. Nf3** with a positional intent, for example, **2. ... Nc6 3. Bb5** (the Rossolimo, which appears in seven Chessable repertoires), **2. ... d6 3. Bb5+** (or 3. d4 cxd4 4. Qxd4), or **2. ... e6 3. c3** (or 3. b3 or 3. g3). Over the decades, we've regularly seen such repertoires recommended in books and articles.

Refreshingly, both Rozman and Kraai choose **2. Nc3**, following unique variations which have been only rarely played until the past few years. These lines have the advantage of flexibility, although in return White cannot expect more than equality versus natural play.

Let's start with **2. ... d6**, a move many Najdorf and Dragon players will play so that after 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. d4 cxd4 5. Nxd4, they will be in familiar territory. Rozman meets 2. ... d6 with **3. d4 cxd4 4. Qxd4 Nc6 5. Qd2**.



This is a system made popular by Magnus Carlsen. It is currently fashionable, but still relatively fresh and full of possibilities.

5. ... g6

The fianchetto is played more than twice as often as 5. ... Nf6, when after 6. b3 e6 7. Bb2, the move 7. ... Be7 is normal, leading to double-edged play after 8. 0-0-0 0-0 9. f4.

Here Rozman shows some deep analysis after 9. ... a6 10. g4!? Nxg4 11. Nf3 intending Rh1-g1 with a pretty attack. If I were preparing this line, I'd look at 9. ... Qa5 10. Kb1 Rd8, intending ... d6-d5. And going back, an obvious try is 7. ... d5 8. exd5 exd5 9. 0-0-0 Be6 with unbalanced but dynamically equal isolated queen's pawn play.

6. b3 Bh6

Because of Carlsen's use of this system, a great number of games have been played with it in just the past two years. Here the natural 6. ... Bg7 7. Bb2 Nf6 8. 0-0-0 0-0 9. f3 has scored very well for White, whose king

is surprisingly safe. Against slow moves, the pawn advances g2-g4 and h2-h4-h5 are dangerous. Rozman is in his element in such lines, showing many fancy tactical nuances.

7. f4 Nf6

Here 7. ... e5 8. Nb5! Bxf4 9. Qxd6 works out nicely for White, and 7. ... f5 8. Bb2 Nf6 9. Bd3 is an important line which Rozman covers in great detail.

8. Bb2 e5

The alternative 8. ... 0-0 hasn't been as successful, but even if 9. 0-0-0 a5! 10. a4 Nb4 11. Kb1 Qb6 12. Nf3 Bg4 has scored well for White, Black's queenside pressure looks real to me, and Rozman's main line (just one of numerous possibilities) leads to a draw by perpetual check. Plenty to think about.

9. g3 0-0 10. 0-0-0 Re8

Rozman covers many typical mistakes that Black plays in these positions. Things get tactical at this point no matter what Black plays, e.g., 10. ... exf4 11. gxf4 Nh5 12. Nd5 or 10. ... Nd4 11. Nge2 Bg4 12. Nxd4! Bxd1 13. Qxd1 exd4 14. Qxd4 with great play for the Exchange.

11. Kb1 Nd4!? 12. Nge2 Bg4 13. Nxd4!?

Another try is 13. Bg2, hoping for 13. ... Rc8? 14. Nxd4! Bxd1 15. Rxd1 exd4 16. Qxd4 Bg7 17. Nb5! Nh5 18. Qxa7! with a winning game.

13. ... exd4

Also unclear is 13. ... Bxd1 14. Nxd1 exd4

15. Qxd4.

14. Qxd4 Bg7 15. Rc1! Nxe4 16. Qxg7+! Kxg7 17. Nxe4+ Kf8 18. Nf6 h5 19. Nh7+ A very courageous player might try 19. Nxe4! hxe4 20. h3 Re3 21. hxe4 Ke7 22. g5 with some dangerous threats.

19. ... Kg8 20. Nf6+

With a draw by repetition.

Kraai has a more flexible approach, using **2. Nc3 d6 3. f4.**



The general idea is Ng1-f3, Bf1-b5, and d2-d3, exchanging off the light-squared bishop and putting the central pawns on light squares. This can lead to a positional struggle, but Kraai likes to attack when possible, as in the line **3. ... Nf6 4. Nf3 g6 5. Bb5+ Bd7 6. Bxd7+ Qxd7** (he says that 6. ... Nbx7 is weaker than 6. ... Qxd7, but after his main continuation 7. d3 Bg7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Qe1, the move 9. ... e6 has done well and should be fine) **7. d3 Bg7 8. 0-0 Nc6 9. Qe1 0-0 10. Qh4 Nd4** and now the speculative **11. f5! Nxc2 12. Rb1 Nb4** (these are not the only moves, of course) **13. Bh6 Nxd3 14. Ng5.** While this terribly complicated position is unclear after **14. ... Nh5**, White certainly has attacking chances.

It's hard to find an original yet effective solution to **2. ... e6**. The traditional 3. g3 d5 and 3. f4 d5 4. Nf3 dxe4 are well worked out and not particularly inspiring, so it's not surprising that both authors look for something a bit more exciting. Rozman recommends **3. d4 cxd4 4. Qxd4**, a rather new idea he calls the "Tari Sicilian." White loses a whole tempo after **4. ... Nc6 5. Qd3**, but intends to castle queenside and attack later.

One main line goes:

5. ... Nf6 6. Bf4 d5

Other moves seem okay here: (a) 6. ... Bb4 7. Nge2 0-0 8. 0-0-0 Qa5!, or here 7. ... e5 8. Bg5 h6 9. Bh4 g5 10. Bg3 d5 with equality. Another idea is (b) 6. ... Bc5 7. 0-0-0 0-0 8. Bd6 Bxd6 9. Qxd6 a6 10. Nf3 b5 11. e5 b4!



There is plenty of play in such positions.

7. 0-0-0

Another path is 7. exd5 Nb4 (7. ... Nxd5 8. Nxd5 exd5 9. 0-0-0 Be6 10. Kb1 Bd6 is equal) 8. Qe2 Nbx5 9. 0-0-0 Qa5 with equality.

7. ... d4 8. Nb5 e5 9. Bxe5! Nxe5 10. Qg3 Nfd7 11. Nf3! a6! 12. Nxe5 axb5 13. Bxb5 Rxa2 14. c4 Ra5

Or 14. ... Qf6, e.g., 15. Nxd7 Bxd7 16. Qb8+ Ke7 17. Bxd7 Kxd7 18. Qxb7+ Kd8 with another equal position.

15. Rxd4 Rxb5 16. cxb5 Qc7+! 17. Kb1 Nxe5

Rozman gives 17. ... Bd6 18. Rc1 Qxc1+ 19. Kxc1 Bxe5 20. Qe3 Bxd4 21. Qxd4 and stops here. Black's position is okay, e.g., 21. ... 0-0 22. f4 Re8 23. b3 Nf6 24. e5 Nd7 25. Kb2 Nf8 26. Qd3 g6.

18. Rc1 Qb8 19. Rxc8+ Qxc8 20. Qxe5+ Be7 21. Qxg7 Rf8

And again the play is level after 22. f3, while other draws are possible, including 22. Rd5! Qc4! 23. Qe5 Qf1+ 24. Ka2 Qc4+.

Against **2. ... e6**, Kraai suggests **3. Nf3**, usually switching to an Open Sicilian next, e.g., **3. ... Nc6 4. d4** (4. Bb5 might go well with the rest of the repertoire) **4. ... cxd4 5. Nxd4.**



He does a good job of providing solid lines for White with ample explanations of strategy, one exciting line going **5. ... a6 6. Nxc6 bxc6** (6. ... dxc6 7. Qxd8+ Kxd8 8. Bf4) **7. Bd3 d5 8. 0-0 Qc7 9. Re1 Bb7 10. Qf3 Bd6 11. e5! Bxe5** (11. ... Bf8!?) **12. Qh5 Bd6 13. Rxe6+** with attack. Here **13. ... Kf8** is not so bad, but White has the practical attacking chances.

Of course the Open Sicilian is theory-heavy, and Kraai sometimes neglects to give enough guidance. In the Four Knights Variation **5. ... Nf6**, for example, he gives **6. Nxc6 bxc6 7. e5 Nd5 8. Ne4**, says there's a lot of theory and "it can get really intense," but he thinks it's just "a nice position for White." Considering that there have been many articles and books recommending the Four Knights for Black, along with thousands of games (including plenty with super-GMs playing Black), Kraai really should have added considerable analysis here and

shown a way for White to play in these highly tactical lines.

Incidentally, against **2. ... a6**, Rozman suggests **3. d4** again, with similar ideas to **2. ... e6 3. d4**. This time **3. ... cxd4 4. Qxd4 Nc6** is answered by **5. Qe3**, hoping in some cases for Bc1-d2, 0-0-0, Nc3-d5 and Bd2-c3. Kraai recommends **2. ... a6 3. g3 b5 4. Bg2 Bb7 5. d3**, when one pretty line goes **5. ... e6 6. f4 d5** (6. ... Nf6 is fine) **7. f5! d4! 8. fxe6 dxc3 9. exf7+ Kxf7 10. Nf3**, saying that “Black is either lost or close to lost.” This is fun stuff.

The two repertoires overlap in what is arguably the most natural variation: **2. Nc3 Nc6**, when both authors recommend **3. Bb5**. Then White intends to play as in a Rossolimo Sicilian with the extra option of f2-f4, e.g., **3. ... g6 4. Bxc6 dxc6** (4. ... bxc6 5 d3 Bg7 6 f4) **5. d3 Bg7** and **6. f4** (Kraai) or **6. Be3 b6 7. Qd2** (Rozman). The main line is **3. ... Nd4 4. Nf3**.



4. ... Nxb5

The authors take somewhat different approaches against the alternatives, a good indication that this system offers flexible play. For example, **4. ... a6 5. Bd3 g6 6. 0-0** (Rozman gives **6. Nxd4 cxd4 7. Ne2** as a second option, when **7. ... d5** should be considered) **6. ... Bg7 7. Re1** can go in several directions. Kraai analyzes **7. ... e6** (7. ... d6 is safer) **8. Rb1 Ne7 9. b4! cxb4 10. Nxd4 Bxd4 11. Rxb4 Bg7** (11. ... Nc6? 12 Rxd4!) **12. e5 Nc6 13. Rbe4** with a rich middlegame ahead.

Another logical defense here is **6. ... e6**, which is a position you can get to via **4. ... e6 5. 0-0 a6 6. Bd3 Nc6**:



Kraai gives **7. Be2 Qc7 8. d4**, which is a main line Taimanov by transposition after **9. ... Nf6**. And Carlsen chose the simpler **7. b3** in a game against Praggnanandhaa.

True to his tactical leanings, Rozman suggests **7. Nd5!?**. The knight leap has actually been played quite a bit, and Black has several valid responses, including the bizarre-looking **7...g5!?** (**7. ... exd5 8. exd5**

Nb4 9. Re1+ Ne7 10. d6 Nxd3 11. cxd3 favors White) **8. Nxd5** (8. Ne3 h5 is double-edged) **8. ... exd5! 9. Qh5 Qe7 10. exd5 Nf6!** (10. ... Nb4 11. d6 Qf6 12. b4!) **11. Qd1 Ne5**, which is very messy. Rozman gives **12. f4!?** Nxd3 **13. cxd3 Qd6 14. Re1+ Be7 15. b3**, when I think **15. ... Nxd5 16. Bb2 Rg8** is fine, but you can see there are all kinds of options in this variation.

5. Nxb5 d6

Black has tried many moves here, from **5. ... a6** to **5. ... g6** and even **5. ... d5!?**. Generally White has scored well.

6. d4 Nf6 7. Nc3

Rozman prefers **7. Qd3 a6 8. Nc3 cxd4 9. Nxd4** with one rather complex line going **9. ... e5** — he analyses the alternatives deeply — **10. Nf5 Bxf5 11. exf5**.

7. ... cxd4 8. Qxd4 e5

If **8. ... g6 9. e5 dxe5 10. Qxd8+ Kxd8 11. Nxe5 Ke8 12. Be3** with chances for both sides.

9. Qd3 h6

Avoiding **9. ... Be7 10. Bg5 0-0 11. Bxf6 Bxf6 12. 0-0 Be6 13. Nd5**.

10. Nd2 Be6 11. Nc4 Rc8 12. Ne3 Qc7

Indirectly hitting the c2-pawn. Kraai gives **13. 0-0 Be7 14. Rd1 0-0 15. Bd2** and thinks that White stands better. Perhaps not, but it's at any rate a complex and interesting middlegame.

Overall, I think both authors do a good job with the Sicilian. A limitation of their **1. e4 e5** coverage (analyzed in last month's column) is that, however creative and exciting, the lines they recommend were often forcing and thus vulnerable to deep preparation by Black. In the case of **1. e4 c5 2. Nc3**, Rozman and Kraai have given the reader variations which are flexible enough to be used for some time, even if a particular line proves awkward or inferior, because White has so many ways to vary and make a game of it.

Next month I'll look at some other defenses to **1. e4** and discuss the merits and limitations of this format. ♠

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

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



TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Board authorizes a temporary change in the US Chess Grand Prix (GP) rules for the period March 4, 2020 through August 31, 2023 out of concern for the unforeseeable impacts the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) could have on participation in GP events. The change allows organizers with guaranteed prize funds to change the status of their prize fund without first seeking US Chess permission to make the change. More specifically, organizers who have announced "XXXX in Guaranteed prizes" (or similar words) for their GP events shall be allowed to re-state their prize funds in their publicity as "XXXX in Projected prizes based on ### players," where ### represents the number of players in last year's event rounded to the nearest five players. For new GP events lacking historical attendance data, the organizer shall specify a "based on" number of players as part of the Projected Prize Fund language in their publicity. This decision includes all GP tournaments that already have been advertised in Chess Life. For any GP events being publicly advertised (whether by TLA, another website, flyers, emails, social media, etc.), organizers shall take all necessary steps to ensure their revised pre-tournament announcements call attention to this change in prize fund status and provide the appropriate "Projected based on XXX players" in the language of their updated publicity. US Chess asks that the chess community support this temporary change in the spirit that it is intended. The Executive Board shall revisit this matter as necessary.

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

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

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of December 31, 2022 for the 2022 Grand Prix.

FINAL 2022 GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Congratulations to the 2022 Grand Prix Champion

IM JASON LIANG

Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1. IM JASON LIANG	NY	222.68
2. GM BRANDON JACOBSON	NJ	177.20
3. IM JOHN BRYANT	CA	166.43
4. IM SEMEN KHANIN	RUS	152.35
5. GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMENEZ	MA	137.17
6. IM MYKOLA BORTNYK	UKR	127.25
7. FM DANILA POLIANNIKOV	MA	124.26
8. GM MARK PARAGUA	PHI	121.20
9. GM ALEXANDER FISHBEIN	TN	103.43
10. GM ANDREW TANG	MD	103.28

2022 Awards

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

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

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

PLEASE NOTE

DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

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

icap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [director@chess.us](http://www.chessevents.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 37675

ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2023 Las Vegas Open

AUGUST 25-27, 2023, NEVADA

Event site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino Address: 3555 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas NV 89109 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Vegas Chess Festivals Email: vegaschess@gmail.com Phone: 7029309550 Website: <https://vegaschessfestival.com> TLA ID: 38780

GRAND PRIX

68th Iowa Open Championship

AUGUST 26-27, 2023, IOWA

Event site: Holiday Inn Address: 6111 Fleur Drive, Des Moines, IA 50321 Overall prize fund: see TLA GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Bill Broich Email: broich01@yahoo.com Phone: 515-205-8062 Website: n/a TLA ID: 38746

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2023 CalChess Open & Class STATE Championship

SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2023

Event site: Sonesta Silicon Valley Event Center (South Milpitas) Address: 1800 Barber Ln., Milpitas, CA 95035 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 b/243 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: BayAreaChess Email: events@bayareachess.com Phone: 408.409.6596 (voicemail/text only) Website: <http://bayareachess.com/calchessopen> TLA ID: 38870

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

145th annual New York State Championship

SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2023, NEW YORK

Event site: Albany Marriott Address: 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 Overall prize fund: \$18,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [director@chess.us](http://www.chessevents.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 38164

GRAND PRIX

89th Annual Southwest Open

SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2023, TEXAS

Event site: Sheraton North Houston at George Bush Intercontinental Address: 15700 John F. Kennedy Blvd, Houston, TX 77032 Overall prize fund: See TLA GP Points: 60 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kwunnie Ng Email: southwestopen@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.kingregistration.com/event/89SWO> TLA ID: 38873

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

82nd New England Open

SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2023, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center Address: 219 Littleton Road, Westford, MA 01886 Overall prize fund: \$4,300 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Massachusetts Chess Association Email: info@masschess.org Phone: 603-891-2484 Website: <http://www.masschess.org> TLA ID: 38725

info@masschess.org Phone: 603-891-2484 Website: <http://www.masschess.org> TLA ID: 38725

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

2023 New Jersey Open

SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2023, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Cherry Hill Double Tree By Hilton Address: 2349 Marlton Pike West Cherry Hill, NJ 08002 Overall prize fund: \$8,650 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Aaron Kiedes Email: akiedes@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: <http://www.njsc.org> TLA ID: 37757

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

9th annual New York State Blitz Championship

SEPTEMBER 3, 2023, NEW YORK

Event site: Albany Marriott Address: 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 Overall prize fund: \$800 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 38918

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2023 Peter P. Lahde Tennessee Open

SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2023, TENNESSEE

Event site: UTK Student Union Address: 1502 Cumberland Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37996 Overall prize fund: \$4,000 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Danny Mullinax Email: dcmullinax@gmail.com Phone: 8652929701 Website: <https://tnchess.us> TLA ID: 38862

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2023 PA State Game/60 Championship

SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2023, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh Address: 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh PA 15213 Overall prize fund: \$695 GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Tom Martinak Email: martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com Phone: 412-908-0286 Website: <http://www.pschess.org/clearing-house/> TLA ID: 38401

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Columbia Tunnelvision XII

SEPTEMBER 16, 2023, SOUTH CAROLINA

Event site: First Church of the Nazarene Address: 901 St Andrews Rd, Columbia, SC 29210 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 gtd GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Columbia Chess Club Email: info@columbiachess.org Phone: 8035690938 Website: <https://columbiatunnelvision.com> TLA ID: 38151

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

9th annual Central New York Open

SEPTEMBER 22-24, 2023, NEW YORK

Event site: Quality Inn & Suites Fairgrounds Address: 100 Farrell Road, Syracuse, NY 13209 Overall prize fund: \$5,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [director@chess.us](http://www.chessevents.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 38561

GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2023 Autumn Open & Scholastic
SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 1, 2023, FLORIDA
Event site: Holiday Inn at Lake Buena Vista **Address:** 13351 State Road 535 Orlando, FL 32821 **Overall prize fund:** \$9,000 **GP Points:** 50 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Larry Storch **Email:** larrystorch88@gmail.com **Phone:** 407-312-6237 **Website:** <https://www.centraffchess.org> **TLAID:** 38641

GRAND PRIX

5th Annual LVCA Ruben Shocron Memorial \$1050 Gtd. (2 Sections)
SEPTEMBER 30, 2023, PENNSYLVANIA
Event site: College Hill Moravian Church **Address:** 72 W. Laurel St, Bethlehem, PA 18018 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,050 **GP Points:** 15 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Bruce R Davis Sr **Email:** bdavis@lehighvalleychessclub.org **Phone:** 4848663045 **Website:** <http://www.lehighvalleychessclub.org/> **TLAID:** 38850

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX

40th Annual Reno Western States Open
OCTOBER 6-8, 2023, NEVADA
Event site: Circus Circus Reno Hotel Casino **Address:** 500 N. Sierra Street, Reno, NV 89503 **Overall prize fund:** \$27,500 **GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Jerome V. Weikel **Email:** wackyvk@aol.com **Phone:** 775-747-1405 **Website:** <http://www.renochess.org> **TLAID:** 38535

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

31st annual Midwest Class Championships
OCTOBER 6-8, 2023, ILLINOIS
Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess Association

Email: director@chessevents.us **Phone:** [703-385-5222](tel:703-385-5222) **Website:** <http://www.chessevents.us> **TLAID:** 38522

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

12th annual Hartford Open
OCTOBER 6-8, 2023, CONNECTICUT
Event site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley Airport **Address:** 1 Bradley Airport (visible at airport entrance), Windsor Locks CT 06096 **Overall prize fund:** \$10,000 **GP Points:** 60 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess Association **Email:** director@chessevents.us **Phone:** [703-385-5222](tel:703-385-5222) **Website:** <http://www.chessevents.us> **TLAID:** 38519

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

13th annual Washington Chess Congress
OCTOBER 20-22, 2023, VIRGINIA
Event site: Sheraton Reston Hotel **Address:** 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston VA 20191 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess Association **Email:** director@chessevents.us **Phone:** [703-385-5222](tel:703-385-5222) **Website:** <http://www.chessevents.us> **TLAID:** 38550

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

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress
OCTOBER 27-29, 2023, NEW JERSEY
Event site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village **Address:** 201 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540 **Overall prize fund:** \$25,000 **GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess Association **Email:** director@chessevents.us **Phone:** [703-385-5222](tel:703-385-5222) **Website:** <http://www.chessevents.us> **TLAID:** 38532

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th annual Los Angeles Open

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023, CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN

Event site: Hilton Orange County Airport **Address:** 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine CA 92612 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess Association **Email:** director@chessevents.us **Phone:** [703-385-5222](tel:703-385-5222) **Website:** <http://www.chessevents.us> **TLAID:** 38547

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

32nd annual Kings Island Open
NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023, OHIO
Event site: Embassy Suites Cincinnati NE **Address:** 4554 Lake Forest Dr, Blue Ash OH 45242 **Overall prize fund:** \$25,000 **GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess Association **Email:** director@chessevents.us **Phone:** [703-385-5222](tel:703-385-5222) **Website:** <http://www.chessevents.us> **TLAID:** 38563

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

58th American Open
NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023, CALIFORNIA, S.
Event site: Hyatt Regency Orange County **Address:** 11999 Harbor Boulevard, Garden Grove, CA 92840 **Overall prize fund:** See TLA **GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** ChessPalace **Email:** play@americanopen.org **Phone:** 714-643-8828 **Website:** <https://americanopen.org/> **TLAID:** 38900

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

54th annual National Chess Congress
NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023, PHILADELPHIA
Event site: Loews Hotel **Address:** 1200 Market St, Philadelphia PA 19107 **Overall prize fund:** \$45,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental

Chess Association **Email:** director@chessevents.us **Phone:** [703-385-5222](tel:703-385-5222) **Website:** <http://www.chessevents.us> **TLAID:** 38941

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

33rd annual North American Open
DECEMBER 26-30, 2023, NEVADA
Event site: Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) **Address:** 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S, Las Vegas, NV 89103 **Overall prize fund:** \$130,000 **GP Points:** 300 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess Association **Email:** director@chessevents.us **Phone:** [703-385-5222](tel:703-385-5222) **Website:** <http://www.chessevents.us> **TLAID:** 38602

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2023 World Chess Festival
DECEMBER 28-31, 2023, HAWAII
Event site: Neal Blaisdell Center **Address:** 777 Ward Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96830 **Overall prize fund:** \$5,000 **GP Points:** 30 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Joe Hanley **Email:** hanleychessacademy@gmail.com **Phone:** 714 925 3195 **Website:** <http://hanleychessacademy.com/2023WCF.html> **TLAID:** 38682

Regional_A

ARIZONA

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023

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

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

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

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

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

Continental Chess OTB Tournament Schedule

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

ATLANTIC OPEN, Aug 25-27, Sheraton Reston Hotel, near Washington, DC. \$30,000 guaranteed prizes.

INDIANAPOLIS OPEN, Aug 25-27, Hilton Garden Inn Indianapolis Airport. \$15,000 guaranteed prizes.

NEW YORK STATE CHAMPIONSHIP, Sept 1-4 at Albany Marriott. 6 rounds, \$18,000 guaranteed prizes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NATIONAL CHESS CONGRESS, Nov 24-26, Loews Hotel Philadelphia. 6 rounds, \$45,000 guaranteed prizes plus plaques & free entries.

CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021-ONGOING

PCC LBX Hangar Sunday Action

Event site: LBX Hangar Building (inside and out) **Address:** 4150 McGowen St, Long Beach CA 90808 **Overall prize fund:** 80% of total entry fee **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** John Tan **Email:** paramountchessclub@gmail.com **Phone:** 3107356871 **Website:** n/a **TLA ID:** 31701

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023

18th annual Los Angeles Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix.

COLORADO

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

CONNECTICUT

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

12th annual Hartford Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

AUGUST 27, 2023

2023 United States Founding Fathers Scholastic Chess Quads

Event site: Rayburn House Office Building **Address:** 45 Independence Ave SW, Room 2168 Gold Room, Washington, DC 20515 **Overall prize fund:** \$110 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Malik F. Johnson **Email:** iconchess@aol.com **Phone:** 2025578266 **Website:** <https://caissachess.net/online-registration/index/2643> **TLA ID:** 38852

AUGUST 27, 2023

2023 United States Founding Fathers Chess Quads

Event site: Rayburn House Office Building **Address:** 45 Independence Ave SW, Room 2168 Gold Room, Washington, DC 20515 **Overall prize fund:** \$114 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Malik F. Johnson **Email:** iconchess@aol.com **Phone:** 2025578266 **Website:** <https://caissachess.net/online-registration/index/2774> **TLA ID:** 38818

SEPTEMBER 9, 2023

2023 Emory Tate Prize for American Scholastic Chess

Event site: The Willard Office Building **Address:** 1455 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 1125, Washington, DC 20004 **Overall prize fund:** \$900 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Malik F. Johnson **Email:** iconchess@aol.com **Phone:** 2025578266 **Website:** <https://caissachess.net/online-registration/index/2858> **TLA ID:** 38864

SEPTEMBER 9, 2023

2023 Emory Tate World Series of Blitz Skills Challenge

Event site: The Willard Office Building **Address:** 1455 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 1125, Washington, DC 20004 **Overall prize fund:** TBD **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Malik F. Johnson **Email:** iconchess@aol.com **Phone:** 2025578266 **Website:** <https://caissachess.net/online-registration/index/2858> **TLA ID:** 38863

GEORGIA

APRIL 8, 2023-ONGOING MONTHLY

Pizza Scholastic

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

Chess.com **Phone:** 770.744.8595 **Website:** <https://mythinkchess.com> **TLA ID:** 37216

ILLINOIS

AUGUST 12-18, 2023

XXXIII Pan-American Youth Chess Festival

Event site: Hyatt Regency McCormick Place **Address:** 2233 South Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., Chicago, IL 60616 **Overall prize fund:** Direct: FIDE titles and norms **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** David Heiser **Email:** david.heiser@renaissanceknights.org **Phone:** n/a **Website:** <https://panamyouth2023.com/> **TLA ID:** 36757

AUGUST 25-27, 2023

16th annual Indianapolis Open (IN)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

31st annual Midwest Class Championships (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023

32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

INDIANA

AUGUST 25-27, 2023

16th annual Indianapolis Open (IN)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

31st annual Midwest Class Championships (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023

32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

IOWA

AUGUST 26, 2023, IOWA

68th Iowa Reserve Championship

Event site: Holiday Inn **Address:** 6111 Fleur Drive, Des Moines, IA 50321 **Overall prize fund:** see TLA **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Bill Broich **Email:** broich01@yahoo.com **Phone:** 515-205-8062 **Website:** n/a **TLA ID:** 38747

KENTUCKY

AUGUST 25-27, 2023

16th annual Indianapolis Open (IN)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023

32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

LOUISIANA

SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2023, TEXAS

89th Annual Southwest Open

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 award-

ed annually. UMBC is a perennial top-10 contender for the collegiate national chess championship.

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023

13th annual Washington Chess Congress (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 27-29, 2023

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023

54th annual National Chess Congress (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MASSACHUSETTS

AUGUST 25-27, 2023

55th annual Atlantic Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2023

82nd New England Open (MA)

See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

12th annual Hartford Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

REGIONALS

OCTOBER 21, 2023

1st Pioneer Valley Autumn Class

Event site: St. John's Lutheran Church **Address:** 60 Broad Street, Westfield, MA 01085 **Overall prize fund:** \$1,000 prizes based on 30 entries **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Western Massachusetts Chess Association **Email:** dgbompastore@gmail.com **Phone:** 4133560303 **Website:** <http://www.wmass-chess.us/> **TLA ID:** 38674

MICHIGAN

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023

32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MONTANA

SEPTEMBER 16-17, 2023

Big Sky Country Open

Event site: Red Lion Hotel **Address:** 20 North Main Street, Kalispell, MT 59901 **Overall prize fund:** Cash prizes based on entries **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Montana Chess Association **Email:** gl-solomon@yahoo.com **Phone:** 406-253-3883 **Website:** www.montanachess.org **TLA ID:** 38919

NOVEMBER 11-12, 2023

41st Missoula Turkey Open

Event site: Holiday Inn Missoula Downtown **Address:** 200 S Pattee St, Missoula, MT 59802 **Overall prize fund:** \$2,000 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Eric Walthall **Email:** eric.m.walthall@gmail.com **Phone:** 4068309524 **Website:** <https://missoulachess.com/> **TLA ID:** 38320

NEVADA

NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023

18th annual Los Angeles Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW JERSEY

JANUARY 14-DECEMBER 30, 2023

Hamilton Chess Club Quads

Dates: Feb. 11, Mar. 18, Apr. 29, May 20, Jun. 3, Aug. 19, Sep. 30, Oct. 21, Nov. 18, Dec. 30. **Event**

site: Switlik Park Pavilion **Address:** Fischer Place/Joe Dimaggio Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08610 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Edward Sytnik **Email:** edmondou@aol.com **Phone:** 609-758-2326 **Website:** <https://sites.google.com/site/hamiltonchessclub/> **TLA ID:** 35704

AUGUST 25-27, 2023

55th annual Atlantic Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

HERITAGE EVENT • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

SEPTEMBER 3, 2023

2023 NJ Open Scholastic

Event site: Cherry Hill Double Tree By Hilton **Address:** 2349 Marlton Pike West Cherry Hill, NJ 08002 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Aaron Kiedes **Email:** akiedes@gmail.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** <http://www.njscc.org> **TLA ID:** 38476

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

12th annual Hartford Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023

13th annual Washington Chess Congress (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 27-29, 2023

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 19, 2023

2023 New Jersey Grade School Championship

Event site: Brookdale Community College **Address:** Lot #7, Arena Dr., Lincroft, NJ 07738 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Alessandro De Marchi-Blumstein **Email:** tournaments.njscc@gmail.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** <http://www.njscc.org> **TLA ID:** 38879

NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023

54th annual National Chess Congress (PA)

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NEW YORK

AUGUST 25-27, 2023

55th annual Atlantic Open (VA)

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SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2023

145th annual New York State Chess Championship (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 3, 2023

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NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023

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OHIO

AUGUST 25-27, 2023

16th annual Indianapolis Open (IN)

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NOVEMBER 10-12, 2023

32nd annual Kings Island Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OREGON

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix.

PENNSYLVANIA

North Penn Chess Club

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

AUGUST 22, 2023

August Quick Quads

Event site: Pittsburgh Chess Club Address: 5869 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15217 Overall prize fund: see TLA GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Pittsburgh Chess Club Email: director@pittsburghchessclub.org Phone: 412-421-1881 Website: <https://pittsburghchessclub.org/uscf/august-quick-2023> TLA ID: 37212

AUGUST 29, 2023

August Blitz

Event site: Pittsburgh Chess Club Address: 5869 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15217 Overall prize fund: \$475 gtd GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Pittsburgh Chess Club Email: director@pittsburghchessclub.org Phone: 412-421-1881 Website: <https://pittsburghchessclub.org/uscf/august-quick-2023> TLA ID: 37213

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SEPTEMBER 1-4, 2023

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SEPTEMBER 22-24, 2023

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OCTOBER 27-29, 2023

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)

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NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023

54th annual National Chess Congress (PA)

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RHODE ISLAND

AUGUST 4-6, 2023

The 2nd Annual Beltway Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 5, 2023

Saturday Night Action at the Beltway Open (VA)

See Virginia.

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023

13th annual Washington Chess Congress (VA)

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SOUTH CAROLINA

AUGUST 19, 2023

Columbia Tunnelvision XI (SC)

See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 16, 2023

Columbia Tunnelvision XII (SC)

See Grand Prix.

TENNESSEE

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2023

2023 Peter P. Lahde Tennessee Open

See Grand Prix.

TEXAS

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

UTAH

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)

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VIRGINIA

AUGUST 25-27, 2023

55th annual Atlantic Open (VA)

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HERITAGE EVENT • STATE • CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

SEPTEMBER 2-4, 2023

2023 (85th) Virginia Closed

Event site: Hilton Garden Inn - Innsbrook Address: 4050 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060 Overall prize fund: \$5,000 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: <http://www.vachess.org> TLA ID: 38871

OCTOBER 20-22, 2023

13th annual Washington Chess Congress (VA)

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OCTOBER 27-29, 2023

27th annual Eastern Chess Congress (NJ)

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NOVEMBER 24-26, 2023

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WASHINGTON

NOVEMBER 21-26, 2023

58th American Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023

33rd annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WEST VIRGINIA

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

SEPTEMBER 9-10, 2023

WV State Championship - Thomas Bergquist Memorial

Event site: Huntington YMCA Address: 917 9th Street, Huntington, WV 25701 Overall prize fund: \$500 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Craig Timmons Email: craigtimmons@gmail.com Phone: 304-415-2119 Website: <https://www.wvchess.org> TLA ID: 38809

WISCONSIN

OCTOBER 6-8, 2023

31st annual Midwest Class Championships (IL)

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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.

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Solutions

PAGE 9 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. Fastest is 1. g4! so that 1. ... hxc4 2. h5 and 3. Rh7+ Kg8 4. Rcg7+ Kf8 5. h6 and Rh7-h8 mate.

PROBLEM 2. 1. ... h5! prompted resignation because the h-pawn keeps advancing. **PROBLEM 3.** Both 1. Qf6+ and 1. Ng5+ win eventually but 1. Nd6+! forces mate, e.g. 1. ... Kf8 2. Qf6+ or 1. ... Kg6 2. Qg5+ (also 2. Qf5+) 2. ... Kh7 3. Qh5+ Kg7 4. Qf7+ Kh6 5. Nf5. **PROBLEM 4.** 1. ... Rxg3! 2. fxg3 Qxg3 threatens 3. ... Qxg2 mate. White resigned after 3. Re2 Rg6 in view of 4. Qxh5 Bxe3+ 5. Kh1 Bf4, for example. **PROBLEM 5.** 1. ... e2! 2. Kxe2 Qe4+ 3. Kf1 Qh1+ 4. Ke2 Qxh2+ 5. Kf3 Qf2+ 6. Ke4 Qd4+ 7. Kf3 Qd1+! trades queens and remains a rook up. **PROBLEM 6.** 1. Re7! Qxh5 2. Rxg7+ Kh8 3. Rxd7+ wins, e.g., 3. ... Kg8 4. Rg7+ Kh8 5. Rg5+ Kh7 6. Rxh5+ or 3. Rxd7+ Rf6 4. Bxf6+ Kg8 5. Rg7+ Kf8 6. Ng5.

PAGE 19 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 16. Bxg5, Black resigned. The problem for Black is that after 16. Bxg5 either recapture loses promptly: 16. ... hxc5 (or 16. ... Qxc5 17. Qxf7+ Kh8 18. Qg8 mate) 17. Ng6 Qxg6 18. Qxg6, exploiting the pin of the f-pawn provided by the bishop on c4. (Hakobyan – Gareyev, AimChess Rapid Play-In, 2023) **TACTIC 2. 21. ... Bb5!** In the game, Black missed this simple tactic and instead lost after 21. ... Qxb2?? 22. Qf6, exploiting the pin the e5-rook to set-up a lethal threat against f7. Black resigned in Bachmann – Dragnev, AimChess Rapid Play-In, 2023. **22. Qxb6** After 22. Qc3 Rxd5 23. Rxe8+ Bxe8, Black has an extra bishop. **22. ... Rxe1+** and Black wins material. **TACTIC 3. 20. Nd5!** A standard sacrifice in the Sicilian of this type, but here, Black's dark-squared bishop is unusually poorly placed on c7, allowing for some extra tricks. **20. ... exd5** If 20. ... Ncd7, then White has some extra options, one of which is 21. Nc6 Bxc6 22. Ne7+ Kf8 23. Nxc6, winning the Exchange, but the best continuation would have been 21. Nxf6+ Nxf6 22. Nf5! exf5 23. Bxf6 gxf6 24. Qh6 Kh8 25. Qxf6+ Kg8 26. exf5 and Black will get mated. **21. Nf5** This is the point of the sacrifice: the f5-square becomes available to White's knight and the b2-bishop is suddenly a massive attacking piece. **21. ... d4 22. Bxd4 Ne8 23. Bxg7** Or, even stronger, 23. Nxc7 Nxc7 24. Qh6 Nce6 25. Bf6 Kf8 26. Qxh7 and Black can resign. **23. ... Nxc7 24. Qh6 Nce6** and **Black resigned** at the same time. A possible continuation was 24. ... Nce6 25. Rd5! (or 25. Nxc7 Nxc7 26. Re3) 25. ... Kf8 26. Qxh7 Ke8 27. Nxc7+ Kd7 28. Nxe6 Kxe6 29. Rf5 and Black will lose shortly. Suyarov – Manish Anto, Asian Continental, 2023. **TACTIC 4. 14. Rd3!** More firepower! **14. ... Be8** It was better to play 14. ... g6 15. Rh3 (the threat is 16. Qh5 gxf5 17. Rg3+) 15. ... Qd8 16. Qe3 with a decisive attack, e.g., 16. ... Bg5 17. f4 Bf6 18. f5 Bg5 19. Qe2 exf5 20. Rxf5 gxf5 21. Qh5

h6 22. Qg6 mate. **15. Bxg7!** The game continuation was **15. Rfd1 Qc6 16. Qg4 g6 17. Rh3 f5 18. Qf4 g5 19. Rg3 Bg6 20. Rxg5 Bxg5 21. Qxg5 Rf7 22. Rd6 Qe4 23. Rd8+ Rxd8 24. Qxd8+ Rf8 25. Bxe6+ Bf7 26. Qg5** mate in Vaidhayan – Jain, AimChess Rapid Play-In, 2023. **15. ... Kxg7 16. Qg4+ Kh8 17. Rg3 Bf6 18. Bd3** when Black does not have a good answer to the threat of Qg4-h5. **TACTIC 5. 15. e5! Nd5 16. Ng5!** A mate threat on h7 forces Black's reply. **16. ... g6 17. Nxd5 Bxd5 18. Bxd5 exd5 19. e6!** Now Black's defenses fall apart. **19. ... Nf6 20. exf7+ Kh8 21. Ne6** and **Black resigned.** (Meier – Tomashevsky, AimChess Rapid Play-In, 2023) **TACTIC 6. 21. Bxf5!** The game continued in a rather tragic fashion: **21. Rbb1?? Bd7??** (21. ... Qg3!) **22. Rbd1??** (22. Bxf5! still wins) **22. ... Bc6! 23. Bg5 Qg3 24. Bxf5?? Qxg2** mate in Golubev – Gharibyan, AimChess Rapid Play-In, 2023. Alternatively, White could also have played 21. Be2! Bd7 22. Rb6 Qg3 23. Qf3 Qxf3 24. Bxf3 Bc7 25. Rb7 Rc8 26. Rd1 and Black is completely busted. **21. ... exf5** If 21. ... Qg3, then 22. Be4 wins for White. **22. c4!** Threatening Re2 with devastating effect. **22. ... Be6 23. Re2** and Black will be forced to give up the queen. **TACTIC 7. 13. ... Rxc3!** A standard Exchange sacrifice, which is what former world champion Garry Kasparov called chess culture. **14. bxc3 Qc7!** So wants White to put the king on b2 before he captures the e4-pawn. Black is not in a hurry as White's dynamic potential is gone. But 14. ... Nxe4 15. Bxe4 Bxe4 would also have been clearly better for Black. **15. Kb2 Nxe4 16. Bxe4 Bxe4 17. f3 Bh7!** Black has a clear advantage. Or 17. ... Bg6! 18. h4 0-0 with a clear advantage for Black. **18. f4 0-0!** The game continued less accurately: **18. ... exf4? 19. Bxf4 Nb6?** (19. ... Ne5 would have kept the balance) **20. Rde1??** (White should have played 20. Rge1! Na4+ 21. Kc1 Nxc3 22. Qd2 and thanks to the threat of Bxd6, White is clearly better) **20. ... Na4+** (Now, Black is winning) **21. Kc1 Nxc3 22. Qf3 0-0 23. Rxe7 Na2+ 24. Kb2 Qxc2+ 25. Ka1 Nc3** and **White resigned** in Vallejo Pons – So, AimChess Rapid Play-In, 2023. **19. f5 Rc8 20. Rd3 a5** and Black has a clear advantage. **TACTIC 8. 17. ... Ng4!** Black forces White to place his pieces rather awkwardly. **18. Bxe7 Qxe7 19. Rh5 g6!** The game continuation was less accurate: **19. ... Qf6?! 20. Qc2 g6 21. Rh3 Qxd4 22. Ne4 Rac8 23. Ng5 Bxa4 24. Qxg6+** and **White resigned** at the same time in Bacrot – Bjerre, AimChess Rapid Play-In, 2023. **20. Rh3 Qf6** with dual threats to f2 and d4. Black has a large advantage. **TACTIC 9. 16. Bxa3!** White distracts the black queen away from the kingside in order to launch a full-scale attack against Black's king. **16. ... Qxa3 17. Ng5!** A threat against f7. **17. ... Re7 18. Nxc7** Oh yeah, we threatened the h7-square too! Sorry about that! **18. ... Nxc7 19. Bxc7+ Kxc7** Black would have been better off trying 19. ... Kf8, although that would also leave White with a winning position. **20. Rd3** A Rook lift to checkmate Black's king. **20. ... Qxd3** If 20. ... Qd6, then 21. Qh5+ Kg8 22. Rh3 ends the game. **21. Qxd3+** White is, of course, winning. Black carried on a bit longer. **21. ... Kg8 22. Ng4 Nf8 23. Rd1 Ng6 24. Qe3 Rc7 25. h4 Rxc4 26. h5 Ne7 27. Qg5 Kf8 28. h6** and **Black resigned.** (Budaravljic – Santos Ruiz, AimChess Rapid Play-In, 2023)

PAGE 51 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Mating net: White mates in two: **1. Nf6+**

Any 2. Qg8 mate. PROBLEM 2. Mating net: White mates in two: **1. Nd7+ Ka8 2. Nc7 mate. PROBLEM 3. Mating net:** White smothers a mate in two moves: **1. Qb8+ Rxb8 2. Nc7 mate. PROBLEM 4. Mating net:** It's over in one move: **1. Nd6 mate. PROBLEM 5. Mating net:** White forces mate in two: **1. Qg8+ Qxg8 2. Ng6 mate. PROBLEM 6. Mating net:** It's mate in two with **1. Qf8+ Kxf8 2. Rh8 mate.**

PAGE 53 ENDGAME SCHOOL

PROBLEM 1. 67. g5! hxg5 68. Rd7+ Kf8 69. Rf7+ Kg8 70. Kg6 g4 71. h6! gxh6 Or 71. ... Ra8 72. hxc7 g3 73. e7 g2 74. Rf8+ and wins. **72. e7 Ra8 73. Rf6, Black resigned.** If 73. ... g3 74. Rd6 Re8 75. Rd8 White wins. (Botvinnik – Najdorf, Alekhine Memorial 1956) **PROBLEM 2. 1. Rb8+ Ke7 2. Rg8 Rg2 3. Kh7 Rh2+ Or 3. ... Kf7 4. g6+ Ke7 5. Ra8 Rh2+ 6. Kg8 Kf6 7. g7 Ke7 etc. 4. Kg7 Rg2 5. g6 Rg1 6. Ra8 Rg2 7. Ra7+ Ke8 8. Ra1, Black resigned.** White has reached the Lucena position in (by transposition) Carlsen – Mamedov, Chess.com 2003.

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MY BEST MOVE

DARIUSZ SWIERCZ

AUTHOR, COACH,
GRANDMASTER

M

Y CHESS JOURNEY BEGAN AT age three when my grandpa, Ryszard, took out an old chess set and introduced me to the game. Having grasped the basic rules, I was happy to capture his queen, and cried when I lost mine.

After a while, I began playing in junior competitions and quickly progressed. The key moment in my chess career happened in 2000 when I met my first coach, Alexander Kachur. Thanks to our training my playing strength grew. In 2004 I shared first place (third on tiebreaks) in the European U10 Championship in Urgup, Turkey, which granted me the FM title at the age of 10.

I began working together with GM Artur Jakubiec in 2005. With his guidance and training, I managed to gain 350+ FIDE rating points and, at the age of 14, became the youngest Polish GM in 2009. My opening repertoire expanded, my knowledge of various structures and most importantly, I developed the skill and interest to work individually on chess.

GM Oleksandr Sulypa helped me with self-confidence and further expanded my opening knowledge, and I received further coaching by GM Mikhail Gurevich, with whom I focused on advanced chess strategy, calculation, dynamics and chess endgames. With all of our efforts, I broke through the 2600 barrier in a couple of years; looking back, I sense the work of all of my coaches in in the following game.

SNEAKY BISHOP

GM Dariusz Swiercz (2627)
GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (2713)
Gibraltar Masters (4), Caleta,
01.25.2013

(see diagram top of next column)

Up a piece against a fierce defender, there was still lots of work to do to convert my advantage.



“
*I never thought
becoming
a titled player
of any kind
was possible...*”



WHITE TO MOVE

43. Qe6!

This is the best move in the position. Here I am activating the queen and threatening Qe6-g8+.

43. ... Qb2+ 44. Kd3 Qxh2

MVL grabs the h2-pawn, looking for activity while also simplifying the position. Here 44. ... Qd2+ fails to 45. Kc4 as 45. ... Qa2+ loses the c3-pawn and the king escapes the checks.

45. Qg8+ Kc7 46. Qxg7+ Kd6

Now for the most important move of the game, and **MY BEST MOVE**.

47. Bg2!!

The ONLY winning move! A study-like idea — the queen is out of play on h2 and lacks any checks, while Black's exposed king will run into various mating nets while the passed f-pawn marches on. The rest is easy.

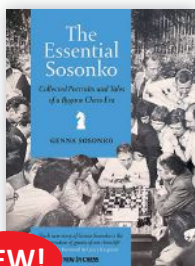
47. ... Qh4 48. f6 Qe1 49. Qf8+ Kd7 50. Bh3+ Kc6 51. Qc8+, Black resigned.

After moving to St. Louis on a chess scholarship, today I am a chess professional, working as an author, a coach, and an active player. I began to focus on teaching in 2020, and I enjoy sharing my experience and knowledge with my students, both individually and in group settings. I have served as the GM-in-residence at the Saint Louis Chess Club, written print and digital opening books, and most recently, I have become the coach of the Saint Louis University chess team! Still, playing is my first love, and I hope to have many successes at the board in the future. ♠

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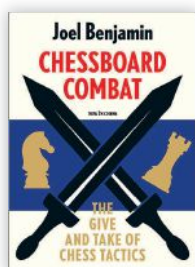
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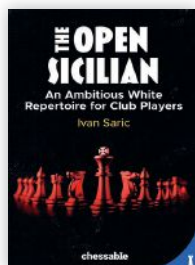
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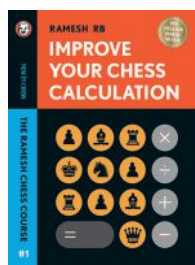
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A White Repertoire vs the Open Sicilian Ivan Saric

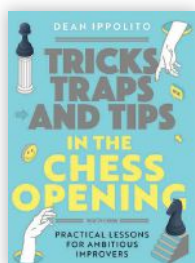
The Open Sicilian is not a phonebook crammed with computer lines, but a textbook full of 21st-century chess wisdom. GM Ivan Saric covers the entire range of Sicilians, from obscure sidelines to the main lines: the Najdorf, the Taimanov, the Rauzer, the Kan, the Sveshnikov and the Dragons. His approach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



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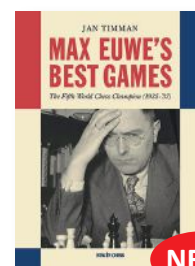
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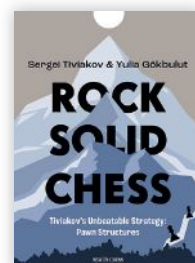
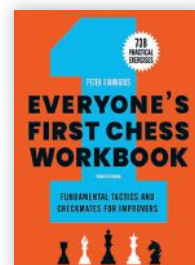
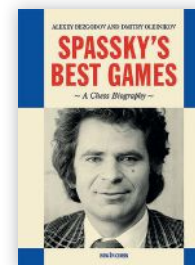
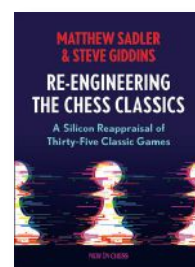
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