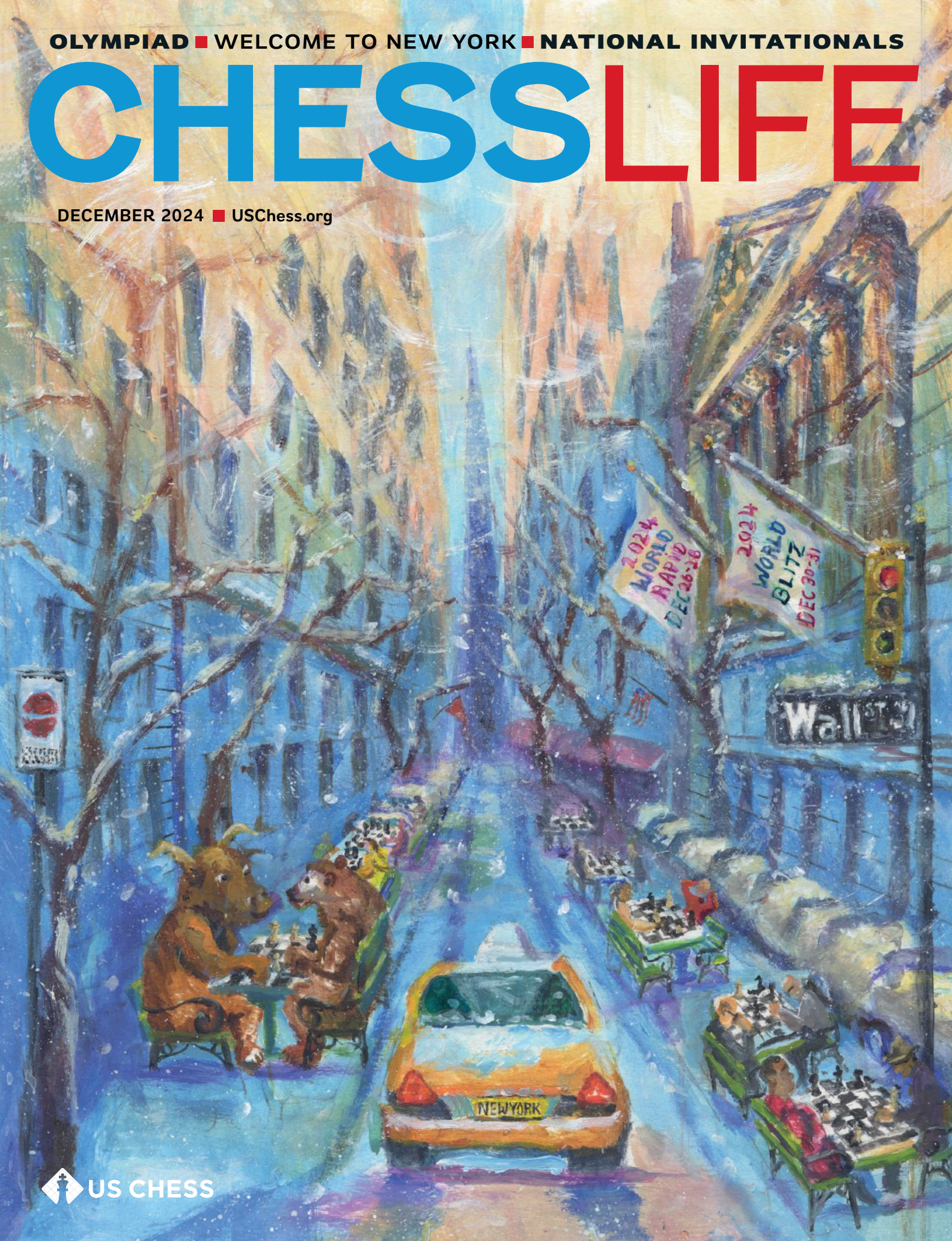


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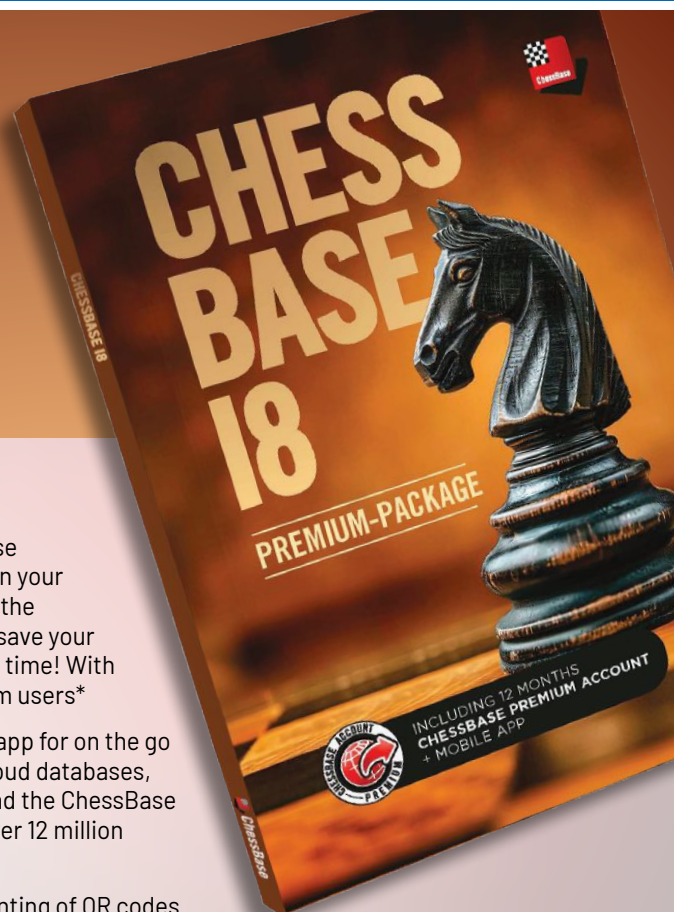
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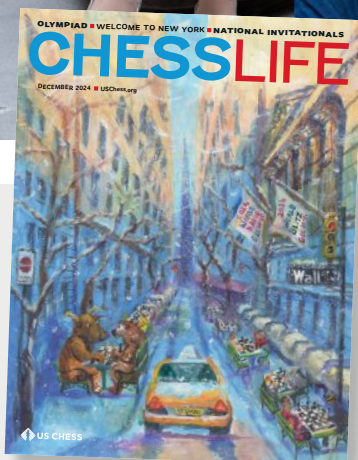
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Our Olympians!



ON THE COVER

Held in New York City at the end of this month, the 2024 World Rapid and Blitz Championships will bring some of the strongest players in the world to our shores. Our cover is an homage to the event and to the city that never sleeps, incorporating elements from Wall Street and beyond. Look for coverage of the Rapid and Blitz on *CLO* and in a future issue of *Chess Life*.

ART BY ROSIE WOODS

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IM Maximillian Lu recaps the last Invitationals of his scholastic career.

BY IM MAXIMILLIAN LU

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U.S. Women's Champion IM Carissa Yip on winning team bronze and individual gold in Budapest.

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ADDITIONAL ANNOTATIONS BY KRUSH, LEE, AND TOKHIRJONOVA

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Second place States!

U.S. takes silver in the Open Olympiad; Aronian wins individual silver.

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The 2024 World Rapid and Blitz Championship is coming to the Big Apple. Here's what you need to know.

BY RICK MASSIMO

You can read archival copies of *Chess Life* on uschess.org. Click on "Chess Life Magazine," and then click "Digital Archives."

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December

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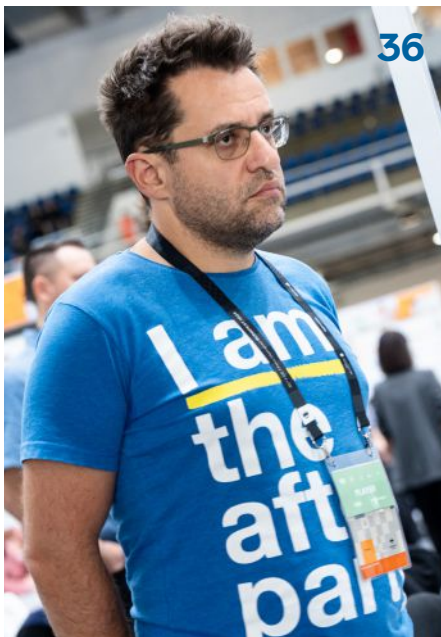
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CONTRIBUTORS



IM CARISSA YIP

(Women's Olympiad) is a three-time U.S. Girls' Junior Champion and she recently won her third U.S. Women's Championship. Originally from Andover, Massachusetts, she is number

one on the November US Chess women's rating lists. Currently she is a student at Stanford University. Find her on Twitter at @carissayipchess.



IM JOHN DONALDSON

(Open Olympiad) is the author of more than 30 books, including his newest title, *Bobby Fischer and*

His World. He is an accomplished chess coach, historian, and journalist, and he has served as captain of U.S. international teams across three decades. His work as team captain earned him the Botvinnik Award from FIDE in 2019. Donaldson served as director of the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club from 1998 through his retirement in 2019, and he helps to administer the Samford Fellowship, awarded annually to some of America's most promising chess talents. Current projects include continued research into the life and games of Bobby Fischer, and collection of the games of GM Jim Tarjan.



IM MAXIMILLIAN LU

(Invitationals) has won multiple national and international scholastic tournaments and is a 10-

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



RICK MASSIMO

(Welcome to New York) is the assistant editor for US Chess publications. He's the author of two

books; he's also working on a novel about a fictional ex-Soviet master, and he lives in Washington, D.C.

2025

World Amateur Team & U.S. Amateur Team Championship East

Welcome to the country's
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1 Hilton Court

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Open to four-player teams with one optional alternate. Team average must be under 2200 (four highest ratings from 2025 January rating list used for ALL players — no exceptions). Teams rated over 2000 average — no more than 1000 points between boards 3 and 4. No more than two GMs on a team.

Time Control: 6SS, 40/100, SD/30 delay 5. **Rds.:** 1-7:30 Sat., 11-6 Sun., 9-3:30 Mon.

Registration: Online registration opens December 1st at official website www.njscf.org. Advance registration only — no on-site registration.

EF: \$275 online only by 1/15/25; ALL \$335 after. All teams: any changes at site or after entering — \$30 charge. **ENTRY MAXIMUM IS 325 TEAMS.** Enter early!

TEAM PRIZES: 1-5th place teams, plaque and 4 digital clocks; Top team (Denis Barry Award) U2100, 2000, 1900, 1800, 1700, 1600, 1500, 1400, 1300, 1200, 1000, each plaque and 4 digital clocks; Top college (same school), 4 digital clocks & plaque; Top high school (grades 9-12 same school), Top middle school (grades 5-9 same school), Top elementary school (grades K-6 same school), Top 2 scholastic teams (mixed schools okay) (Collins Award), Top mixed doubles (2 males, 2 females, no alternates), Top seniors (all players over age 50), Top military, each plaque & 4 digital clocks; Top company (full time only, same employer, noneducational), Top coaches (educational), Top all female, Top family (4 family members), Top

state (CT, DE, MD, MA, NJ, NY (Benjamin Award), PA, VA), each plaque; Top future team (all players under age 10), Top military college, Top parent/child (2 pairs, one parent, one child), each special plaque.

ADDITIONAL PRIZES: Best Player 1-4 and top alternate, all 6-0 scores, each digital clock. Biggest individual upset each round, engraved Cross pen. Entry fee refunded Sunday night to team with best "chess related" name. Best "chess related costumes or gimmick," 1st — gourmet dinner for 4. 2nd — gourmet dinner for 4. Surprises and special giveaways each round.

HR: See link to reserve room at www.njscf.org. Chess rates expire 1/17/2025.

Tournament Director NTD/IA:

E. Steven Doyle (50 years)

Sunday night: Bughouse \$25 per team. Cash prizes.



For help forming teams contact
Worldamateurtteam@njscf.org

Visit new.uschess.org/2025-world-amateur-team-us-team-east for more details.





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Alice Lee

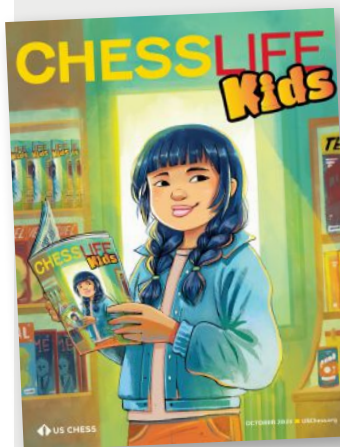
"I'd like to thank the U.S. Chess Trust for their support in my chess career. I have had the honor of receiving the prestigious Samford Fellowship, which has given me encouragement and support for my chess."



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COUNTERPLAY



YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE

To the editor:

In life there are two types of men: those who are brave and those who are not. Stopping recursion at the third go is not brave. You know what you did and I am disappointed.

Justin Gooch
Via email

John Hartmann responds:

Guessing this is about the October Chess Life for Kids cover? If so, yes, I was not nearly brave enough. At least 11 recursions would have been better. Apologies.

NOT FOR KIDS

At 69 years old and as a life-long 1. d4 player, I have greatly enjoyed the Chess Life for Kids openings series. There's enough coverage of theory without drowning the student in analysis — a nice combination.

Looking forward to another series for playing Black. I would like to see a repertoire based on 1. e4 e5. However, I am open to whatever you suggest.

John Christoffer
Via email

John Hartmann responds:

Thanks for the kind words. The more I think about it, the more I believe that Chess Life for Kids is a misnomer. There's great stuff in CLK for players of all ages! (If only I'd ramped up the recursions ...)

I'll definitely take your recommendation into consideration. Others can chime in with their ideas for a Black repertoire by emailing me at john.hartmann@uschess.org.

RATING INFLATION?

Hi. I noticed that two games in the October 2024 issue (McShane – Atwell and McShane – Corrales) have a typo for Luke McShane's rating. It's not 2802; maybe you meant 2602?

John Thompson
Via email

John Hartmann responds:

We use US Chess ratings for games that are played on American soil, and FIDE ratings for those played elsewhere. McShane's pre-event rating for the World Open was indeed 2802.

Thanks for being a careful reader! We're always happy to answer questions like these! ♠

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The Mississippi Master

BY FM ALEX KING

B

ENSON SCHEXNAYDRE HAS ended a decades-long drought in the state of Mississippi: His November US Chess rating is exactly 2200, making him the first Mississippi player since the 1980s to become a national master.

Schexnaydre, a 19-year-old freshman at Copiah-Lincoln Community College, was already the state's highest-rated active player by hundreds of points. He earned the coveted master title in the 2024 Tennessee Open at my local Memphis Chess Club and has made much of his rating progress in out-of-state tournaments.

Schexnaydre started playing chess in 2015 in the Franklin County Chess (FCC) program founded by Dr. Jeff Bulington, which was the subject of the *60 Minutes* feature "Chess Country." In 2016 I visited FCC and gave a simul where Schexnaydre — then rated 1228 — came close to holding me to a draw. He's had a few lessons with me, but his main coaches have been IM Dave Ross, FM Nick Matta, and GM Robert Hungaski. It was great to rub elbows with him again this year in Memphis, and later we caught up for a brief interview:

Alex King: How does it feel to be the first national master from Mississippi in so many years?

Benson Schexnaydre: It has been a goal I was certain I wanted and worked hard to finally achieve, but I do not feel that special when I know there are so many greater chess players than me.

How did the Franklin County Chess program shape your chess journey? How important was the guidance of teachers compared to your own talent and hard work?

Without FCC I flat out would not have been a chess player. Dr. Bulington and my other teachers gave me building blocks for my chess that I would otherwise never have. But the most important part for any chess player is hard work.

How do you see your own chess style? Who are your favorite players?

I try to simply play the best move but I know deep down I love playing unclear, tactically sharp positions. My favorite modern players are Veselin Topalov and Judit Polgar. The emphasis they have on the initiative is incredible. I attended a camp where they taught and they were great in person too.

Outside of chess you're a black belt in martial arts and were high school valedictorian, as was your older sister. What values did your family instill that have contributed to your many achievements?

All my siblings are ambitious and competitive. My family always let me choose my passions and decided they would help and support me in any way they could. Just them taking me to and from chess practice is a gift not every child gets. Their support has been crucial to my success in many ways that I bet I am not even aware of.

This year you won the Mississippi State Championship for the fifth time. Is the overall level of competition in your state increasing, and do you expect to see more titled players come out of Mississippi in the coming years?

It's definitely possible. I felt much stronger resistance from players in this Championship than I have in recent years. It made me happy to see. But becoming titled in Mississippi is hard and it takes a commitment and opportunity not many have.



I asked Benson to annotate one of his games from the Tennessee Open, and in humble fashion he chose his one loss:

PHILIDOR'S DEFENSE (C41)

CM Joseph Wan (2350)

NM Benson Schexnaydre (2196)

Tennessee Open (3), Memphis, 09.28.2024

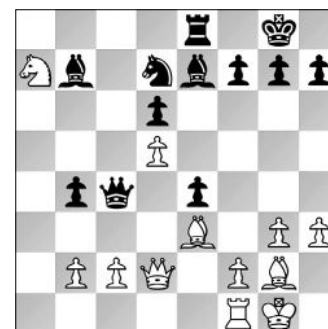
Annotations by Benson Schexnaydre

This was the last round of the day, and I went into the game thinking that a draw was fine.

1. d4 d6 2. e4 Nf6 3. Nc3 e5 4. Nge2 Nbd7 5. g3 Be7 6. Bg2 0-0 7. 0-0 c6 8. a4 Re8 9. a5 Qc7 10. h3 Rb8 11. Be3 b5

White has played an offbeat line that I was happy to see. I think the light-squared bishop is stronger on the a2-g8 diagonal.

12. axb6 e.p. axb6 13. d5 b5 14. dxc6 Qxc6 15. Nd5 Nxd5 16. exd5 Qc7 17. Ra7 Rb7 18. Nc3 b4 19. Nb5 Qc4 20. Rxb7 Bxb7 21. Na7 e4 22. Qd2



Here White offered a draw; I rejected it, as we both thought I was better. The more I

look at it now, the more I realize my position was not as favorable as I thought.

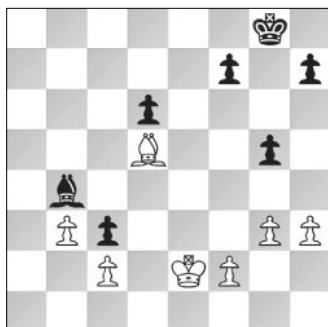
22. ... Nf6 23. b3 Qc3 24. Qxc3 bxc3 25. Bd4 Nxd5 26. Bxe4 Bf6

Trying to trade into an opposite-colored bishop ending I thought I could easily hold.

27. Bxd5 Bxd4 28. Bxb7 Bxa7 29. Ra1 Bc5 30. Kf1 g5 31. Ra4 Rb8 32. Bd5 Rb4 33. Rxb4

A surprise. I immediately offered a draw, thinking he was conceding it.

33. ... Bxb4 34. Ke2



The position is much tougher than I first thought. After the game I still wasn't clear about whether it was a draw.

34. ... Bc5?

The right move was 34. ... h5!. Now the h-pawn won't become a weakness down the line. I tried to beat the engine from here, but I even found a way to lose as White: 35. Kd3 Bc5 36. f3 Kf8 37. Kc4 Ke7 38. b4 Bf2 39. Kb5 Bxg3 40. Kc6 f6 41. b5 Kd8 42. Kb7 Kd7 43. b6 Bf2! 44. Bc6+ Ke6 and now 45. Kc7? d5! 46. b7 Ba7 47. b8=Q Bxb8+ 48. Kxb8 d4 when Black wins. Of course this is all very speculative.

35. f3? Bd4?

AK: This was the last chance for 35. ... h5!, and White should have kept winning chances with 35. g4!.

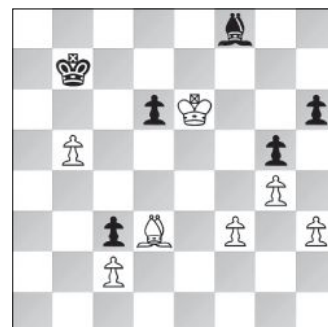
36. Kd3 Be5 37. g4 Kf8

Around here it began to dawn on me that my position was really bad.

38. Kc4 Ke7 39. Kb5 Bd4 40. b4 Kd7 41. Bxf7 Kc7 42. Kc4 Be5 43. Bg8 h6 44. Bh7 Kb6 45. Bd3 Bg7 46. Kd5 Bf8 47. b5 Kb7 48. Ke6

(see diagram top of next column)

48. ... d5 49. Kxd5 Kb6 50. Ke6 Bg7 51. Kf7 Bh8 52. Kg6 Be5 53. Kxh6 Bf6 54. Kg6 Bd8 55. Kf5 Kc5 56. f4 gxf4 57. Kxf4, Black resigned.



POSITION AFTER 48. Ke6

I feel like there is a lot to learn from this game. I played the opening well and got an OK position, but after the draw offer things got shaky.



Congratulations to Benson for his accomplishment on behalf of himself and his state. I look forward to seeing more great things from him in the future! ♠

For up-to-date chess news and information, check out **Chess Life Online** at [uschess.org/clo](https://www.uschess.org/clo) on a regular basis.



Benson (right) takes the silver pieces in New Orleans.

Call for Nominations

2025 US Chess Executive Board Election

THE US CHESS FEDERATION (US CHESS) will hold an election in 2025 for four at-large positions on the Executive Board. The top four vote-getters will be elected for a term of four years expiring in 2029.

Any current US Chess member who is not a current US Chess employee or designated contractor (as defined in the US Chess by-laws) may be nominated for election to the Executive Board.

Nominations must be made by submitting a petition containing the signatures of 50 or more members of US Chess who are either registered or eligible to register to vote, and by paying a \$100 filing fee to the US Chess Federation.

The members signing the nomination petition must include at least 15 US Chess delegates (alternate delegates don't count) representing at least five states. Petitions and filing fees must be postmarked by Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024. Send petitions and the filing fee to:

US Chess Federation
ATTN: Governance Coordinator
P.O. Box 775308
St. Louis, MO 63117

Petitions may also be submitted electronically to governance@uschess.org.

The nomination petitions must contain the dated signature, printed name, and US Chess ID number of each signer, and should contain the following text:

"We, the undersigned members of the US Chess Federation, nominate (candidate name goes here) as a candidate for election to the US Chess Executive Board in the 2025 election. We also consent to having our names and US Chess ID numbers published as having signed this petition."

A sample nomination form is available at www.uschess.org/docs/gov/reports/USChess_EB_ElectionPetitionForm_updated_nonfillable.pdf

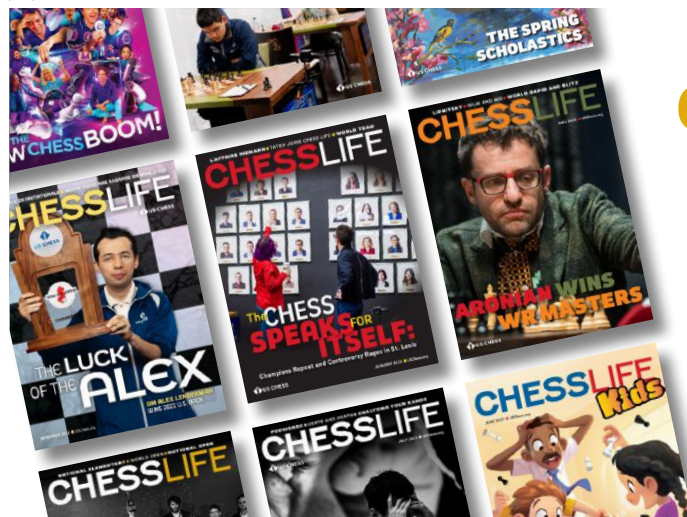
A fillable version of the same form is available at www.uschess.org/docs/gov/reports/USChess_EB_ElectionPetitionForm_updated_fillable.pdf

Candidates must consent to be on the ballot either by signing their own nomination petition or by separate notice to US Chess.

A voting member for this election is any current US Chess member (active as of June 1, 2025) whose membership expires on or after June 30, 2025; who will be age 16 or older as of June 30, 2025, and who registers to vote by June 1, 2025. Members with memberships of less than one year's duration at their start are not eligible to become voting members. The election will be conducted

by electronic ballot; to vote, members must have an email address on file with US Chess.

Emails with voting instructions will be distributed around June 10, 2025, to voting members who are registered to vote as of June 1, 2025. Returned ballots will be counted in July. Terms of elected board members will begin at the conclusion of the 2025 delegates' meeting.



CHESS LIFE AND CHESS LIFE KIDS

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Membership!

James "Jim" Hollingsworth

1955-2024

BY JOSHUA ANDERSON

JAMES "JIM" HOLLINGSWORTH WAS born in Dayton, Ohio, on June 13, 1955. He learned to play chess at age 13, and although chess would never be his focal point, it would remain a cherished activity for the rest of his life.

In 1978, Hollingsworth enlisted in the Army. He served for over 30 years on active duty and individual ready reserves and reserves, retiring as a major. During that time, he was everything from a supply specialist to commander of a field artillery battery in South Korea to a reservist with the Civil Affairs Battalion, earning numerous awards — and attaining an expert rating in the late 1980s while in South Korea.

Hollingsworth's military career and family — he had four children and numerous grandchildren — limited his chess playing through 2008. Even so, he helped establish the Red River Shootout, a chess match between Texas and Oklahoma that recently celebrated its 22nd year.

Once retired, Hollingsworth devoted more time to chess, becoming active in both the Oklahoma State Chess Association and the Texas Chess Association (TCA). He also remained active in military chess: He was invited to compete in seven All-Army Chess Championships and played in five of them. In 2021, he organized the 62nd U.S. Armed Forces Open, the third-largest edition of that tournament.

There are 38 of Hollingsworth's games in Megabase from 2005 through 2020. Here is one of the most interesting, played in his careful style.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, GRAND PRIX ATTACK (B23)

Ernest Maldonado Sr. (1708)

Jim Hollingsworth (1833)

30th North American Open (10),

Stillwater, 05.30.2011



1. e4 c5 2. Nc3 g6 3. f4 Bg7 4. Nf3 d6 5. Bc4 e6 6. 0-0 a6 7. d3 b5 8. Bb3 Qb6 9. Kh1 a5 10. a4 b4 11. Ne2 Ne7 12. g4 Bb7 13. Ng3 Nd7 14. h3 d5 15. e5 h6 16. Qe1 d4 17. Ne4 Bxe4 18. Qxe4 0-0-0 19. Bc4 Kc7 20. Bd2 Qb7 21. Qe2 Nb6 22. Bb3 Nbd5 23. Kg1 h5 24. Rf2 hxg4 25. hxg4 Bh6 26. Nh2 Rh7 27. Bxd5 Nxd5 28. Raf1 Rdh8 29. Rg2 Kb6 30. Qe1 Qc6 31. c4 dxc3 e.p. 32. bxc3 Qxa4 33. cxb4 axb4 34. f5 Bxd2 35. Qxd2 gxf5 36. gxf5 Qc6 37. d4 c4 38. fxe6 fxe6 39. Rb1 c3 40. Qc2 Qc4 41. Qa2 Qxd4+ 42. Qf2 Qxf2+ 43. Rxf2 Kc5, White resigned.

Since 2016, Hollingsworth entered and

judged Chess Journalists of America awards. He also developed a plan to get the TCA to submit numerous entries, served on the outreach committee, and helped with the Distinguished Chess Journalists awards. In 2021, he won a CJA award for Best Photograph of the Year.

Though we worked together for eight years, I did not meet Hollingsworth until this summer, when (as seen above) he accepted a US Chess Meritorious Service Award for his 45 years of chess service.

Jim Hollingsworth passed away Sept. 19. I was already looking forward to seeing him at the 2027 U.S. Open, in Dallas. It will be less fun with Jim gone. ♠

The 2024 Year-End Trivia Quiz

Time to put all that useless knowledge to work!

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

T

HE TIPOFF THAT 2024 WAS going to be a tricky year for trivia came Oscar night, when the question was spawned: One of the big Academy Award winners had a chess scene. Which blockbuster movie was it?

If you knew the obscure fact that J. Robert Oppenheimer played chess, you would have guessed wrong. If you have an eagle eye for chess boards you might have spotted the one with pink pieces — in *Barbie*.

With that warning we present our annual quiz on perfectly useless bits of chess knowledge you may have acquired in this or previous years. Answers are on page 71.

(1) In one of 2024's most unusual exhibitions, dozens of amateurs:

- (a) Played one another with sets and boards on which all the pieces and squares were white.
- (b) Won more than \$100,000 by guessing moves chosen by AlphaZero.
- (c) Took part in a simultaneous exhibition in which their grandmaster opponent played not only blindfolded but in scuba gear, submerged in a tank of water.

(2) A recent bestselling book recalled how a future chess star looked like "some sort of deranged pilot from a 1940s movie" when he was young. Who was it?

- (a) Mikhail Tal
- (b) Bobby Fischer
- (c) Magnus Carlsen

(3) What is the significance of this dialogue?

Question: "Do you play chess?"

Answer: Yes.

Question: I have K at e1 and no other pieces. You have only K at e3 and R at h8. It is your move. What do you play?

Answer: (after 15 second pause) Rh1 mate."

- (a) It was cut from an early scene in the Netflix series "The Queen's Gambit."
- (b) It is the original "Turing Test," to determine whether the answerer is human or computer.
- (c) It is the first time the computer HAL speaks in the movie "2001."

(4) Times have changed: GM Bent Larsen was asked in 1974, "Is being a chess professional now feasible?" Yes, he replied, but only:

- (a) If you are paid for giving at least four simultaneous exhibitions a month.
- (b) If you write at least two books a year.
- (c) If you become a grandmaster by age 16.
- (d) If you become an international master by age 24.

(5) This little-known game earned new attention in 2024. Why?

1. e4 c5 2. d4 cxd4 3. Nf3 g6 4. Nxd4 Bg7 5. c4 Nf6 6. Nc3 d6 7. Be2 O-O 8. Be3 Bd7 9. O-O Nc6 10. h3 Nxd4 11. Bxd4 Bc6 12. Bf3 Re8 13. b4 b6 14. a4 Rc8 15. a5 Qc7 16. axb6 axb6 17. Ra6 Nd7 18. Bxg7 Kxg7 19. Qa1 Ne5 20. Ra7 Qd8 21. Be2 Bd7 22. Nd5 Kg8 23. Rc1 e6 24. Ne3 h5 25. b5! Qh4 26. Rd1! Qf4 27. g3 Qh6 28. Rxd6, Black resigned.

- (a) It is the first game Dommaraju Gukesh won against a grandmaster, played when he was 11.
- (b) A new book confirms it is the only known game of Géza Maróczy playing the Maróczy Bind.
- (c) Rachel Reeves, who won the game when she was a British girls champion, was named Chancellor of the Exchequer in July.

(6) Great players have good habits. Mikhail Botvinnik said he maintained one habit throughout his adult life. Aron Nimzovich credited the same habit with helping him achieve his greatest success. What is it?

- (a) Playing a blindfold game before breakfast.
- (b) Testing your memory by reciting the results of every world championship match.
- (c) Performing the gymnastic exercises described in the book "My System."

(7) You've heard of Fischer Random. What board game was invented by another world champion?

- (a) Laska
- (b) Chessablanca
- (c) Euwe Can Play

(8) Many chess fans readers were intrigued when they read the words "A fun ride from Apprentice to Business Grandmaster." Where did they come from?

- (a) *The New York Times* review of Maurice Ashley's new book.
- (b) An advertisement about the most popular financial news show on television in 2024.
- (c) Donald Trump's blurb for a chess book.

(9) The first time St. Louis became the center of the chess world was in 1886, when games of a world championship match were played there. But the first game was briefly delayed because:

- (a) It was to be held on an outdoors stage — and was rained out.
- (b) The board was ruled unacceptable because the squares were red and black.
- (c) There were religious protests over the "sacrilegious depiction of bishops."

(10) Another first: The first time an Ameri-

QUIZ FOR DECEMBER

WHO WOULD HAVE

guessed that an antique opening pushed out of master play a century ago would become the most popular battleground for the world's elite players today? The Giuoco Piano has somehow become super-trendy. Each of the six diagrams came about after its signature setup 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. d3 (or 4. c3 and 5. d4). Your task is to find the fastest winning line of play. This will usually mean the forced win of a decisive amount of material. Solutions on page 71.



PROBLEM 1

GM M Amin Tabatabaei
GM Pranav Venkatesh



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2

GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
GM Bogdan-Daniel Deac



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3

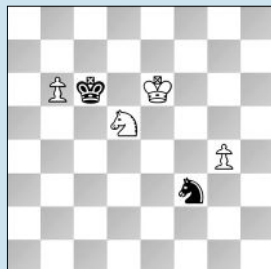
FM Nagarkatte Vedant
Alan Bakija



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4

GM Rameshbabu Vaishali
IM Oliwia Kiolbasa



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5

IM Alexander Katz
WGM Atousa Pourkashian



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6

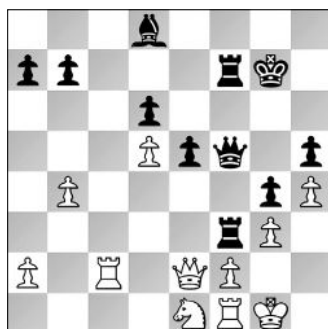
GM Cemil Can Ali Marandi
GM Elshan Moradiabadi



WHITE TO MOVE

can teenager played in an Olympiad he won the following game as Black. Who was he?

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 g6 3. c4 Bg7 4. Nc3 O-O 5. g3 d6 6. Bg2 Nc6 7. O-O e5 8. d5 Ne7 9. e4 Nd7 10. Nh4 f5 11. Bg5 Nf6 12. Qd2 fxe4 13. Nxe4 Nxe4 14. Bxe4 Bh3 15. Rfe1 Qd7 16. Bg2 Bxg2 17. Bxe7 Qxe7 18. Nxd2 Qf6 19. Re2 g5 20. Rae1 Rf7 21. b4 Raf8 22. Rf1 g4 23. Qc2 h5 24. Nh4 Bh6 25. c5 Kg7 26. Ng2 Bg5 27. Re4 Qg6 28. Qe2 Rf3 29. Ne1 Qf5 30. cxd6 cxd6 31. Rc4 Rf7 32. h4 Bd8 33. Rc2



33. ... e4! 24. Ng2 Bb6 35. Kh2 e3 36. Nf4 Rxf4 37. gxf4 Qxf4+, White resigned.

- (a) Samuel Reshevsky
- (b) Larry Evans
- (c) Bobby Fischer
- (d) Albert Simonson

(11) A famous friendship was temporarily ruptured by a chess game: "When I beat him one day he got so angry that he swept the pieces to the floor. After a few games like that, we stopped playing." Who was the friend talking about?

- (a) Ben Affleck
- (b) Anderson Cooper
- (c) Bill Gates
- (d) George Clooney

(12) Among the new chess-related devices reported this year was:

- (a) The "mouthpad," a hands-free touchscreen that allows you to make moves with your tongue.
- (b) A set created by a 3D printer whose kings explode when mated.
- (c) An electronic 50th-anniversary Rubik's Cube with chess pieces on every square.

13. At various times in his career he identified himself as a "chess champion," a "landlord," an "editor," a "diplomat" and, at age 37, "retired." Who was this person?

14. Fans of World Champion Garry Kasparov were told in 1997, "Anyone without the slightest knowledge of chess would be able to determine" when he is about to win a game. "All they have to do is watch ..."

- (a) "... his posture."
- (b) "... his shoes."
- (c) "... his wrist."

15. "It can't be as hard as getting a man on the moon." Who famously said this, and what was he talking about?

- (a) Elon Musk, about a computer "solving" chess by 2034.
- (b) Bobby Fischer, about a computer becoming the world's best player.
- (c) Magnus Carlsen, about refuting the Berlin Defense. ♠

What It Takes

There's no feeling like winning a medal at an Olympiad. Here's how it's done.

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

T

HE OLYMPIAD IS THE MOST special event on the chess calendar. It's one of the few international team events, and one

where every country is represented, and with more or less an equal number of male and female participants. Amateurs and the world's top players play under the same roof. It is truly a celebration of chess.

Our Olympiad teams went on a triumphant run at the 2024 Olympiad in Budapest, Hungary — silver medals for the open team, bronze for the women's — so it feels fitting to write a column on what it takes to win a medal. This was an especially momentous occasion for our women's team — their first medal since bronze at Dresden in 2008, which was also the last time both of our teams finished on the podium.

I've played in six Olympiads myself and certainly have experienced the many ups and downs this event offers. So what does it take for a team to win a medal at the Olympiad?

TRUST YOUR TEAM

Winning the game that clinches victory for your team is one of the best feelings in the world. Losing the game that costs the match, especially towards the end of the tournament, is devastating. There should be general trust between the players that they will come through and the burden isn't on one player to carry the team. Same applies to ongoing games: Trusting that a teammate will convert a winning position they have

on the board or save a worse endgame can lessen the burden.

KEEP THE GAME GOING

When one player has a bad position, the rest of the team understandably feels the pressure. But the finality of resignation, and of seeing the loss on scoreboard, is an extremely unpleasant feeling that should be put off as long as possible. The most striking example from this Olympiad was GM Levon Aronian's first round game against a much lower-rated opponent.

DON'T RESIGN YET!

FM Andre Mendez Machado (2122)

GM Levon Aronian (2729)

45th Olympiad (1), Budapest, 09.11.2024



BLACK TO MOVE

13. ... Qb7

Levon realized that 13. ... Ng7 loses the house to 14. Nd6+!, so after a 20-minute think, he found a move to at least keep the game alive on the board.

14. gxf5 Bxf5 15. d4

Of course White is completely winning, but things later took a bad turn for the Panamanian player.

In a very funny, very Levon-style interview a few rounds later, he confessed that in any other tournament he simply would have resigned, but in a team event he felt the responsibility to keep playing. Once he learned from the arbiter that he could offer a draw on move 30, he then had a goal to at least keep the game alive until then. By now we know that Levon did, miraculously, win this game.

KEEPING IT TOGETHER

IM Alice Lee (2384)

WGM Alua Nurman (2324)

45th Women's Olympiad (11), Budapest, 09.22.2024



BLACK TO MOVE



Alice Lee considers the options against Nurman

On the women's team, it was IM Alice Lee who saved several half-points from much worse positions by putting up great resistance and not collapsing. Saving the last-round game after an early disaster secured the medal for the U.S. team.

19. ... Nxf2!

Alice walked into this tactic with her last move (19. Qa3).

20. Na4

The position is disastrous for White — losing the f2-pawn also weakens the e3-pawn. But Alice finds the best way to keep the fight going. Of course 20. Kxf2?? loses the queen to 20. ... Nd3+ 21. Bxd3 Qxa3.

20. ... Nxa4

Already an inaccuracy. Black could have taken advantage of the pin one more time with 20. ... b6! 21. Nxc5 Ne4! bringing the knight back. Unlike in the game, the a7-pawn is defended here.

21. Qxa4 Ng4 22. Qxa7 Bf5 23. Bf1 Qxe3+

Trading when you are up material is natural, but here keeping more pieces on the board will give Black better chances to convert the pawn. After 23. ... Ra8! 24. Qc5 Qe6! Black can keep the queens on the board and attack the weak white king. Of course, these are very difficult decisions to make over the board.

24. Qxe3 Nxe3

The endgame gives Alice better chances of

holding on. The weakness of her king is no longer relevant; her knight will have a nice home on d4; Black's d-pawn can't go too far, and the pawn majority on the queenside gives her great counterplay.

25. a4?

White rushes to create a passed pawn on the queenside, but it will leave her with weaknesses instead. Activating the knight first with 25. Nd4 would have been more accurate.

25. ... Rxc1 26. Rxc1 Ra8?!

The more active and accurate move was 26. ... Re4!. From here, the rook controls the d4-square and also can deal better with the pawns. For example, play might continue 27. a5 Ra4 28. a6 bxa6 29. bxa6 Nxf1 and a second pawn will fall. White can try 27. Ra1, but after 27. ... Nxf1 28. Kxf1 Rb4 the white pieces are suddenly very passive and the threat of ... Bf5-c2, attacking the a4-pawn, looms.

27. Nd4 Be4 28. Ra1

The position is slowly starting to look slightly dangerous for Black. If White manages to create a passed pawn defended by the light-squared bishop, the tables will really turn in her favor.

28. ... b6

(see diagram top of next column)

29. a5!



POSITION AFTER 28. ... b6

Alice doesn't miss her chance and keeps the momentum going.

29. ... bxa5

Black could blunder with 29. ... Rxa5?? 30. Rxa5 bxa5 31. b6 when the pawn runs.

30. Nc6 Nc4

After 30. ... a4 31. b6 Black has to start doing some damage control, as the pawn cannot be stopped. It should be a draw after 31. ... d4 32. b7 Bxc6 33. bxa8=Q+ Bxa8 34. Rxa4 Bc6 35. Rxd4 Nxf1 36. Kxf1 g6.

31. Bxc4 dxc4 32. Ra4!

Another accurate move by Alice. Neither pawn grab works: 32. Rxa5?? loses to the simple tactic 32. ... Bxc6, and 32. Nxa5 will lead to disaster with 32. ... c3 33. Nb3 Rd8 when the b-pawn is observed by the bishop; the knight and rook are passive, and Black's passed c-pawn is becoming too difficult to deal with; ... c3-c2, ... Rd8-d3 and ... Rd3-d1+ are coming.

32. ... Bxc6 33. bxc6 Rc8 34. Rxc4 a4 35. Rxa4 Rxc6 36. h3

The worst is over for Alice; these three versus two rook endgames are drawn with best play. Although her opponent tried for a long time, Alice was never in danger again.

36. ... Rc2 37. Kh2 g6 38. Rb4 Kg7 39. Ra4 Re2 40. Kg3 Rd2 41. Kf3 Rc2 42. Rb4 Rc3+ 43. Kf2 g5 44. h4 Kg6 45. Rb6+ f6 46. hxc5 hxc5 47. g4 Rc7 48. Kf3 Kf7 49. Ra6 Rc3+ 50. Kf2 Rd3 51. Ke2 Rd4 52. Kf3 Ke7 53. Ra3 Kd6 54. Ra6+ Ke5 55. Ra5+ Rd5 56. Ra3 Rd1 57. Re3+ Kd4 58. Re6 Rf1+ 59. Kg3 Rf4 60. Ra6 Ke5 61. Ra5+ Ke6 62. Ra6+ Kf7 63. Ra7+ Kg6 64. Rb7 Re4 65. Kf3 Re6 66. Ra7 Rb6 67. Rc7 Rb3+ 68. Kf2 Rb8 69. Ra7 Rf8 70. Kg3 Rf7 71. Rxf7 Kxf7 72. Kf3 Kf8 73. Kf2 Ke8 74. Ke2 Kd7 75. Kd3 Kd6 76. Kd4 Kc6 77. Kc4 Kd7 78. Kd3

Just don't fall into the trap: It looks like White gets the opposition after 78. Kd5 but Black takes it with 78. ... Ke7 and wins.

78. ... Ke8 79. Ke2 Ke7 80. Ke3 Ke6 81. Ke4 Kd7, draw.

SHOW UP FOR THE TEAM

Matches and medals often come down to clutch victories or crucial half-points that decide tiebreaks, and even players who have sat out for several rounds in a row have to be ready to step in at any moment. In the final round of the Open, it was GM Wesley So's victory against China's GM Wei Yi that ensured the team's podium finish. After losing in the previous match she played in, IM "Begim" Tokhirjonova really shined in her game against GM Vaishali Rameshbabu to ensure a tie against the unstoppable India. You can read her annotations on page 27.

GO ON A HOT STREAK

GM Gukesh Dommaraju's remarkable streak of 8 out of 8 in 2022 is the most memorable one in recent Olympiad history. This year, it was GM Arjun Erigaisi who was unstoppable on board three, winning the first six games. Hot streaks are not necessary to win an Olympiad, but it certainly seems to be the trend. When one player on the team starts winning all their games, it gives themselves and the team more confidence.

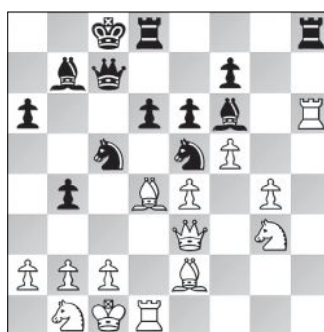
IM Carissa Yip was undeniably the star of our women's team, winning the individual gold medal on board two and finishing with a remarkable performance rating of 2634. She was undefeated in 11 games while taking no rest days and went on two streaks, winning the first four games, then another three games in the middle. One of my favorite games of hers came against Ukraine.

CRASHING THROUGH

GM Anna Ushenina (2417)

IM Carissa Yip (2386)

45th Women's Olympiad (10), Budapest, 09.21.2024



BLACK TO MOVE

20. ... Ned3+!!

A nice shot that breaks the harmony in White's position. Black could also trade rooks on h6 first.

21. Bxd3

White is left with even less material after 21. Rxd3 Nxd3+ 22. Bxd3 Bxd4.

21. ... Bxd4

The white queen is now overworked and cannot recapture.

22. Qg5 b3!

Now that the white queen has left the queenside, Carissa is going after the enemy king.

23. Bc4

It's a very cute checkmate after 23. axb3 Nxb3.

23. ... Be5 24. Rxh8 Rxh8 25. axb3 Bxg3

It's all over now, as Black is up a bishop.

26. Nd2 d5 27. exd5 exd5 28. Be2 Re8 29. Bf3 Nxb3+ 30. Kb1 Bf4, White resigned.

SHOW RESILIENCE

The Olympiad is a long event with many ups and downs. As long as the team is in the running, all the players need to mentally stay in the game. Our open team suffered an unexpected loss to Ukraine in round four and could only draw against the much lower-rated Romanian team in round six. Nonetheless, they didn't throw in the towel — they pulled it together and finished on the podium with clutch victories in the later rounds. Our women's team lost to underdog Mongolia in round five but quickly recovered in the following rounds. Mental toughness and staying in the game for the long run is one of the key qualities of winners, be it in an individual tournament or a team event. ♠



Krush looks on as Yip matches wits with Ushenina

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PHOTO: VANESSA LEE



Samford Fellows IM Carissa Yip (l.), IM Alice Lee (r.), WGM Begim Tokhirjonova & 2008 Fellow GM Irina Krush all helped lead Team USA to the Olympiad Bronze Medal. Lee earned Silver for her unbeaten performance on Board Four.

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ONE MORE TIME

IM Maximillian Lu recaps the last Invationals of his scholastic career.

BY **IM MAXIMILLIAN LU**

M

WANDERING ALONG the Norfolk marina boardwalk, suitcase in tow, I marveled at the grandeur of the Navy fleet punctuating the cloudy skyline as I waited to check in to my hotel. Lost in

the moment, I savored a rare but welcome moment of tranquility in a summer full of chess travel and farewells to friends before the start of college. It hit me, then, that the 2024 Denker was the final hurrah of my scholastic career. Until then, I hadn't properly reflected on my years of scholastic chess — life, specifically as a second semester high school senior, was moving too fast. And so, I was determined to make this experience count. Or I would try, anyway.

I turned back toward the hotel and saw two kids blitzing out Bongcloud theory on the patio between the hotel and the marina. “So it has begun,” I thought.

Norfolk, Virginia, played host to temporary hub more than 650 chess players across the National Invationals and US Open starting in late July. One of my favorite parts of the four-day Invationals weekend has always been connecting with friends from across the country and making new ones along the way.

The Invationals bring together the best players from each state across five sections: the Denker (High School), the Barber (Middle School), the Rockefeller (Elementary School), the Haring (Girls), and the Irwin (Seniors 50+). The podium finalists of each scholastic section earn college scholarships: \$5,000 for first place, \$3,000 for second, \$2,000 for third. There are also special awards (the Ursula Foster U15 / U12, Barber U11, and Rockefeller U8) awards in each scholastic section for players under specific ages.

All scholarships and awards are fund-

ed through generous contributions from US Chess, the U.S. Chess Trust, Dewain Barber and Susan Barber, David and Maureen Grimaud, John D. Rockefeller V, and US Chess: the Dewain and Susan Barber Fund. US Chess would also like to express special thanks to Dwight Barber, the Ursula Foster Family, Jon Haskel, and a number of anonymous sponsors for their continued support.

The winners of the Denker, Haring, and Irwin also qualify for their respective U.S. Championship (Junior, Girls, and Senior). Attendance at the 2024 Invitationals was

DENKER

The old adage says blitz is bad for your classical chess. I've never believed it, particularly given the prominence of online blitz, but it's true that the top three Weeramantry Blitz finishers all struggled to replicate our success in the classical Denker.

With four IMs and 10 players over 2300, the Denker promised to be one of the most fiercely contested events. Two-time defending Denker champion GM Arthur Guo opted not to compete this year, creating a fresh opportunity for others to grab a piece of the action.

The Denker can also be volatile because it features high schoolers who study a lot but don't have many opportunities to compete in their home states — as a veteran of scholastic chess, I've learned never to underestimate any opponent. This year, for example, Kentucky master Evan Sammons knocked off FM Vishnu Vanapalli in round two and held IM Sandeep Sethuraman to a draw in round three. Only two perfect scores remained after three rounds: the familiar rivals IM Gus Huston and FM Sharvesh Deviprasath.

Huston won impressively over Deviprasath, and looked to be the odds-on favorite to capture the title entering the fifth round as the sole perfect score, but he faced an even tougher challenge from Sethuraman. After a tense and chaotic five-hour game filled with blunders on both sides, Sethuraman emerged victorious, propelling himself a half-point ahead of the chasers.

Nevertheless, there was still room for a last-round surprise. In the final round, I had 4/5 and faced Sethuraman with the white pieces, needing a win to secure a share of first place. I eventually won a pawn, but I was unable to convert and had to settle for

near perfect, setting a record: 52 players in the Irwin, 50 each in the Denker, Barber, and Rockefeller, and 48 in the Haring.

What better way to warm up for the main event than by playing some spirited speed chess? The Weeramantry Blitz offers a unique opportunity for players across the invitationals to compete in sections divided by rating. I eventually won on tiebreak over Delaware's FM Terry Luo, though not after two dramatic matches against blitz specialist (and eventual Denker co-champion) NM Avi Kaplan of Illinois. IM Gus Huston of New York took clear third.

a draw. Kaplan and Deviprasath won their games, leading to a three-way tie for first with 5/6. Sethuraman claimed first and a qualifying spot for the 2025 U.S. Junior Championship on tiebreaks, while Kaplan placed second and Deviprasath third.

Sandeep humbly remarked that "Most of my games were pretty equalish throughout, and I was able to outplay [my opponent] during time trouble." A wise reflection on what it takes to power through such a crowded field.

The end of the Denker is bittersweet, as it signifies the culmination of a scholastic career for the outgoing seniors. This year, seven of the top 10 finishers competed for the last time.

BARBER

The absence of last year's top seeds and co-champions — Erick Zhao, who is now an IM, and GM-elect Brewington Hardaway — gave way to exciting chess.

While Sammons played the role of giant-killer in the Denker, the Barber saw its own dark horse in 10th seed NM Anjaneya Rao. In round three, Rao played top seed IM Eric Liu to a hard-fought draw. Defending co-champion NM Jasmine Su slipped past the other leaders to enter the fifth round as the sole perfect score, with Rao, second-seeded FM Brejesh Chakrabarti, and a handful of others half a point behind.

The crucial game between Su and Chakrabarti seemed poised to determine the championship, but a draw set up a final-round showdown between none other than Su and Rao, the two remaining 4½/5 scores. A draw would guarantee both players



Left: Our author, deep in thought. Right, top to bottom: Denker winner Sethuraman, Deviprasath, and Kaplan.

a share of first and the co-champion title, but a decisive result would yield an outright victory. Su opted to play conservatively with white, entering a quiet sideline of the French Defense and gaining the upper hand entering an early queenless middlegame. However, a series of inaccurate moves and a misguided plan allowed Rao to seize the initiative and the game.

With this victory, Rao culminated a remarkable run by securing the outright Barber championship with $5\frac{1}{2}/6$. Liu, despite his earlier draw with Rao, finished strong, earning second place with 5 points. Chakrabarti drew his final game and took third on tiebreaks, edging four other competitors — Su (Conn.), NM Alex Zhang (Mo.), NM Harshit Jagirapu (N.M.), and NM Roshan Sethuraman (Ariz.) — all with $4\frac{1}{2}$ points.

ROCKEFELLER

I'm not sure which makes me feel older: knowing that a good portion of the Rockefeller field is half my age or scanning through the results list and seeing mostly US Chess ID numbers starting primarily with 17... or 30... (which are used for the most recent members). Nonetheless, I felt nostalgic absorbing the energy the kids brought to the atmosphere; the tableside antics and "I adjust" gamesmanship were familiar relics from a different time. Upon recognizing me at the airport, several kids interrupted their bughouse game, pieces flying, and bounded over to ask me about the tournament. I smiled in amusement, thinking back to when I had their bubbly gregariousness. *So this is how it feels to be a senior.*

Despite featuring the youngest competitors, the Rockefeller still packed quite a punch. Washington's Ted Wang, the top seed and the section's only national master, cruised through the first four rounds, dispatching his opponents with ease. Matching his performance was Florida's Vivan Mulay, who was the only other player with $4/4$. Their fifth-round battle to remain the only perfect score ended in a grueling 134-move draw, with Wang missing several opportunities to gain a decisive advantage earlier in the game.

Joining them both with $4\frac{1}{2}/5$ was Michigan's Rocky Wang, one of the rare third graders in the Rockefeller. The ensuing Wang-Wang final round showdown lived up to the hype, with an exciting Sveshnikov Sicilian creating a double-edged game. Eventually, Rocky faltered under pressure from Ted's marching kingside majority. Not to be outdone, 12th-seeded Mulay secured his place as co-champion alongside Ted Wang by defeating New York powerhouse Lev Shagin on the white side of a Catalan in just 16 moves.

MINI-PUZZLE

Vivan Mulay (2025)

Lev Shagin (2117)

Rockefeller Tournament of Elementary State Champs (6), Norfolk, 07.30.2024

(see diagram top of next column)

What is White's best continuation?

10. a3 Bxd2 11. dxc5!

A powerful intermediate move, winning a crucial pawn.



► The 40th Annual Denker Tournament of High School Champions marks an end of an era, as it is the final year of the U.S. Chess Trust's 40-year commitment to the longest-running tournament of champions. US Chess is grateful to the Trust for all of its support for the Denker over the years.

The Denker is also celebrating a new era, as Dewain and Sue Barber announced at the Invitational opening ceremony that they are endowing the tournament going forward. Because of their vision and financial commitment, the Denker will be enjoyed by high school players for generations to come! Thank you, Dewain and Sue!



WHITE TO MOVE

11. ... Qa6 12. Nxd2 Qxc4 13. Nxc4

Mulay has a crushing position, and Shagin resigned in just three more moves.

In the end, the dominant duo finished a whole point ahead of the pack, with Wang barely edging Mulay by one point on the second tiebreak to capture the Rockefeller title. Five players tied for third place with 4½, including Glenn Zhang (Calif.-S), Harvey Hanke (Ind.), Kevin Zhao (Mass.), Rocky Wang (Mich.), and Lacey Wang (Conn.); Zhang earned third place on tiebreaks.

HARING

This year's Haring boasted a record attendance of 48 players, continuing a long-term trend of increasing female participation. As the section is for K-12 players, the wide range of ages fosters a collegial and supportive environment. Several participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to connect at Sunday afternoon's traditional Meet & Greet.

The Haring also followed one of the consistent themes of the Invitationals: the prevalence of upsets. Indiana's Laura Escobar toppled two WCMs who outrated her by 300 points. FM Zoey Tang, of Oregon, the top seed by more than 100 points, managed to avoid the fray, leading as the sole perfect score after four rounds. In the crucial matchup between the two top seeds, New York's WFM Megan Paragua put Tang under pressure in the late middlegame but settled for a draw as soon as the position reached a seemingly equal rook endgame.

Tang's concession to Paragua paved the way for California's WFM Angela Liu to jump back into contention. In the last round, Liu, unfazed by the tournament situation, opened a sizable time advantage and put up a tenacious defense against Tang on the black side of a Queen's Gambit Declined. Despite blundering a pawn in a complex

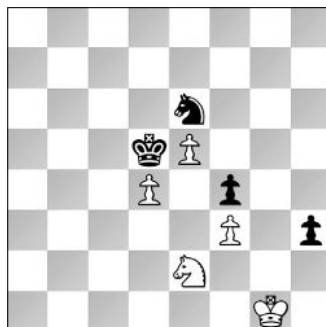
knight endgame, Liu fought her way back to equality, taking advantage of Tang's time trouble. Yet at the ninth hour, Tang caught Liu off guard with a triangulation leading to *zugzwang*, clinching the title.

AN ENDGAME DANCE

FM Zoey Tang (2313)

WFM Angela Liu (2089)

Haring Tournament of Girls State Champs (6), Norfolk, 07.30.2024



BLACK TO MOVE

66. ... Ng5 67. Kf2 Ne6 68. Kf1 Ng5 69. Kf2 Ne6 70. Kg1 Ng5 71. Kh1!

Tang shifts her king in the other direction, challenging Liu to find the correct continuation. Although the position is still objectively drawn, Tang's last move creates serious practical chances.

71. ... Ne6?

71. ... Nxf3 was the clearest path to a draw. It might seem scary to allow 72. Nxf4+, but after 72. ... Kc6! 73. d5+ Kd7 the king effectively stops White's pawns. For example, 74. e6+ Kc7 75. Ng6 Kd6 76. Nf4.

72. Kh2

The position Black had to avoid: She cannot defend both pawns without losing one to check or letting the e-pawn advance.

72. ... Ng5 73. Nxf4+ Kxd4 74. e6, Black resigned.

White wins Black's knight for the pawn.

After Paragua bested Maryland's Angelina Verma in the last round, the podium results mirrored the starting ranks: Tang first, Paragua second, and Liu third on tiebreaks over Lilianna Gao (Conn.), WCM Chloe Wang (Pa.), and WIM Kelsey Liu (Mass.).

Right, top to bottom: Barber champion Anjaneya Rao; Rockefeller winner Ted Wang, and Vivan Mulay.





IRWIN

The Irwin Tournament of Senior Champions is a unique event among unique events. Long after their scholastic days, these senior stalwarts return to represent their states and fight for a chance to qualify for the U.S. Senior Championship. The Invitationals and concurrent U.S. Open also provide the ideal atmosphere to reconnect with old friends while sipping a beer on the dock.

The Irwin fielded three GMs and seven IMs, marking one of the strongest events to date. Several familiar faces, including GM John Fedorowicz, IM Nikoloz Managadze, and IM Ron Burnett, headed the initial standings, along with a new crop of players.

Overall, Managadze showcased excellent technique throughout the tournament. His opponents included a GM and three IMs, and he cruised to a clean first-place finish with $5\frac{1}{2}/6$, a whole point ahead of his closest competitors. Managadze's toughest challenge came in round four against IM Alexander Matros, who nearly busted his signature fianchetto setup, but thanks to time trouble and an overly optimistic sacrifice, Managadze prevailed. The outright victory was a welcome turnaround from last year's Irwin, where he tied for first with GM Jesse Kraai but lost on tiebreaks. Ultimately, five players tied for second with $4\frac{1}{2}$ (in tiebreak order): IMs Timothy Taylor, Oladapo Adu, Igor Khmel'nitsky, and Matros, as well as FM Doug Eckert.

It's always fascinating to learn about the diverse backgrounds and professional experiences of the Irwin participants. I was quite impressed to discover that Matros is a professor at the University of South Carolina and recently published research examining the phenomenon of online cheating during COVID-19. Quite a relevant area of investigation!

TEAM

The State Team Championship is often secondary to the individual events; it's based on the combined score of each state's delegates to all the Invitationals and the primary goal is to promote fun, lower-stakes competition. However, this year's championship was fiercely contested, with top seed New York boasting an average rating of 2304! New York

Left, top to bottom: Haring winner Zoey Tang, Irwin champ Nikoloz Managadze, and Terry Luo.

opened an early lead, but slipped in the last round, allowing four teams to jump a point ahead and tie for first with 21 of a possible 30 points. The Connecticut team secured first place on tiebreaks, followed by Texas, Illinois, and Arizona.

One of the most notable aspects about the Connecticut team (aside from it being my home state!) was its composition as the first majority-female delegation in the history of the Invitationals, with Jasmine Su in the Barber, Lacey Wang in the Rockefeller, and Lilianna Gao in the Haring. Each of Connecticut's scholastic players scored $4\frac{1}{2}$, while Irwin representative NM Mikhail Koganov rounded out the delegation with 3.

FEATURED GAME

There are always so many exciting battles from the Invitationals, but IM Gus Huston's (N.Y.) miniature against NM Alexander Rutten (Ga.) from the Denker was one to remember. Selected by FM Sunil Weeramantry for the Best Game prize, it showcases a dazzling flurry of sacrifices and a master class in pursuing the attack.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B99)

IM Gus Huston (2437)

NM Alexander Rutten (2275)

Denker Tournament of High School Champions (2), Norfolk, 07.28.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 a6

Rutten opts for the Najdorf, one of the most popular and versatile Sicilian variations.

6. Bg5

A sharp line with reams of theory. If one player is unfamiliar with the resulting positions, the game can quickly go awry.

6. ... e6 7. f4 Nbd7 8. Qf3 Qc7 9. 0-0-0 Be7
10. g4



So far, both Huston and Rutten have been following main line theory. However, Rutten now deviates with a sideline.

10. ... h6

The first line I played (as Black) while learning the Najdorf back in 2013. Although it has roughly stood the test of time, I found that White's energetic play often poses difficult practical problems. The main move is 10. ... b5, leading to another forcing variation. Theory continues 11. Bxf6 Nxf6 12. g5 Nd7 13. f5 and now Black has two main moves: 13. ... 0-0 and 13. ... Bxg5+, both leading to sharp theoretical play.

11. Qh3!?

This queen maneuver is relatively common in the Bg5 lines of the Najdorf, but it's relatively untested here. Huston hopes to use the annoying pin on the h8-rook to advance his pawns.

11. ... Rg8

An impressive find. It isn't easy to give up the right to castle, but Rutten correctly recognizes that it is crucial to immediately neutralize White's g5-bishop. Black could play 11. ... Nc5 but after 12. Bg2 Black must play 12. ... Rg8 anyway to maintain the balance.

12. Bxf6 Bxf6

It might seem natural to play 12. ... Nxf6?, but Black runs into trouble after 13. g5! hxg5 (13. ... e5 is met by 14. Nf5 where Nc3-d5 is coming next and White's knights overwhelm Black) 14. fxcg5 Nd7 15. g6 and White completely undermines the pawn wall in front of Black's king.

13. e5

Huston continues plowing through, taking no prisoners. He is happy to sacrifice material to maximize his dynamic advantage and blast open Rutten's king cover.

13. ... dxe5 14. Nxe6!



The point behind White's last move. Huston

fully destroys Rutten's pawn structure with tempo. How should Black proceed?

14. ... fxe6?

A very natural, but costly, recapture. The only way to maintain the balance was to throw in the intermediate 14. ... Qc6! with a double attack on the e6-knight and h1-rook. Ideally, Rutten would like to capture the e6 knight without significantly compromising his pawn structure. Play might continue 15. g5 Qxe6 16. gxf6 Qxh3 17. Bxh3 Nxf6 18. Bxc8 Rxc8 19. Rhe1 Nd7 when White's initiative peters out into equality, or 15. Bg2 Qxe6 16. Nd5 Bd8 17. Rhe1 when now Black must find 17. ... g5! 18. f5 and 18. ... Qd6 with a very unclear, double-edged position.

15. g5

Now Huston's sleeping queen on h3 suddenly springs into action with decisive effect! White threatens the f6-bishop as well as a deadly fork on e6.

15. ... Ke7

Rutten chooses to save the e6-pawn, condemning his bishop to certain doom. However, White's task is not so easy. How should Huston continue the attack?

16. Ne4!

White's also winning after 16. gxf6+ but it's less convincing after 16. ... Nxf6 17. fxe5 Qxe5 when White must now play 18. Kb1 to keep a winning advantage.

16. ... hxg5 17. fxcg5 Bxg5+ 18. Nxcg5 Nf6

19. Qa3+

The queen sweeps across the third rank to give the decisive blow, taking advantage of Rutten's king stuck in the center.

19. ... Ke8 20. Bb5+ Bd7 21. Nxe6

A nice final touch, showcasing the overwhelming activity of White's pieces.

21. ... Qb6 22. Bxd7+ Nxd7 23. Rd6, Black resigned.

Black's queen is nearly trapped mid-board, with Ne6-c7+ and Rh1-d1 to follow. In Stockfish's modest opinion, the position can already be reduced to mate in 15! A beautiful miniature and powerful display of coordination and dynamic play from Huston.

GRATITUDE

A lot has changed since I first attended the Invitationals as Connecticut's Barber representative in 2016: The Rockefeller, Irwin, and

Weeramantry Blitz have been added since then, and attendance at the Invitationals as a whole has nearly doubled. There is now a much more robust effort promoting girls/women in chess, and US Chess has strengthened the collegial spirit among players at the event, particularly the younger ones.

I would be remiss not to express my gratitude for all the experiences I have been fortunate enough to have and for the people who have been instrumental in helping me get there. I would especially like to recognize Mr. Dewain Barber for his invaluable support to the scholastic chess community. He has been a visionary for the Invitationals and an exemplary steward of the game. ♠

Blitz champion
IM Max Lu



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from the **SAINT LOUIS**

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MAKE YOUR MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM AMERICAN GAMES in this year's Chess Olympiad in Budapest.

The puzzles start off easy and gradually become more 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 you're unsuccessful, play through the solution, but return to the puzzle in one or two weeks to see whether you can now solve it. That way, you gradually expand your tactical vision and you'll be more likely to 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 71. ♠

TACTIC 1.



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TACTIC 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



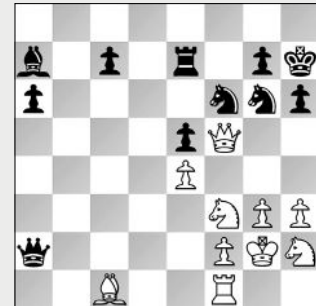
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TACTIC 5.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



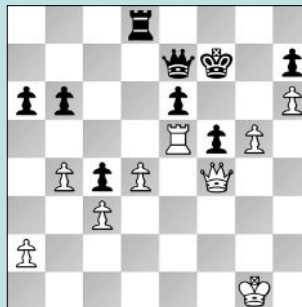
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TACTIC 7.



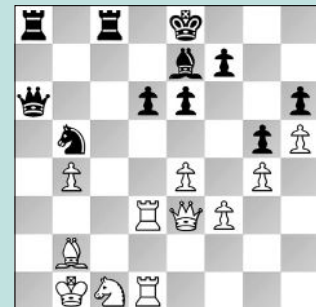
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TACTIC 8.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



BLACK TO MOVE

Position 1: OPEN SESAME

Position 2: DISTRACT THE DEFENDER

Position 3: SPACE INVADER

Position 4: CAN OPENER

Position 5: INTERFERENCE

Position 6: UNDRRESS THE EMPEROR

Position 7: THREADING THE NEEDLE

Position 8: GOOD PREPARATION

Position 9: REMOVE THE DEFENDER



THE VIEW FROM BOARD 2

U.S. Women's Champion IM Carissa Yip on winning team bronze and individual gold in Budapest.

BY **IM CARISSA YIP**

ADDITIONAL ANNOTATIONS BY **GM IRINA KRUSH, IM ALICE LEE, AND IM GULRUKHBEGIM TOKHIRJONOVA**

THE OLYMPIAD brings together the strongest players from across the globe every two years to compete for national pride. Team tournaments are always fun, but I've played in two Olympiads now, as well as the online edition in 2020, and it is one of my all-time favorite events because I get to play with the top players in the country instead of against them. Typically, we battle it out every year at U.S. Women's, the American Cup, and other such events, but at the Olympiad we compete against the rest of the world together.

This year, Team USA comprised GMs Fabiano Caruana, Wesley So, Leinier Dominguez, Levon Aronian, and Ray Robson in the Open, and GM Irina Krush, as well as IMs Begim Tokhirjonova, myself, Alice Lee, and Anna Zatonskih for the Women's. The coaches and captains were GM Mikhail Antipov and IM John Donaldson for the Open, and GMs Alex Onischuk and Melik Khachiyan for the Women's.

The day before the first round was my birthday, so after the opening ceremony we all went out for team dinner and cake — a lovely start to 21.

In the first round, Begim, myself, Irina, and Anna faced off against Jordan. We were favorites, and convincingly won 4-0. The next few rounds passed in relatively the same manner, with $3\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ scores against the Philippines, Canada, and the Netherlands.

As we settled into the rhythm of the tournament, the team locked into a routine.

We would all meet up for breakfast in the hotel, then split up to do prep. I'd order in some food for lunch and finish my prep; then the girls and I would take a taxi to get to the round early, while the boys would hop on the Budapest public transport (and usually arrive before us!). There would be a bit of time to kill before the game, and I'd yap with the team. After the game, I'd take the shuttle back to the hotel and wait for the whole team to finish before our group dinner. Dinner would be filled with chatter about the round and the other teams, and we'd take some guesses at the pairings. The night ended with a team meeting, and we did it all over again the next day. It's a busy schedule to keep for two weeks!

Our first stumble came in round five against Mongolia. We were at 4/4, and the favorites in the match, but Alice and Irina couldn't get anywhere. Seeing that I was defending a losing position on board two, Begim overpressed in her game and miscalculated a rook endgame. In the end, I managed to hold my game, but our final score was 1½-2½. Team morale was down after this upset — at the meeting that evening, we discussed the next day's match and lineup with a certain amount of disappointment. But losing happens, and our goal was still clear: to win the gold. The next day, we came back with a win against Switzerland. In the final hour of play, on the last board left, Alice's opponent blundered a bishop unexpectedly in a drawn position. Final score: 2½-1½.

With five out of six match points, the team was still very much in the race for medals, and I was leading the race for the individual board two gold with a very decent 5½ out of 6. We celebrated the halfway mark at the Bermuda party, where I ran into some old friends, made some new ones, and celebrated my birthday in style.

After the rest day, we locked back in. Armenia held us to a 2-2 draw, with four (!) decisive games including this terrific victory by Alice.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT, RAGOZIN VARIATION (D38)

IM Alice Lee (2384)

IM Anna M. Sargsyan (2364)

45th Women's Olympiad (7),

Budapest, 09.18.2024

Annotations by IM Alice Lee

Armenia was a dangerous and solid team, and I knew that with the white pieces, it would be my duty to keep pressure on the board.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 Bb4

5. Bg5 h6 6. Bxf6 Qxf6 7. e3

I could have played 7. Qa4+!? Nc6 8. e3 0-0 9. Be2 dxc4 10. 0-0 Bd7 11. Bxc4, leading to positions that resemble the more popular 5. Qa4+, but without the dark-squared bishop. The difference has pros and cons: On one hand, the bishop generally gets stuck behind the pawn chain on d2; on the other, it is a bishop, and one that could be useful in the long run.

7. ... 0-0 8. Rc1 Rd8



Not the top engine move, but certainly not bad. My opponent did start spending time around this moment, so I knew she was out of prep. I was a bit surprised, given that I do have a game in the database with this line, although it was more than a year ago.

The main line is 8. ... dxc4 9. Bxc4 c5 10. 0-0 cxd4 11. Nxd4 Bd7, which leads to a very drawish position.

9. Qb3

I could have gotten a slight advantage by playing 9. a3 Bxc3+ 10. Rxc3. While Black always wants to play ... c7-c5 in this type of structure, here she cannot. This is why 8. ... Rd8 was not the very best here. Of course, it's nothing too terrible for Black — she can play ... c7-c6 with a Slav structure — but White's position is definitely easier to play after 10. ... c6 11. Bd3 Nd7 12. 0-0.

9. ... Nc6?!

I don't like this move; it goes against Black's main plan in this structure. Of course, Black can now aim to play ... e6-e5, but in general, playing ... c7-c5 when given the chance is best: 9. ... c5 10. cxd5 exd5 11. dxc5 Nc6 12. a3 Bxc5 13. Nxd5 Qd6 14. Nc3.

10. c5?!

I thought it was clever to try to enclose her bishop, but I underestimated how quickly she can get ... e6-e5 in.

It would make sense to play 10. a3 since White is positionally near winning after

10. ... Bxc3 11. Qxc3. After 10. ... Bf8 White can play the safe option (a) 11. Qc2 guarding against ... Nc6-a5 — if 11. ... Na5 12. cxd5 exd5 13. Bd3 — or go in for the interesting, engine-like line (b) 11. cxd5!? exd5 12. Nxd5 Qe6 13. Bc4 Na5 14. Qb5 Nxc4 15. Nxc7 Qg6 16. Qxc4 Qxg2 17. Ne5! Qxh1+ 18. Ke2 Qg2 19. Qxf7+ Kh7 20. Nxa8 with a small advantage. I'm not sure whether I would've gone for this in the game!

10. ... a5 11. Bb5 e5! 12. 0-0 e4?



It turns out that chess players everywhere are fueled by soda!

Black is OK after 12. ... Bxc3 13. bxc3 Bg4 14. Nd2 Bf5 15. Qa4.

13. Nxd5!

I don't think she seriously considered this. I get a rook and two pawns for two pieces at first, but her dark-squared bishop is still in dangerous waters, so she will have to play ... a5-a4 and give up the a-pawn at some point.

13. ... Rxd5 14. Qxd5 exf3 15. Qxf3

I thought this would lead to a clearly pleasant position without complications, but I was debating between this and 15. a3. I didn't see a refutation, but I was a bit wary of 15. ... Bh3. I saw an opportunity to go into a pawn-up opposite-colored bishop ending with rooks with 16. Qxf3?, which is what I calculated at the board. I saw 16. ... Qxf3 17. gxf3 Nxd4 18. exd4 Bxf1 19. Kxf1 Bd2 20. Rc2 Bf4 21. h3 Rd8 22. Rc4, but decided against it.

What I missed was 16. Rfd1!. Allowing the capture on g2 seems counterintuitive, but if Black doesn't have mate, I will be up a clear Exchange: 16. ... Bxg2 and now I have to find 17. Qe4! (17. axb4?! Re8! shuts the queen out), which seems like very non-human chess. It guards against ... Ra8-e8 ideas and also aims to head to g3 as a defense mechanism in some scenarios. After 17. ... a4 18. axb4 Bh3 19. Qf4 White is winning.

15. ... Qxf3 16. gxf3 a4 17. a3

I calculated 17. Bxc6 bxc6 18. Rc4 Rb8 19. a3 Bd2 20. Rxa4, but I realized I wasn't trapping the bishop after 20. ... Be6! and ... Be6-b3.

Black could go wrong, though, after 20. ... Bh3? 21. b4! Bxf1 22. Kxf1 with a funny position where White has three pawns for a bishop, but the bishop on d2 is a terrible piece while pawns in the endgame are always good!

17. ... Ba5 18. Bxa4 Ne7 19. Bc2 c6 20. Rfd1 Bh3 21. Bd3



I have a rook and three pawns versus a bishop and a knight, but it's not so easy. Black has the bishop pair, and none of my pawns are advanced or passed.

21. ... Rd8 22. Bf1 Be6 23. Bc4 Nf5?

I was shocked to see this move, especially as she did not spend much time on it! I fully expected 23. ... Bh3 to avoid the bishop exchange. Now I can get rid of one of the major components of her compensation: the bishop pair.

She could also have played 23. ... Nd5; although White still gets a very pleasant position after 24. b4 Bc7 25. b5 Ba5 26. Rd3, at least it's not dead lost like after the bishop trade. Another alternative was 23. ... Bh3 24. b4 Bc7 25. a4.

24. Bxe6 fxe6 25. f4

I played this instead of 25. Rc4 g5 26. Kf1 Nh4 27. Ke2 Rf8 partially because I did not see the Rc1-c4 idea until a move later, and partially because I thought that if I don't play f3-f4, she'll be able to fix a permanent weakness on f3. But the truth is, the f3-pawn doesn't matter, because I'll be picking up her entire queenside: After 28. Ra4 Bc7 29. Ra7 Nxf3 30. Rxb7 Bxh2 31. a4 the win should come by hand after putting the rook on a1 and pushing the a-pawn.

25. ... Kf7 26. Rc4 g5 27. Ra4 Bc7 28. fxe6 hxe6 29. Ra7

Here I thought the rest would be trivial, but I underestimated the defensive resources my opponent would utilize ...

29. ... Rd7 30. Rd3 Ne7

White is winning after 30. ... e5 as long as I take care of counterplay with 31. Rb3 exd4 32. Rxb7 dxe3 33. fxe3.

31. Rb3 Nc8 32. Ra8 Ne7 33. Kg2 e5 34. dxe5

The engine shows I'm still winning after 34. Rxb7 exd4 35. Raa7 Nd5 36. exd4 Kg6, but Black has a very nice outpost for the knight on f4, and I don't think this is trivial; I think what I did in the game was better from a practical standpoint.

34. ... Ke6

White wins after 34. ... Bxe5 35. Ra7 Rd2 36. Rxb7 Bf6 37. a4.

35. Rxb7 Kxe5 36. Raa7 Nd5 37. h3 Ke4 38. a4

I started to get slightly worried here. I did see that ... Ke4-d3-e2 could be refuted, but she will not be letting me play b4-b5-b6 without creating any counterplay.

38. ... Rh7

After 38. ... Kd3 39. b4 Rf7 I was happy to find the defensive resource 40. Kg1!, but really,

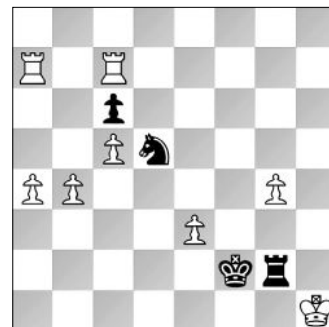
if this is a defensive resource that I have to find, things have gotten a bit tricky. White does win after 40. ... Ke2 41. Rxc7! Nxc7 (41. ... Rxc7 42. Rxc7 Nxc7 43. f4 gxf4 44. exf4 and knight cannot stop pawns on both sides from queening) 42. b5 cxb5 43. axb5.

39. b4 g4 40. hxe6

I thought Black's position was almost resignable here, but I didn't expect how bizarre things would get! The simplest way to win is 40. b5 gxh3+ 41. Kh1 Rd7 42. b6 Nxb6 43. Rxc7.

40. ... Rh2+ 41. Kg1 Kf3 42. Rxc7 Rg2+ 43. Kh1 Kxf2!

I missed this. I thought she had to play 43. ... Nxc7 44. Rxc7 Kxf2, when I win with 45. Rxc6 Kg3 46. Rd6 Rb2 47. Rd1, but her knight is a soldier not to be given up, especially since she doesn't have many pieces or pawns left.



I was in a state of confusion. I couldn't see an immediate win despite being up an Exchange and four pawns. Black has a very real threat of ... Kf2-g3 and moving the rook to basically anywhere on the second rank. I need to get my rook back to the first rank to prevent mate, which is not that easy because my pawns are blocking so many files! Fortunately, there are only two reasonable moves that I have to calculate.

44. Rd7!

I tried to make 44. Rh7? work, because after 44. ... Kg3 45. Raf7 Nxe3 46. Rh3+ Kxh3 47. Rf3+ the clever idea is that if Black trades rooks with 47. ... Rg3? 48. Rxc3+ Kxc3, the pawns versus knight endgame is winning after 49. g5 Nf5 50. g6 Kf4 51. a5 Ke5 52. a6 Kf6 53. a7. But Black has 47. ... Kxc3! and after 48. Rxe3 Rb2 it's a draw: My king is too far from the action.

44. ... Kg3 45. Rxd5 cxd5 46. Rf7 Rb2 47. Kg1!

Fortunately, I'm up four pawns in this position. She can take one, two, or even three of them, but it doesn't matter. Her king is

completely cut off and my king will spring into action if necessary.

47. ... Rxb4 48. Kf1!

This is not the only winning move, but the best practically. My back-rank problems are gone, and I'll be marching my c-pawn up the board.

48. ... Rxa4 49. c6 Ra8

Black loses after 49. ... Rxc4 50. c7 Rc4 51. Ke2 because her king is cut off both on the f-file and, really, on the fourth rank, because 51. ... Kg4 will be met with 52. Rf4+. If she moves her rook, I can win her d-pawn. I also have the immediate threat of Ke2-d3 and e3-e4, so it's a simple win.

50. g5, Black resigned.

With this win, we tied Armenia. This was one of my most interesting games from this tournament; the position was always objectively good for me, but my opponent was able to pose strong practical problems that required calculation and thought to get past.

We recovered with a clean 3½-½ over Uzbekistan in round eight. The same round saw India, who had been leading the tournament with a perfect score, lose to Poland. This meant we would face off against India in the ninth round, and if we still wanted medal chances, losing wasn't an option. The same went for India, though, and at team meeting, we predicted that they would play their top lineup. I went back to my room that night and started preparing for GM Vaishali Rameshbabu — at 7½ out of 8, I was still

leading the board two individual race, and it was time to secure the medal. The team strategy was for me to make a clean draw with the Black pieces, while Begim and Irina could push with the white pieces, and Alice (who had a slight rating advantage over IM Vantika Agrawal and was at a whopping 6½/7) could play for a win.

It was a surprise the next day when we saw the board pairings — India had decided to sit their board one; everyone was shifted up a board and I was now playing IM Divya Deshmukh. After a quick debrief with Melik, it was clear our strategy remained the same. I made a very solid draw, while Alice kept her cool in the face of a terrifying attack from IM Tania Sachdev, who ultimately couldn't find better than a three-fold. On board three, Vantika's attack crashed through in a Nimzo, but Begim was the hero of the round, scoring a very nice win against Vaishali, allowing us to hold the top seeds to a draw.

ENGLISH OPENING (A23)

WGM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova (2380)

GM Vaishali Rameshbabu (2498)
45th Women's Olympiad (9),
Budapest, 09.20.2024

Annotations by WGM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova

1. c4 e5 2. g3 Nf6 3. Bg2 Bc5 4. Nc3 c6 5. e3 0-0 6. Nge2 d5 7. cxd5 Nxd5

I expected this, since Black gets an unpleasant IQP position after 7. ... cxd5 8. d4 Bd6 9. dxe5 Bxe5 10. 0-0.

8. d4

Even though 8. 0-0 looks natural, I didn't like 8. ... Nxc3 9. bxc3 (9. Nxc3 Bf5) 9. ... Qd3! when suddenly it's awkward for White.

8. ... exd4 9. Nxd5 cxd5 10. Nxd4

I thought it made sense to take with the knight and play against the isolated d5-pawn. I knew I didn't really have much due to the passivity of my bishop on c1, but I thought I should try to press a bit anyway.

10. exd4 is another way to press, since my pawn on d4 is slightly better defended than the pawn on d5. But this didn't feel like much concretely, as Black can play 10. ... Bb6



Coach Melik Khachikyan studies the board intently

11. 0-0 Nc6 12. Be3 Bg4 followed by ... Bg4xe2 and everything gets exchanged.

10. ... Nc6 11. Nb3

I didn't like 11. Nxc6 bxc6 12. 0-0 Qf6 because I'll have trouble developing the c1-bishop.

11. ... Bb6

The bishop is headed in the wrong direction after 11. ... Bb4+? 12. Bd2. Keeping the bishop pointed at the d4-square is obviously best.

12. 0-0 Be6

I was hoping for 12. ... d4 13. exd4 Nxd4 14. Be3 Nxb3 15. Qxb3 with some pressure due to the powerful g2-bishop.

Black could have included 12. ... a5!? here. I can't take the pawn: After 13. Bxd5? a4 the knight has no squares, and after 13. Qxd5 a4 14. Nd2 Be6 Black's activity more than compensates for the pawn. And after 13. a4 Be6 I still don't really have anything.

13. Bd2



I don't want to allow ... d5-d4, but unfortunately there is no other way to develop the bishop.

13. ... Re8?

A strange decision. Maybe her idea was to keep pieces on and keep the game complex, but objectively this is a bad decision. Now White secures control over the d4-square, and it's easy to pile the pressure on d5.

The game should fizzle out to a draw after 13. ... d4 14. exd4 Nxd4 15. Bc3 Nxb3 16. axb3 Qxd1 17. Rfxd1 Bxb3 18. Rd7.

14. Bc3! Qg5

She wants activity and to hopefully drum up a mating attack on the kingside, but White's structure is just too solid.

15. a4

Either forcing a weakness or pushing the bishop away from the d4-square.

15. ... Rad8

My plan after 15. ... a6 was 16. a5 Ba7 17. Ra4!, strengthening control over d4 and possibly swinging over to f4. If 15. ... a5?! 16. Qe2 and the b5-square is tender.

16. Nd4?!

I didn't want to allow her to open files and release some tension. I was concerned with 16. a5 d4! 17. Nxd4 (or 17. exd4 Bxb3 18. Qxb3 Nxd4) 17. ... Bxd4 18. exd4 Bd5 and I thought Black was more or less fine here.

But 16. Qd3! would have been a nice

touch. The point is that now if Black tries 16. ... d4 (16. ... Bf5 17. Qb5) 17. Nxd4 Bxd4 18. exd4 Bd5 White is much better coordinated and can play 19. Rfe1 with h2-h4 coming next. Black's control over d5 will be destabilized; the queen is getting kicked, and there are questions about the back rank.

16. ... Bg4

The right concept is 16. ... Bxd4 17. Bxd4 h5, leaving White with a dark-squared bishop against a knight. Black will then play on the light squares.

17. Qd2 Bc7?

Black gears up for an ... h7-h5-h4 push, but White has fast counterplay along the c-file. Black is still fine after 17. ... Bxd4! 18. Bxd4 h5.

18. Rac1 Qh5?!



This drops a pawn for no compensation, but Black was struggling strategically.

White repels Black's attack after 18. ... h5 19. h3 Bd7 20. Nf3! Qh6 and Black has no real answer for the impending storm on the other side of the board starting with 21. b4. Naturally 18. ... Rd6? 19. Nb5 wins, but the best defense was 18. ... Qg6, passively defending c6 and keeping an eye on g7 as well.

19. Nxc6! bxc6 20. Qd4

Maybe she wanted to sacrifice the pawn to attack along the h-file, but it is too slow.

20. ... Be5 21. Qxa7 Bxc3 22. Rxc3 Rd6 23. Qc7

I can eventually slow Black's attack down with h2-h4, so I just have to make sure to exchange some pieces and take the sting out of the attack in the meantime. The queen is excellently placed here, preparing Rc3xc6 but also getting ready to play a role on the h2-b8 diagonal.

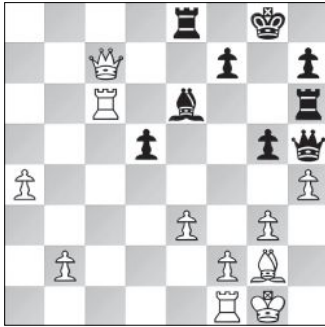
23. ... Rh6 24. h4 g5

Attacking is Black's only idea now.



The camaraderie among Team USA players was strong

25. Rxc6 Be6



The simplest way to win after 25. ... gxf4 is 26. Rxh6 Qxh6 27. Qf4! After 27. ... Qxf4 (27. ... Qh5 28. gxf4 Qxh4 29. f3) 28. gxf4 the queenside pawns will decide.

26. Rd6!

The cleanest win. With one pair of rooks in the endgame, Black might have a sliver of hope, but with this move I tactically threaten to exchange both the queens and a set of rooks. I should still win after 26. Qe5 gxf4 27. Qxh5 Rxh5, but why not exchange more pieces?

26. ... Kg7

After 26. ... gxf4 27. Rd8 Rxd8 28. Qxd8+ Kg7 29. Qxh4 Qxh4 30. gxf4 Rxh4 31. f4 the rook is locked out, on top of all Black's other problems.

27. Rd8 Rxd8 28. Qxd8 gxf4 29. Qxh4 Qf5

It's even easier after 29. ... Qxh4 30. gxf4 Rxh4 31. f4.

30. Qd4+ f6 31. Rc1 Qh5

The last gasp. There is a check on h2, but no cigar.

32. Rc7+ Kg6 33. Qd3+ Bf5 34. Qxd5, Black resigned.

Now Black's king is getting hunted. It's going to be mate after 34. Qxd5 Qh2+ 35. Kf1 Bh3 36. Qg8+ Kh5 37. Rc5+ f5 38. Rxf5+ Bxf5 39. Bf3+.

With two rounds left to go, things were heating up. Kazakhstan was now leading, with eight match wins and a loss (for 16 points), while India was in clear second with seven wins, one draw, and one loss (15 points). Team USA was tied for third with 14 points, along with eight other teams. We understood that we likely needed to win our last two matches in order to finish with a medal.

When the 10th round pairings came out, they were quite promising: Kazakhstan had to hold second-seeded Georgia, while India

was contending with the ultra-strong China. We were paired against fifth-seeded Ukraine, who outrated us.

I personally was quite nervous for the finish to my event: Since I'd played a 1500 player in the first round, I took a hit of around 70 points in performance rating. This meant that I was still leading the board two medal race at 8/9 and a 2600 performance, but by a smaller margin than I would've liked. A draw or loss would set me back a fair bit, and I didn't want anything less than gold.

But when we sat down at the board the next day, my nerves vanished and I was absolutely certain that we would win the match. I caught GM Anna Ushenina off-guard in the opening, got an advantage and never let go. On board four, Alice achieved a massive time advantage, but it fizzled out into a drawish endgame. Begim was always a bit better on our top board, but it was unclear how she would win. Irina had a very solid and pleasant position against IM Natalia Buksa; I finished my game with a nice tactical sequence, and with the first victory, caught the shuttle back and settled in to watch the rest of the team fight it out.

Alice ultimately couldn't make progress in the rook endgame, and a draw was soon agreed. On board three, Buksa fought back to cause major complications and got the better of Irina under time pressure.

A BITTER PILL

GM Irina Krush (2396)
IM Natalia Buksa (2387)
45th Women's Olympiad (10),
Budapest, 09.21.2024
Annotations by GM Irina Krush

The most dramatic moments for the team came at the finish line. In the penultimate round we played Ukraine. Carissa had already won quickly against former Women's World Champion Anna Ushenina; Alice was up a pawn in a rook ending but looked to be heading towards a draw, and there was an unclear situation on Begim's board as we passed the first time control. I had had an advantage, but in the leadup to the 40th move, I'd squandered it; I was up a pawn but was on the defensive. My pawns are blockaded and the bishop on d5 is clearly better than my knight. I tried to look for active ideas.



WHITE TO MOVE

42. Nd2!? Rb2 43. Reb1

This was my concept behind the knight retreat, challenging Black's active rook and making it hard for her to advance the a-pawn.

43. ... Ra8!?

My opponent thought for a long time on this move, and I hadn't seen it coming — it's not very forcing, but the point is simply to defend the a-pawn.



Krush fights Buksa and the clock in round 10

44. e4!?

Giving up a pawn to get activity on the e-file.

44. ... Bxe4 45. Rxb2 Qxb2 46. Re1 Bd5 47. Re7 a4 48. Qg3 Bf7 49. Ne4



At this point, I was starting to get optimistic. It's a really sharp situation with Black close to promoting, but White's pieces are working beautifully to create threats against the black king. I was down to just under three minutes; my opponent, under five. The engine says it's equal, but it can go either way.

49. ... Qb3!?

I didn't expect this move, which left Natalia with less than a minute. Mostly I was focused on 49. ... Qxd4 50. Nd6 and even though the computer says Black survives in multiple ways, I couldn't find even one during the game. After the game move I thought, "Now I can take on f6; surely I will have something there."

50. Nxf6+ Kh8

I had just over two minutes to figure out where my win is. The problem is that there is no win.

51. Qe5 a3??

There's one winning move, and I have 57 seconds to find it. Unfortunately, it's a backward move, which is one of the "blind spots" in chess. If you see it, it's obviously good, and there's almost nothing to calculate, but the trick is seeing it in the first place. Instead, I saw a line that ends in a draw and decided it was enough for the team to win the match. But I missed something ...

I didn't realize taking the knight was possible, and I'd guess my opponent didn't either. After 51. ... gxf6 you think, "OK, I take on f6 with check and then take the bishop," but Black defends the bishop with 52. Qxf6+ Kg8 and White has to figure out how to make a draw here.

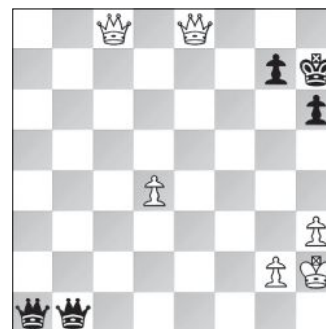
52. Ne8??

52. Qe4! hits the rook and threatens mate.

52. ... Qb1+

I was expecting 52. ... Rxe8 53. Rxe8+ Bxe8 54. Qxe8+ Kh7 55. Qe4+ with a perpetual, but this check changes everything. I no longer have access to e4.

53. Kh2 Rxe8 54. Rxe8+ Bxe8 55. Qxe8+ Kh7 56. c6 a2 57. c7 a1=Q 58. c8=Q



Four queens! But it's Black to move, and I get mated.

58. ... Qg1+ 59. Kg3 Qa3+ 60. Kf4 Qf2+ 61. Ke5 Qae3+ 62. Kd6 Qxd4+ 63. Kc6 Qb6+ 64. Kd7 Qfd4+ 65. Ke7 Qbf6, mate.

In the end the team got the win, but for me personally it was a pretty big blow to lose in this way, especially since it was my second consecutive loss. It wasn't the most confidence-inducing situation heading into the last round. (*Krush*)

In the final game of the match, Begim was pressing a better ending that fizzled into equality; with Irina's loss, we needed a miracle for her to break through against IM Yuliia Osmak's fortress.

The miracle came when Osmak blundered on move 62. Likely she was trying to force the exchange of rooks and go into a simple fortress with queen versus rook and pawn, but Osmak missed Begim's reply: She exchanged off the last pair of pawns and won the queen versus rook endgame easily.

Spirits were high after this victory, especially since Kazakhstan drew, India won, and we were only a point behind. Paired with Kazakhstan in the final round, we needed a win to fight for gold. India was facing off against Azerbaijan. If they drew, we would share first and it would depend on tiebreaks. If India lost, we would clinch it. But of course, this all depended on us beating Kazakhstan.

Begim achieved a very promising position out of the opening, while Irina had a complicated position, but I knew she could navigate these waters. The big scare was that Alice blundered unexpectedly, losing the f2-pawn to a tactic. I watched it in shock, but I was sure that Alice would lock in and make the draw for the team. (See page 12 for the game. ~ed.) Meanwhile, I had a very smooth victory over IM Meruert Kamalidenova.



Carissa Yip considers her options in her round 11 matchup

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE, MAKAGONOV SYSTEM (E71)

IM Carissa Yip (2386)

IM Meruert Kamalidenova (2352)

45th Women's Olympiad (11),

Budapest, 09.22.2024

Annotations by IM Carissa Yip

Going into the round, Team USA needed a win on this board for a shot at the gold. I set out with a fight in mind on move 1.

1. c4

Surprising my opponent immediately! I hadn't played 1. c4 in years, but I'd prepped up a nice line against her King's Indian.

1. ... Nf6 2. Nc3 g6 3. e4 d6 4. d4 Bg7 5. h3 0-0 6. Be3 Nfd7



A very rare move, and here I took my first think of the game. The point is that Black wants to play ... e7-e5, and if White responds with d4-d5 Black can play a quick ... f7-f5. However, I ultimately determined that if Black played ... e7-e5, I would just leave my d-pawn there. Black's typical ideas of ... exd4 don't work as well anymore, because the knight is no longer on f6 pressuring the e-pawn.

7. Nf3 a6

After 7. ... e5 8. Qd2 Re8 9. 0-0-0 White doesn't need to close up the center, and the attack on Black's king is coming quickly.

8. Qd2 c5 9. Be2 Nc6 10. 0-0 cxd4

Black has nothing better but to transpose into a version of the Accelerated Dragon / Maróczy Bind structure that's very pleasant for White.

11. Nxd4 Nc5 12. Rfd1 Be6 13. Rab1

Aiming at b2-b4 in some lines and forcing Black to commit the a-pawn.

13. ... a5 14. b3 Bd7

It was evident here that my opponent was



INDIAN WOMEN'S TEAM TAKES THE LONG WAY TO THE TOP

BY RICK MASSIMO

WHILE THE OPEN TEAM RELATIVELY breezed through Budapest, assured of at least a tie for team gold entering the last round, the Indian women's team of GMs Harika Dronavalli, Vaishali Rameshbabu (Pragg's sister), IMs Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agrawal, and Tania Sachdev had a rougher road.

While, like the Open team, they breezed through the first seven rounds with a perfect score (including a 3-1 win over the powerful, second-seeded Georgian team), they lost to Poland in round eight and were caught by Kazakhstan and the Poles. Remarkably, after a draw with Team USA in round nine, they trailed Kazakhstan by a match point entering the penultimate round; from there, however, they won out, easily beating Azerbaijan 3½-½ in the 11th and final round to leapfrog Kazakhstan, who drew 2-2 against the U.S.

As with the Open team, the women's gold was an improvement over the bronze they won on tiebreak two years ago in Chennai — the women's team's first medals.

The Indian women were paced by 18-year-old IM Deshmukh, who scored 9½/11 in her first Olympiad, winning the gold medal on board three.

India has been a rising power in world

chess for years, but women's chess has taken a longer path: There wasn't an Indian Women's Championship until 1974. The first reasonably prominent Indian women chessplayers were the three Khadilkar sisters — Vashanti, Jayshree, and Rohini — who won the first 10 women's championships comprised the nation's Olympiad women's team in 1982. (Rohini's father and FIDE had to intervene when she was denied a spot in the "men's" national championship in 1978.)

Since then, however, the successes have been piling up at a faster and faster pace: Vijayalakshmi Subbaraman was India's first IM, and in 2005 had three GM norms and a 2498 live rating, two points from the title; she didn't make it. Humpy Koneru did, however, smashing through the GM barrier at age 15 and playing in the 2001 Women's World Championship match. Dronavalli became the second Indian woman to achieve the GM title and played board one for India in Budapest.

And the signs for a long stay around the top of women's chess look good for India: Only Dronavalli, Vaishali, and Sachdev were on the team that won bronze in Chennai; meanwhile, India has four players in the women's top 15 (led by Humpy, who didn't play in Budapest) and six players in the girls' top 50.

unsure how to continue. Meanwhile, White has a very nice space advantage and all the choice in the world on how to improve and expand.

15. Ndb5 b6 16. f4

Looking to activate the bishop via f3, and potentially setting up some e4-e5 ideas.

16. ... Na7



This was a critical moment. I wanted to make e4-e5 work in a number of ways, but Black always has a nice resource with ... Bd7-f5.

17. Nd4

Now, I expected my opponent would offer a repetition with 17. ... Nc6, but I got a surprise. There were other options.

(a) After 17. Nxa7 Rxa7 18. e5 Bf5 19. Rbc1 Rd7 any White advantage fizzles out.

(b) 17. e5 Bf5 18. Rbc1 Nxb5 19. cxb5 dxe5 20. Qe1 is quite good for White, but I wasn't thrilled about the idea of giving up a pawn.

I could have also played (c) 17. Bd4 Nxb5 18. cxb5 Be6 19. Bxg7 Kxg7 20. Qe3 when the b5-pawn is a thorn in Black's position and White has a great grasp of the queenside light squares.

17. ... e5?!

Another critical moment, and here I stumbled.

18. Nf3?!

The correct way to go was 18. fxe5, forcing Black to either bury the bishop on the long diagonal or allow White to keep the strong knight on d4. (a) If 18. ... Bxe5 19. a3 the structure is the same as the game, but the knight is much better on d4 because it stops ideas of ... Bd7-c6; the bishop on e5 gets in Black's way because she'd prefer to have an open e-file to target the e4 pawn, and the f3-square is open for the bishop to take over. After 19. ... Bc6 20. Bf3 b3-b4 is coming very quickly, with a sizable advantage. (b) After 18. ... dxe5 I underestimated the key move 19. Ndb5! Nxb5 (Black's ... Bd7-c6 ideas are now impossible: 19. ... Bc6 20. Qxd8 Raxd8 21. Rxd8 Rxd8 22. Nxa7) 20. cxb5 Be6 21.

Qxd8 Raxd8 22. Rxd8 Rxd8 23. Bxc5 bxc5 and now the ending is completely winning once the light-squared bishops are traded off: 24. Bc4 Bh6 25. Bxe6 Be3+ 26. Kf1 fxe6 27. Ke2 Bd4 28. Na4 Rb8 29. b6 and the white king gets in much faster than Black's and decides the game. Of course, this isn't the easiest to see in advance!

18. ... exf4 19. Bxf4 Re8 20. Bd3 Bc6 21. Bg5



21. ... f6?

The mistake which more or less decides the game — the dark-squared bishop is cut off, and the f6-pawn soon becomes a weakness.

Black needed to play 21. ... Qd7 when after 22. Nd5 Bxd5 23. exd5 White has a very nice structure and the a7-knight is out of play, but Black can keep fighting



Friends and teammates: Begim, Carissa, and Alice

with 23. ... b5. I'd prefer White, but Black would emerge from the complications with some chances.

22. Bh4 Nc8

Black can never take; the tactics don't work out: 22. ... Nxe4 23. Bxe4 Bxe4 24. Nxe4 Rxe4 25. Qd5+.

23. Bc2

Avoiding exchanges! Already the position is quite bad for Black, with weaknesses on b6, d6, and f6.

23. ... Ra7 24. Nd4 Ba8 25. Rf1 Rf7

26. Rbe1 Na7 27. a3 Nc6 28. Nxc6

I didn't want to allow the knight to e5, but it was more important and more precise to continue avoiding exchanges. For example, after 28. Ndb5 Ne5 29. b4 axb4 30. axb4 Ne6 31. Bb3 Rd7 32. Qa2, the push c4-c5 is coming, and Black can't avoid losing material.

28. ... Bxc6 29. b4

Still, though, White is winning.

29. ... Ne6 30. Bb3 Kh8 31. Kh1 Qd7

32. Nd5 Bxd5 33. Qxd5!

It's important to keep the d-file half open and the structure as it is.

33. ... a4 34. Ba2 Rff8 35. Bg3!

Winning material by force.

35. ... Rd8 36. c5 Rfe8 37. cxd6 Ng5 38. Bc4 Qc8 39. Bb5 Qc3 40. Kh2 Rf8 41. d7 Nf7



42. e5

A very nice finishing blow.

42. ... Nxe5

White wins after 42. ... fxe5 43. Rxf7.

43. Rxe5 Qxa3

If 43. ... fxe5 44. Rxf8+ White wins after 44. ... Rxf8 (or 44. ... Bxf8 45. Bxe5+) 45. d8=Q.

44. Re8 Qxb4 45. Rfe1 a3 46. Rxd8, Black resigned.



With this win, Team USA took the lead in the match.

When my game ended, the team situation was looking iffy. Irina had shuffled around her pieces for the last couple moves, and it seemed her opponent was the one pushing. Alice was defending a worse rook endgame. Begim previously had great chances in a complicated endgame, but she lost her big trumps under time pressure. A win over Kazakhstan no longer seemed possible. I could only give Melik a comforting pat on the back as I left the tournament hall, hoping that our team captain wouldn't have a heart attack during the round.

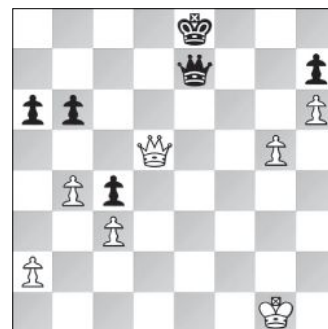
Ultimately, after a topsy-turvy match, we finished 2-2. Irina's draw was key.

HOLDING ON

WGM Xeniya Balabayeva (2335)
GM Irina Krush (2396)
45th Women's Olympiad (11),
Budapest, 09.22.2024
Annotations by GM Irina Krush

After move 40, I found myself in this critical situation in a queen endgame, just having lost a pawn. This game was going to matter a lot. I have only one way to draw, and it's amazing that everything holds together, but it does!

42. ... Qe3+



BLACK TO MOVE

It's either this or 42. ... Qe1+, but either way the checks eventually run out and the king runs to e5.

43. Kg2 Ke7!

This quiet king move is what holds the draw. White was threatening Qd5-g8+ followed by picking up the h7-pawn with check. But now the black queen is well placed, defending b6 and threatening the g5-pawn in case White comes for h7. My opponent spent a long time looking for a way to continue the game, but there really isn't one, and in fact she nearly got herself in trouble by avoiding the perpetual.

44. g6 Qe2+ 45. Kg3 Qe1+ 46. Kg4 Qg1+

47. Kf4 Qh2+ 48. Ke4 Qh4+

I had calculated the cool drawing line 48. ... Qe2+ 49. Kd4 Qd2+ 50. Kxc4 Qxa2+ 51. Kd4 Qd2+ 52. Ke5 Qg5+, but I was starting to think that maybe I could be more ambitious.

49. Ke3 Qxh6+ 50. Kf2 Qh2+

I would have tried 50. ... Qxg6 here if I'd seen that after 51. Qxc4 I can trade queens into a winning pawn endgame with 51. ... Qf7+!. But she can keep it level with 51. Qb7+ Kf8 52. Qxa6.

51. Kf1 Qh3+ 52. Kf2 Qh2+ 53. Kf1 Qh3+

54. Kf2 Qh2+ 55. Kf1 Qh3+, draw.

Though it wasn't quite what we wanted, our tiebreaks got us the bronze medal and the first podium finish for the U.S. Women's team in 16 years! The Open team had finished with a very nice silver medal. Tears were shed, hugs were shared, selfies were taken.

I couldn't be happier about my second Olympiad personally: a 10/11 score and a 2600+ performance, pushing my rating back

over 2400. Moreover, I'd won the individual gold medal on my board. An Olympiad gold is the most important achievement of my career thus far, and I'd like to thank everyone who has supported me in this — my family, coaches, friends, and fans. Next up: GM! ♠

For more on the Olympiad, including dozens of annotated games, visit our **CLO** coverage at new.uschess.org/45th-fide-chess-olympiad.

THE 2024 FIDE WOMEN'S OLYMPIAD AT A GLANCE

SEPT. 10-23, 2024 | BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

TEAM WINNERS

GOLD: India, 19 match points. **SILVER:** Kazakhstan, 18 match points. **BRONZE (ON TIEBREAKS):** United States, 17 match points.

INDIVIDUAL MEDALS

BOARD 1 GOLD: GM Zhu Jiner. **SILVER:** IM Sarasadat Khademalsharieh. **BRONZE:** GM Nana Dzagnidze. **BOARD 2 GOLD:** IM Carissa Yip. **SILVER:** GM Elisabeth Paehtz. **BRONZE:** IM Song Yuxin. **BOARD 3 GOLD:** IM Divya Deshmukh. **SILVER:** IM Sabrina Vega Gutierrez. **BRONZE:** GM Elina Danielian. **BOARD 4 GOLD:** IM Agrawal Vantika. **SILVER:** IM Alice Lee. **BRONZE:** IM Anna Sargsyan. **BOARD 5 GOLD:** WFM Dana Kochavi. **SILVER:** WIM Nodira Nadirjanova. **BRONZE:** IM Miaoyi Lu.

AMERICAN RESULTS

BOARD 1: IM Gulrukhbegim Tokhirjonova, 5/10. **BOARD 2:** IM Carissa Yip, 10/11. **BOARD 3:** GM Irina Krush, 5/9. **BOARD 4:** IM Alice Lee, 8/10. **BOARD 5:** IM Anna Zatonskih, 2½/4.

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U16, & U18

Friday: Round 1

Saturday: Rounds 2, 3, & 4

Sunday: Rounds 5 & 6



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\$175 by 3/24, \$225 by 4/3



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Bughouse: # Rds TBD, G/5,d0



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GOLD FOR



INDIA!



The 45th Olympiad was a huge success for India, with both the Open and Women's teams winning team gold. GM Gukesh D, GM Arjun Erigaisi, IM Divya Deshmukh, and IM Vantika Agrawal won individual gold.



SECOND PLACE STATES!

U.S. takes silver in the Open Olympiad;
Aronian wins individual silver.

BY **IM JOHN DONALDSON**

ADDITIONAL ANNOTATIONS BY **GM LEVON ARONIAN AND GM WESLEY SO**



THE 45TH CHESS Olympiad, held Sept. 10-23 in Budapest, Hungary, will be best remembered for India's double first place in the Open and Women's sections. Their performance

in the former was particularly impressive, as they set several records *en route* to winning their first-ever team gold medals.

GMs Dommaraju Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu, Arjun Erigaisi, Santosh Gujrathi Vidit and Pentala Harikrishna scored 21 out of a possible 22 points in the 11-round competition, a record amount since the Olympiad switched from game to match point scoring in 2008. Only a round nine draw with the defending champions from Uzbekistan kept India from a perfect record. Their score of 35 points from 44 games was also a record, and included only one individual loss: Pragg to Wesley So in round 10. (See So's annotations at the end of this article.)

While all five Indian players were in good form, the exceptional performances of the 18-year-old Gukesh and 21-year-old Erigaisi led the way. The former, the challenger to Ding Liren for the World Championship in Singapore, scored 9/10 for an incredible performance rating of 3056, while the latter was almost equally impressive, with 10/11 and a performance rating of 2968. The two superstars gained 30 and 19 rating points respectively to advance close to 2800, and as of early October are currently rated number four and five in the world.

Gukesh and Erigaisi both have a special skill set — the ability to win with Black.

This is not an easy task for the world's elite: Lower-rated players are often content to aim for a draw with White, and many mainline variations can lead to massive simplification, so the pieces often are effectively taken out of the hands of the rating favorite before the game even gets started. Gukesh and especially Erigaisi continue to come up with tricky lines that keep the pieces on the board without taking too much risk.

The following games show the gold medal winners on boards one and three are all-around players, equally at home in endgames and dynamic positions.

Unlike India's boards one and two, Erigaisi did not play in this year's Candidates Tournament, nor was he invited to some of the other elite events, as his rating at the time was not quite high enough. Instead, he ended up playing in one open tournament after another, gaining invaluable experience in playing for a win in every game and earning a reputation as a brilliant attacking player. As we shall see, he is also a good technician.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, DRAGON VARIATION (B77)

GM Arjun Erigaisi (2778)

GM Rauf Mamedov (2637)

45th Olympiad (5), Budapest,
09.15.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 g6 6. Be3 Bg7 7. f3 Nc6 8. Qd2 O-O 9. Bc4 Nxd4 10. Bxd4 Be6

This old-fashioned way of playing, which dates back to the late 1950s, doesn't lead to the fire-breathing play one normally associates with the Dragon. It is, however, quite solid and easy to play. Anish Giri recommends this variation for Black in his Chessable course on the Dragon, and Hikaru Nakamura has played it successfully against strong opposition.

11. Bb3 Qa5 12. O-O-O b5 13. Kb1 b4 14. Nd5 Bxd5



15. exd5

Play the past few moves has been quite forcing, with no major alternatives for either side, but here White can try 15. Bxd5 when 15. ... Rac8? led to a strong attack in the famous game Fischer – Larsen at the Portoroz Interzonal in 1958 (game 2 in *My 60 Memorable Games*), but Black can improve with 15. ... Nxd5 16. Bxg7 Nc3+! 17. bxc3 Rfb8 18. cxb4 Qxb4+ 19. Qxb4 Rxb4+ 20. Bb2 Rab8 with clear equality.

15. ... Qb5 16. Qd3

White can also try 16. Rhe1 but after 16. ... a5 the threat of ... a7-a5-a4 is so strong that White doesn't have anything better than trading queens with 17. Qe2 leading to play similar to the game.

16. ... Qxd3 17. Rxd3



17. ... Rfc8

17. ... Nd7 is also considered reliable; Giri recommends it in his course. Black seeks to negate White's advantage of the bishop pair and head for a position where his knight is superior to White's remaining bishop. That said, the move played in the game is the one top players have favored.

18. Re1 Rc7 19. c3 a5 20. cxb4 axb4 21. g4 21. Rdd1 is seen more often, but play will soon transpose.

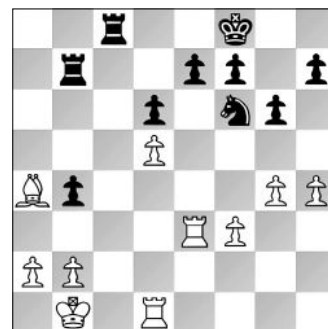
21. ... Rac8 22. Rdd1 Bh6

This is the first the choice of Stockfish 17, but the engine also judges that Black has sufficient compensation for the pawn after 22. ... Nd7 23. Bxg7 Kxg7 24. Rxe7 Ne5 25. Rxc7 Rxc7.

23. h4 Bf4 24. Bb6 Rb7 25. Be3 Bxe3 26. Rxe3 Kf8 27. Ba4

(see diagram top of next column)

All this was likely familiar to the players from their preparation. The depth of modern theory is startling!



POSITION AFTER 27. Ba4

27. ... Rc5

27. ... Rbc7 (threatening ... Nf6xd5) is the first choice of the engines, planning to meet 28. Bc6 with 28. ... e6. Mamedov may not have wanted to play the pawn-down double rook ending after 29. Rb3 Rb8 30. a4 Nxd5 31. Bxd5 exd5 32. Rxd5 Ra7 33. a5 Rba8 34. Rxd6 Rxa5 35. Rxb4 even if the oracles claim he has sufficient compensation.

28. Bc6 Ra7?

28. ... Rb6 protecting the b-pawn and meeting 29. g5 with 29. ... Nh5 looks like a distinct improvement. Now Erigaisi has a clear advantage.

29. g5 Nd7

The difference is that now 29. ... Nh5? is met by 30. Rd4 Rca5 31. a4! bxa3 e.p. 32. b4 a2+ 33. Ka1 R5a6 (33. ... Ra3 34. Rxa3 Rxa3 35. b5 Rxf3 36. b6 Rb3 37. b7) 34. b5 Rb6 35. Re2 and White's b-pawn decides the game.

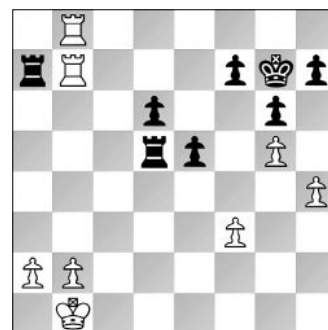
30. Rd4 Nb6?

Black had to try 30. ... Ne5, although after 31. Rxb4 Nxc6 32. dxc6 Rxc6 33. b3 e6 34. Kb2 Ke7 35. a4 White is clearly for choice.

31. Rb3 e5

Black maintains material equality with this move but White's queenside passed pawns will soon prove unstoppable.

32. Rdx4 Nxd5 33. Rb8+ Kg7 34. Bxd5 Rxd5 35. R3b7





Erigaisi takes a moment to clear his head against Mamedov

35. ... Rxb7

Black doesn't want to exchange rooks, but has no choice as 35. ... Raa5 is met by 36. Rd8 with deadly threats of doubling on the 7th or 8th rank.

36. Rxb7 Rd4 37. b4

There is no stopping White's passed pawns.

37. ... Rxh4 38. a4 h5 39. gxh6+ e.p. Rxh6 40. a5 Rh3 41. a6 Rxf3 42. Rb5 e4 43. a7 e3 44. Kc2, Black resigned.

But Gukesh Dommaraju was the star of the Budapest Chess Olympiad, and the following encounter was the game of the event. The top board battle in the match between 2018 gold medal winner China and India started slowly, with mistakes from both sides, but the way in which Gukesh exerted his will in the endgame, with the match score tied 1½-1½, is most impressive.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B50)

GM Gukesh Dommaraju (2764)

GM Wei Yi (2762)

45th Olympiad (7), Budapest, 09.10.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Nc3 Nf6

Black can play independently with 3. ... e5 4. Bc4 Be7 5. d3 Nf6 6. Bg5 0-0 7. Bxf6 Bxf6.

4. Be2



This move is played partly for its surprise value; elite players have only started experimenting with it the last two years. It could transpose into an Open Sicilian if White later plays d2-d4.

4. ... e5

After 4. ... g6 5. 0-0 Bg7 White doesn't have anything better than transposing into a Classical Dragon with 6. d4, which is not considered particularly dangerous for Black. Gukesh may have been playing the percentages here as Wei invariably favors the Najdorf, not the Dragon, when he plays the Sicilian.

5. Bc4

Such is modern chess! Gukesh breaks a fundamental rule by moving a piece twice in the first five moves of the game. He is in good company, as both Magnus Carlsen and Levon Aronian have done exactly the same thing.

5. ... Be7 6. d3 Nc6 7. Bg5 0-0

Vachier-Lagrave played 7. ... Nd7 against Carlsen earlier this year and 7. ... Be6 against Aronian in 2023. All three moves are of equal value, but they lead to quite different types of positions, so it's a matter of taste.

8. Bxf6 Bxf6 9. Nd5 Be6 10. Qd2

White has also tried 10. 0-0 g6 11. c3 Bg7 12. a3 Kh8 13. b4 f5 with equal chances in Caruana – Carlsen, Tal Memorial Blitz, Moscow 2013.

10. ... a6 11. 0-0 b5 12. Bb3 Kh8 13. a3 Rb8 14. h3 g6 15. c3

Gukesh shows his ambition with this move. 15. Nxf6 Qxf6 16. Bxe6 Qxe6 would have deadened the game, with a draw the likely result.

15. ... Bg7 16. Ba2 f5



17. Ng5

White could also have chosen 17. Nb4 which leads to a position with equal chances after 17. ... Bd7 18. Nxc6 Bxc6 19. Ng5 Bh6 (or 19. ... Qd7 20. Ne6 Rf6 21. Nxc7 Kxc7) 20. Nf7+ Rxf7 21. Qxh6 Rf6. Objectively this might have been the best way to play for White, as the text and the followup leads to a position that favors Black.

White had another logical plan in 17. b4. Note that 17. ... fxe4?! can be met by 18. Ng5! Bh6 19. Nxe6 Bxd2 20. Nxd8 Nxd8 21. dxe4 Ne6 22. Rad1 with a small advantage.

17. ... Bg8 18. exf5 gxf5 19. f4 c4

It looks good for Black after 19. ... a5 planning to push to a4. After 20. a4 b4 21. Bc4 h6 22. Nf3 Bxd5 23. Bxd5 Ne7 24. Be6 Rf6 25. Bc4 e4 26. dxe4 fxe4 27. Nh4 d5 28. Rad1 Qb6 Black has a nice advantage, as 29. Bxd5? loses to 29. ... c4+ 30. Kh2 Rd8.

There's another promising move for Black: 19. ... h6 20. Nf3 Bxd5 21. Bxd5 Ne7 22. Ba2 e4 followed by ... d6-d5 with complete control of the center.

20. dxc4 bxc4 21. Bxc4



21. ... exf4?

There was a clear advantage to be had with 21. ... Na5 22. Ba2 Nb3 23. Bxb3 Rxb3 24. Kh2 e4 leaving Black with two bishops, a strong center and pressure against the b2-pawn.

22. Nf3 Na5?

This no longer works so well.

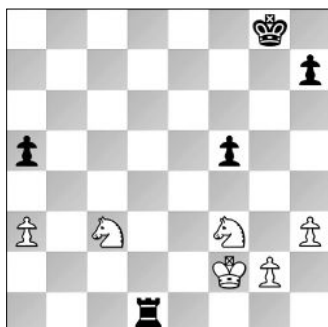
23. Ba2 Nb3 24. Bxb3 Rxb3 25. Nxf4?

White would have been better after 25. Rf2 Bxd5 26. Qxd5 Qb6 27. Qd2 Qe3 28. Re1 Qxd2 29. Rxd2 with a superior pawn structure.

25. ... Qb6+ 26. Rf2 Rb8 27. Rd1 Rxb2 28. Qxb2 Qxb2 29. Rxb2 Rxb2 30. Rxd6 a5?!

There was a simpler draw with 30. ... Bxc3 31. Rxa6 Rb5 32. Kf2 Ra5 33. Rxa5 Bxa5, keeping in mind that two knights cannot force a win by themselves.

31. Rd8 Bxc3 32. Nd5 Rb1+ 33. Kf2 Rd1 34. Rxg8+ Kxg8 35. Nxc3



Theoretically, this position is a draw, but White is clearly the one with all the chances. Up to this point Gukesh's play was nothing special, but from here to the end of the game he maximizes his chances and forces his opponent to constantly defend as his clock ticks down.

35. ... Rc1 36. Nb5 Rc2+ 37. Kf1 Kf7 38. Nfd4 Rc1+ 39. Ke2 Kf6 40. Nd6 Rc3 41. N6b5 Rc1 42. Ke3 Rg1 43. Kf2 Rc1 44. Ne2 Rb1 45. Nbc3 Rb3 46. a4 Ke5 47. g3 Rb6 48. Ke3 Rb4 49. Kd3 h6 50. Ke3 Rb3 51.

Kd3 Rb4 52. Ng1

Black's active defense has offered White no opportunity to go forward, but Gukesh keeps probing.

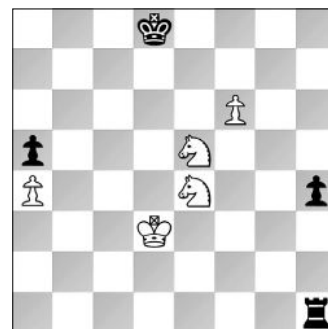
52. ... Rb8 53. Nf3+ Kf6 54. Nd4 Rd8 55. Ke3 Rc8 56. Kd3 Rd8 57. Nce2 Rb8 58. Nf4 Rb1 59. Nd5+ Ke5 60. Nc3 Rh1 61. Nf3+ Kd6 62. h4 Rh3 63. Ne2 f4!

Wei Yi correctly continues his policy of active defense.

64. Nfg1 Rh1 65. gxf4 Rxh4 66. Nf3 Rh1 67. f5 h5?!

This move is good enough to draw if followed up correctly, but it's not a good practical choice, as it allows White's knights to finally work together. Instead, 67. ... Ra1 68. Nc3 Ke7 was the right way to play, preventing White from making any progress.

68. Nc3 h4 69. Ne4+ Kd7 70. Ne5+ Kd8 71. f6



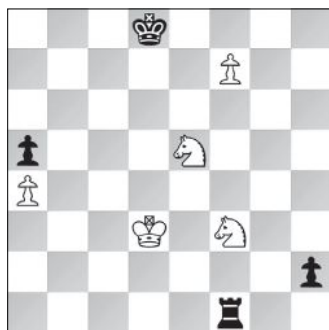
71. ... h3?

Unfortunately, by this point Wei Yi was low on time in a position where the only defense resembles an endgame study, requiring several difficult computer-like moves to



hold the balance: 71. ... Rd1+ 72. Ke2 Rd5! 73. Ng6 Rf5 74. Nxh4 Rf4 75. Ng6 Rxe4+ 76. Kd3 Rxa4 77. f7 Rf4! 78. Nxf4 Ke7.

72. f7 Rf1 73. Ng5 h2 74. Ngf3



74. ... Ke7

Black had a better practical try with 74. ... Rd1+; after 75. Kc4 h1=Q 76. f8=Q+ Kc7 it looks like the only winning move is 77. Qf4! with the point that after 77. ... Rc1+ 78. Kb5 Rb1+ 79. Ka6 Rb6+ 80. Kxa5 Black's checks have run out.

75. Nxh2 Ra1 76. Nhg4 Ra3+ 77. Kd2 Rxa4 78. Nh6 Ra2+ 79. Ke3 Ra3+ 80. Ke4, Black resigned.

"In the game against Gukesh, it looked like I could make an easy draw," Wei Yi said in an interview with the Hindustan Times. "But then he began thinking carefully and made quite a few difficult moves. I made mistakes and didn't do well in time trouble. There's a lot for me to improve. The way I lost such an endgame was upsetting for me. ... These young players are very strong

and it's not easy to face them. So, I feel very nervous now."

Unlike the previous Olympiad in Chennai, where the top 10 Open section finishers included a number of surprises, the rating favorites dominated in Budapest — the United States followed India onto the podium in second and Uzbekistan in third, emerging on game points from a tie with China, Serbia, and Armenia for second through sixth with 17 match points.

The silver medals were a marked improvement over the U.S. team's performance in Chennai two years ago, when illness took a toll. This time around, GMs Fabiano Caruana, Wesley So, Lenier Dominguez, Levon Aronian, and Ray Robson achieved the same match score as 2022, but against stronger opposition and while scoring three more game points, which proved important in the tiebreak.

The U.S. team's event can be divided into three stages: First came a rocket start, with three match victories by large margins. The second phase comprised a painful 1½-2½ loss to Ukraine, which could have easily been a win, followed by a win and then a draw with a solid Romanian team.

In an event that only lasted 11 rounds and featured a record 188 teams, there was now little room for error, but the Americans rose to the occasion, scoring four wins and one loss in the last five rounds. The loss came in the penultimate round against India. This was a must-win match for the U.S., which was trailing by two match points, and near the first time control a 2-2 score seemed likely, but a winning attempt failed and the

match ended 1½-2½.

Fortunately, the U.S. team saved its best for last, defeating third-seeded China in the last round by 2½-1½ to take home the silver medals. The hero for Team USA down the stretch was Wesley So, who won his last two games against players rated in the world top 10. Budapest was Wesley's fourth Olympiad for the United States, and in 41 games he has lost exactly one!

Indian players are getting all the attention these days, and deservedly so, but one recent arrival in the world's top 10 deserves a mention.

Wei Yi, of China, is still the youngest player ever to attain a FIDE rating of 2700, a milestone he reached back in 2015 at the age of 15. Two years later, Wei Yi was up to 2753 but he then entered the highly regarded and demanding Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management. Since graduating, Wei Yi has had several excellent results, including a victory in the Tata Steel tournament in Wijk aan Zee, and shows signs of finally realizing his full potential. Now 25, he is currently rated eighth in the world.

The next game shows off Wei Yi's excellent positional judgment and endgame skill.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, ACCELERATED DRAGON (B36)

GM Wei Yi (2762)

GM David Anton Guijarro (2665)

45th Olympiad (5), Budapest,
09.15.2024

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. c4

The great Hungarian player Geza Maróczy's final resting place in Kerepesi Cemetery was only a mile from the playing site, so the Maróczy Bind seems a fitting choice.

5. ... Nf6 6. Nc3 d6

This move sets up the idea 7. ... Bg7 8. Be3 Ng4, so White either has to reinforce his control over the g4-square or retreat the knight.

7. Be2

Among the alternatives here is 7. Nc2, which GM Le Quang Liem used in the last round against Guijarro. That game ended in tragedy for the top-15 player Le, who coaches at Webster: 7. ... Bg7 8. Be2 Nd7 9. Bd2 0-0 10. 0-0 Bxc3 11. Bxc3 Nc5 12. b4 Nxe4 13. Bb2 e5 14. a3 Be6 15. Ne3 f5 16. Qd3 a5 17. f3 Ng5 18. b5 Ne7 19. c5 dxc5 20. Qc3 Nf7 21. Rad1 Qc7 22. f4 Rad8 23. fxe5 Ng5 24. Bc4 Rd4 25. Qb3 Rxc4 26. Nxc4 Nd5 27. b6 Qe7 28. Nd6 c4 29. Qxc4 Ne3 30. Qc7?



Anton Guijarro suffers before resigning against Wei Yi



Levity breaks the tension before the first round.



30. ... Nh3+! 31. gxh3 Qg5+ 32. Kf2 f4 33. Ke2 f3+ 34. Kd3 Nxf1 35. Bd4 Qg2 36. Kc3 f2 37. Qe7 Qxh3+ 38. Rd3 Ne3 39. Bxe3 f1=Q, White resigned.

7. ... Nxd4 8. Qxd4 Bg7 9. Be3 0-0 10. Qd2 a5 11. f3 a4 12. Rc1 Be6 13. Nd5 Nxd5 14. cxd5 Bd7 15. a3
Wei takes time out to prevent Black from playing ... a4-a3.

15. ... e6 16. dxe6 Bxe6 17. Bd4 Bxd4 18. Qxd4



Both players were likely still in their preparation.

18. ... Qg5

Black could try sacrificing a pawn with 18. ... Qh4+ 19. g3 (19. Qf2 Qf6 20. Bd3 d5 21. 0-0 Rfd8 leaves Black with no problems) 19. ... Qh3 20. Kf2 Bb3 21. Qxd6 Rfd8 22. Qf4 Rd4 23. Rhf1 Rad8 24. Kg1 Rd2 25. Rf2 Qe6. Does Black have decent counterplay, or after 26. Qe3 is White just a pawn up?

19. Kf2

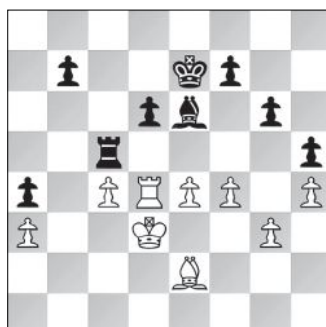
White prefers to keep his king closer to the center in case an endgame is reached.

It looks scary for Black after 19. 0-0 Rfc8 20. f4 (20. Rxc8+ Rxc8 21. Qxd6?? Qe3+) 20. ... Qd8 21. f5 Rxc1 22. Rxc1 gxf5 23. Rc3, but Black is fine after 23. ... f4.

19. ... Rfc8 20. h4 Qh6 21. Rc3 Rxc3 22. bxc3 Rc8 23. c4 Qf4

Play is similar to the game after 23. ... Rc6 24. g3 Qg7.

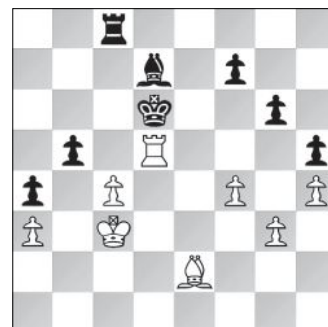
24. g3 Qe5 25. Rd1 h5 26. f4 Qc5 27. Qxc5 Rxc5 28. Rd4 Kf8 29. Ke3 Ke7 30. Kd3



30. ... Bd7?!

So far Anton Guijarro has defended very well, but here he starts to go wrong. The correct way to handle this position was with 30. ... Rc6 intending to bring the rook to the b-file for counterplay. For example: 31. Bd1 (31. Kc3 Rb6) 31. ... Rb6 32. Bc2 Rb2 33. Kc3 and the position is equal.

31. Kc3 b5 32. Rd5 Rc8 33. e5 dxe5 34. Rxe5+ Kd6 35. Rd5+



35. ... Ke7?

This is a serious mistake, but one that was not easy to see when low on time near the time control (40/90 followed by G/30, with a 30-second increment throughout).

The correct way was 35. ... Ke6. After 36. Re5+ (36. Kb4 bxc4 37. Bxc4 Ke7 is equal) 36. ... Kd6 37. Kb4 bxc4 38. Bxc4 Rb8+ 39. Ka5 f6 40. Rd5+ Ke7 equalizes.

36. c5

This move entails a temporary pawn sacrifice, but White will soon recover his material and more with a winning position.

36. ... Be6 37. Re5 f6 38. Re3 Rxc5+ 39. Kb4!

The point of White's previous play. Now Black's queenside pawns fall.

39. ... Rc1 40. Bxb5 Rb1+ 41. Kxa4 Kd6 42. Ka5 Bf5 43. a4 Kc5 44. Rc3+ Kd4 45. Rc4+ Kd5

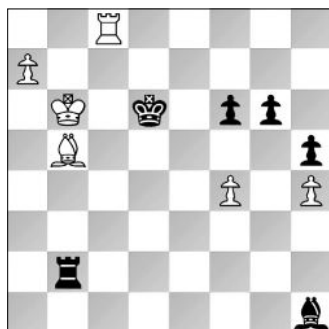
Black isn't saved by 45. ... Ke3 46. Rb4.

46. Rc6 Rg1 47. Kb6 Rxc3 48. a5 Rb3 49. Rc5+ Kd6 50. a6 Be4 51. a7 Rb2 52. Rc8 Bh1

(see diagram next page)

53. Rc3!

Strong players do not give up easily. After the hasty 53. a8=Q? Black strikes back with 53. ... Bxa8 54. Rxa8 Ke6 with good chances to reach a theoretically drawn rook and bishop versus rook ending. Wei instead goes after another weakness: Black's g-pawn.



POSITION AFTER 52. ... Bh1

53. ... Ba8

Black loses in a similar way to the game continuation after 53. ... Ke7 54. Rc8 Rb1 55. Kc5 Rc1+ 56. Bc4 Bf3 57. Rg8 Rg1 58. Rg7+ Kd8 59. Bd5.

54. Rg3 Ke6

White also wins after 54. ... Be4 55. Rxg6 as the bishop can't take the rook and also control the a8-square.

55. Rxg6 Kf5 56. Rh6 Kxf4 57. Rxh5 f5 58. Rh8 Bh1 59. Rg8 Ke5 60. h5 f4 61. h6 Rh2 62. Rg6 Ba8 63. Bc6 f3 64. Bxa8 f2 65. Bg2 Rxg2 66. Rxg2 f1=Q 67. a8=Q Qb1+ 68. Ka7 Qa1+ 69. Kb8, Black resigned.

TWO FROM THE TEAM

SICILIAN DEFENSE, TAIMANOV VARIATION (B48)

GM Levon Aronian (2729)

FM Zhenyong Jayden Wong (2397)

45th Olympiad (2), Budapest,

09.12.2024

Annotations by GM Levon Aronian

In the previous round I experienced a real shocker: I was completely lost (see page 12 ~ed.) against a youngster from Panama and only by some miracle managed to win. When the team trusted me to play against another youngster, I got excited! And scared!

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4

I knew my opponent mostly plays the Paulsen/Taimanov Sicilian, and I had a rare idea planned.

3. ... cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nc6 5. Nc3 Qc7 6. Be3 a6 7. Qd2

This is considered old-fashioned. More popular choices are 7. Qf3, 7. g4 or 7. a3.

7. ... Nf6 8. 0-0-0 Be7

This is called the Brazilian Variation; it's more tactical, while the old move, 8. ... Bb4, heads for an equal endgame. The main point is that Black tries to play for a quick ... b7-b5 and plans to put the knight on h5 after g2-g4-g5. From there, because the d7-pawn hasn't moved and so e6 is protected, Black has the unusual idea of ... f7-f5 in many lines.

9. g4

The unusual move I had in mind. White is trying to sacrifice material for development and long-term compensation. The more common moves are 9. f4 or 9. f3.

9. ... Nxg4

My opponent took time on every move, and my inner dirty flagger rejoiced at the prospect of potential time trouble havoc. I should note that accepting the pawn sac is very natural, but not forced, since 9. ... b5 leads to a healthy position after 10. g5 Ng4 (because of the quick g2-g4, 10. ... Nh5 doesn't work here after 11. Be2) 11. Bf4 d6.

10. Bf4 Nge5

Good move. After 10. ... Qb6 11. Nxc6 bxc6, both 12. Rg1 h5 13. h3 e5 14. hxg4 exf4 15. gxh5 and the simple 12. Na4 are dangerous.

11. Nxc6 bxc6

I was sure that my opponent would not even consider 11. ... dxc6 since in this opening taking in that direction is mostly connected with a future ... e6-e5, which is not an option here. And yet, surprisingly, 11. ... dxc6 is OK here! After 12. Rg1 Bf6 12. Bg3 c5 Black is ready to retreat the knight to c6 after the coming f2-f4 and can bring the king to a safe haven with ... Bc8-d7 and ... 0-0-0.

12. Rg1

The most challenging try. I could play 12. Bg3, but it's more strategic and doesn't ask immediate questions.

12. ... g5

Black has an abundance of good options, and this is the most brave! It would take a small book to write about 12. ... g6, 12. ... 0-0 and 12. ... Bf6. The only line except 12. ... g5 I remembered well was 12. ... 0-0, where White needs to play 13. Qe3 f6 14. Qg3 Rf7 15. Be2 with the idea of Be2-h5!

13. Rxg5

After the game my opponent told me that this move was unexpected, but in fact it's the only move for White — once you know that 12. Bg3 g5 is decent for Black, 13. Bg3 makes very little sense.

13. ... Bxg5

The next three moves are forced.

14. Bxg5 Nf3 15. Qe3 Nxg5 16. Qxg5 d6

After the game Leinier asked me about 16. ... d5? but it's a natural-looking blunder! After 17. exd5 cxd5 White wins with 18. Bg2, since there's no good way to stop Bg2xd5.

17. f4

This is a novelty that I was putting my trust in. White is trying to play the long game and eventually get a grip over the c5-square after e4-e5, replying to ... d7-d5 with Nc3-a4.

17. ... Qe7

An interesting decision by my opponent, who was down to 30 minutes. I remembered how to play against 17. ... Bb7, but after this I had to start to think on my own.

18. Qg1

Inaccurate. The queen belongs here, but only after the inclusion of 18. Qg7 Rf8.

18. ... Kf8

This is why I had to play 18. Qg7. Now Black has a clear plan of ... Rf8-g8 and ... d6-d5.

19. e5 Rg8

But this is a bad blunder that I did not fully take advantage of. It's better and more natural to just play 19. ... d5.

20. Qb6 d5 21. Ne4

This is the problem. Black can't take because of 22. Rd8+ winning the queen or mating with 22. ... Kg7 23. Qg1+, so the knight gets close to Black's king for free.

21. ... Rg6



22. Nd6

I played this move after thinking for a few minutes: That's an example of my bad shape at the start of the Olympiad. Not playing classical chess for three months can make a difference! The game is over soon after 22. Nf6 Rxf6 23. exf6 Qxf6 24. Kb1: Black's forces are too disharmonic and after White develops with Bf1-d3 and Rd1-g1 the black king will not survive for long. And if Black doesn't take,

for example 22. Nf6 h5 23. Bd3 Rh6, White still invades with 24. Rg1 Rh8 25. Qxc6 Rb8.

22. ... Bd7 23. Bd3 Rg2

At this point I was a bit puzzled that I am not crushing Black with such a dominant knight on d6.

24. Kb1 Be8 25. f5

It took me 30 minutes to understand that things are not what they seem. The best White can get here is a draw, and I was determined to achieve it.

25. ... Qa7

Of course. Black can also play 25. ... exf5, but this move forces White to find only moves.

26. Qb4 Rg1 27. Be2

A sad necessity. All the discovered checks lead nowhere, so the d6-knight is in the right place. At this moment I was about 90 percent sure Black cannot avoid the draw, and even though it was not the result I was hoping for, I felt at peace.

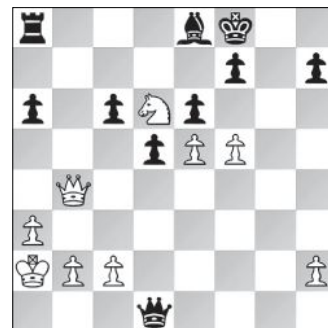
27. ... Rxd1+

Black had a zillion moves, but, being short on time, my opponent chooses the most direct way.

28. Bxd1 Qg1 29. a3

The point of White's previous play. The knight on d6 is a good piece after all; it stops Black from putting the queen on c4 with check in some lines.

29. ... Qxd1+ 30. Ka2



Black is a rook up, but because White has discovered checks, f5-f6 ideas and the possibility of chasing the a8-rook, the position is drawn!

30. ... exf5

The alternative 30. ... Qg1 31. f6 Kg8 forces White to play 32. Qb7 Qa7 33. Qb3 with a draw, but I think my opponent thought this would also be easy.

Leinier Dominguez studies Aronian's game against Wong



31. Nxf5+ Kg8 32. Qe7 h6

The only move, but sufficient.

33. Nxh6+ Kh7 34. Qh4 Kg6??

A terrible, losing blunder. This is why chess is comparable to martial arts: You can have a difficult and balanced fight for 95 percent of the round and lose because of a silly mistake. 34. ... f5 and 34. ... f6 still draw, though it's more complicated now.

35. Qf6+ Kh5 36. Nf5

This is the problem: The only way to avoid the mating net leads to a knight fork or puts Black's own queen in the way.

36. ... Qf3

36. ... Qxc2 fails to the fork 37. Qh6+ Kg4 38. Ne3+. And 36. ... Qd2 is met with 37. Ng3+ Kg4 38. Qf5+ Kh4 39. Qh5 mate.

37. Qh6+ Kg4 38. Ne3+, Black resigned.

Black loses the queen, so my opponent resigned and I once again marveled at my own tremendous luck.

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

GM Wesley So (2752)

GM Rameshbabu Pragganandhaa (2750)

45th Olympiad (10), Budapest, 09.21.2024

Annotations by GM Wesley So

This game was played in the 10th round, when we were one match win behind the leaders, India. We were on the ropes, because even if we beat them, we would still be behind on tiebreaks. But we were very thrilled to be able to compete against the leaders of the tournament, who had dominated all throughout the event. And if a miracle happened and we actually won the match, we might even have an outside chance for gold!

1. e4 e5

I also prepared for the French, as Pragg regularly plays it, including the day before against Sindarov, but I figured he'd go for this instead.

2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4

Our coach, GM Mikhail Antipov, is an expert in the Italian, and has a practically encyclopedic knowledge of it, so it was a big topic during our team meetings, and several of our players played it during the tournament. I also have some understanding of it, playing it frequently, especially online, with both colors.

3. ... Bc5

I won a decent game with white in round three against GM Naiditsch after 3. ... Nf6 4. d3 Be7.

4. 0-0

I had this against Pragg with opposite colors a month earlier in the Sinquefeld Cup. He played the sharp line 4. c3 Nf6 5. d3 d6 6. Bg5 and was very well prepared. He got a winning position, but I managed a miracle draw.

4. ... Nf6 5. d3 d6 6. c3 a6 7. a4 Ba7

Pragg likes this setup, but normally I prepare for other possibilities too; for example, there's also a lot of theory on ... a7-a5 here or on the previous move.

8. Nbd2

I thought he'd be very well prepared against 8. Bg5 — he'd played it a few times with white, including in round six against GM Peter Leko. Mikhail told me to play an early Nb1-d2, but I have no understanding of why it's more accurate than 8. Re1.

8. ... 0-0 9. h3**9. ... Be6**

Pragg had never gone for this variation before; normally, Black plays ... Rf8-e8 first. In the Sinquefeld Cup, he played 9. ... h6 10. Re1 (10. Ba2) 10. ... Qe7 against MVL. A rare move, but he equalized very easily.

10. Bxe6 fxe6 11. b4

In return for the doubled pawns Black gets an open file and quick activity. As Grischuk once said, Black simply has to attack on the kingside in this position!

11. ... Qe8

Keymer played 11. ... h6 12. Re1 Ne7 against me in Düsseldorf last year and won very easily. I'm more aware now how quickly the position can become dangerous for White. One of the tips he gave me after the game was 13. Nf1 Ng6 14. N1h2! with the idea of

g2-g3 and Kg1-g2, to secure the kingside and limit his knights.

12. Ra2

This is always a good move, as Levon Aronian told me. It protects the second rank and now b4-b5 is also possible. Black gets a quick kingside attack and a very good game after 12. Re1 Nh5 13. Nf1 Qg6.

12. ... Nh5

Black could also keep options open with the flexible 12. ... Qg6!?

13. Nc4 Nf4

It's pleasant for White after 13. ... b5 14. Ne3 followed by Ne3-g4 or g2-g3.

14. b5

My first idea was 14. Kh2 but 14. ... Qh5 threatening ... Nf4xh3 is fine for Black.

14. ... Nb8!

I thought this was a nice move, as the knight can reroute itself to d7, protecting b6.

Against 14. ... Ne7 I had planned to play 15. b6 Bxb6 16. Nxb6 cxb6 17. g3 and put the rook on b2, when Black's doubled pawns give me a slight edge.

15. Kh2

I spent 25 minutes here, but finally couldn't find anything convincing.

My first intention was to play 15. b6, but I didn't think I had much after 15. ... Bxb6 16. Rb2 (16. Nxb6 cxb6 17. g3 Ng6 is also nothing for White, because Black can always give back the pawn with ... b6-b5, responding to a4xb5 with ... a6-a5 creating a protected, passed a-pawn) 16. ... Nd7 17. a5 Ba7. Now 18. Rxb7 allows 18. ... Nc5, so I have to give up my bishop, and after 18. Bxf4 Rxf4 19. Rxb7 Qc8 20. Rb4 h6 I didn't think Black has problems here with a strong dark-squared bishop.

15. ... Nd7 16. g3 Ng6 17. bxa6

I didn't want to play this move, but if I don't

I always have to watch out for the possible opening of the a-file.

But maybe I didn't have to trade pawns right away: The position gets complex after 17. Kg2 d5 (17. ... Nc5 18. Be3 and Black cannot take the pawn, as after 18. ... axb5 19. axb5 Qxb5 20. Ng5 White gets a strong attack) 18. Ncd2 Bc5 19. Qc2.

17. ... bxa6 18. Kg2 d5 19. Ncd2

19. Na5 was one idea, but I thought my knight is too far from my king.

I didn't want him to exchange minor pieces with 19. Ne3 Bxe3 20. Bxe3 Nf6 followed by ... Qe8-c6, when Black doesn't seem to have any problems at all.

19. ... Nf6 20. Re1

20. c4!? is interesting, to clarify the situation on the queenside.

20. ... Rd8 21. Qe2



I didn't really think I was better here, but I was happy to get a playable position and Black has doubled pawns. After 21. Qc2 I was a bit worried about 21. ... Nh5 22. Nf1

but the computer shows that Black has no real attack on the kingside.

21. ... Qc6 22. c4 Rf7

22. ... Nh5 makes sense, and after 23. Nf1 dxc4! 24. dxc4 Bc5 with the idea of ... Bc5-b4, Black is totally good.

23. cxd5

I relieved him of his doubled pawns, but in the process I opened the position and gave myself targets on the c-file.

23. ... exd5 24. Nf1 h6 25. N1h2

After a long, adventurous journey, I finally achieved the setup I learned from the Keymer game. The position is just equal, of course, but my king is safe, and Pragg started to go wrong.

25. ... Rfd7

I think the rook was just fine on the f-file.

Black has many good moves here, such as 25. ... Bd4 or 25. ... Qd6 followed by ... c7-c5.

26. a5



It's always good to advance your rook's pawn to gain space, and fix the a6-pawn. Now Pragg started to use a lot of time.

26. ... dxe4?!

This just weakens his position, giving me three isolated pawns to target. Black is totally fine after 26. ... Qe6 followed by ... c7-c5.

27. dxe4 Rd3 28. Rd2

Trading his active rook looks normal to me.

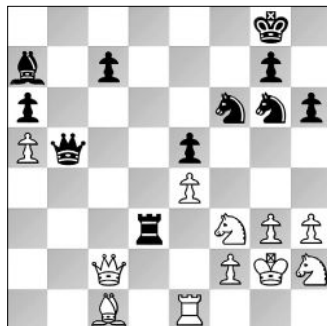


The computer prefers 28. Rc2 Qd6 29. Rc4 followed by Qe2-c2.

28. ... Qb5

Stronger is 28. ... Rxd2 29. Bxd2 Qb5! since once the queens are traded, Black will have a perfectly solid and tenable position. If White tries to avoid it with 30. Qd1 Black forces it anyway with 30. ... Qc4 and White has to play 31. Qc1.

29. Rxd3 Rxd3 30. Qc2!



Pragg must have missed this move from afar. Now White's queen suddenly infiltrates the position.

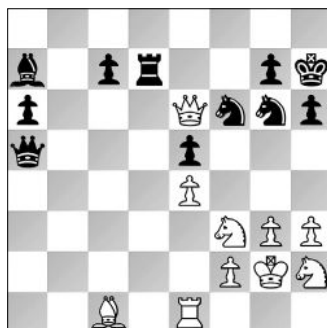
30. ... Rd7

Here 30. ... c5 doesn't look attractive, since at the very least I can pin his pawn with 31. Be3 when the a7-bishop looks very ugly indeed.

31. Qa2+ Kh7 32. Qe6

A good move, but I missed 32. Ng4! winning on the spot! After 32. ... Nxg4 33. hxg4 White's position structurally is just dominating — g4-g5 is coming next move, and Black has no real defense.

32. ... Qxa5!



Pragg almost used up all his time here. It's a nice practical try, and it almost worked. He's a great calculator, so I kind of trusted him that the tactics worked in his favor after 33. Ng4. But they don't!

33. Qf5

After 33. Ng4 Nxg4 34. Qxd7! (34. hxg4 Rd6 is OK for Black) 34. ... Nxf2 I just assumed Black is fine here, but in fact White is totally winning after 35. Be3 or 35. Re2. The knight on g6 cannot join the fight and I am simply up the Exchange.

33. ... Qa2 34. Rf1?!

Again just trusting my intuition — and Pragg's.

If I had been more disciplined in calculating I might have played 34. Nh4! I saw that after 34. ... Qf7 35. N2f3 Re7 36. Bg5! Black is pinned multiple ways, and White wins by activating the rook next. But I wasn't sure the endgame was winning after 34. ... Qxf2+ 35. Qxf2 Bxf2 36. Kxf2 Nxh4 37. gxh4. It is, but White has to play very accurately to hang on to both the e4- and h3-pawns.

34. ... Re7?

We both underestimated 34. ... Rd6! , which is the only way to stay in the game. Normally Pragg would easily spot 35. Nxe5 Ng8 followed by breaking the pin with ... Ng8-e7, but he had less than two minutes left.

35. Bxh6

35. Bg5 was stronger yet, but I was happy with this move, since Black has many weaknesses.

35. ... gxh6 36. Qxf6 Qe6?

The final mistake. It was much more stubborn to play 36. ... Rf7 37. Qc6 Qe2! White still wins after 38. Qe6 Kg7 39. Qg4 but I have to find a lot of accurate moves.

37. Ng4

I can also play 37. Qf5 first.

37. ... a5

Fortunately for me, the ending is easily winning after 37. ... Qxf6 38. Nxf6+ Kg7 39. Nd5 Rd7 40. Ra1.

38. Qf5

Black's king is very weak, and he has four isolated pawns!

38. ... Kg7 39. Qh5 Nh8 40. Nh4 Kh7 41. Nxh6, Black resigned.

Black reached the time control, but Pragg resigned.

Our team was still in big trouble after my game. Erigaisi was outplaying Leinier from the very beginning; Fabiano blundered a pawn on board one, after desperately trying to trick Gukesh, who was in time trouble; Levon had an equal endgame on board four. In the end we lost 2½-1½. But the next day we came back and beat China, earning ourselves a last-minute silver medal! Big congratulations to India for their dominating performance, especially Gukesh and Erigaisi who combined for 19 out of 21 total points! Big congratulations also to our own team, for never giving up. ♠

For more on the Olympiad, including dozens of annotated games, visit our **CLO** coverage at new.uschess.org/45th-fide-chess-olympiad.

THE 2024 FIDE OPEN OLYMPIAD AT A GLANCE

SEPT. 10-23, 2024 | BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

TEAM WINNERS

GOLD: India, 21 match points. **SILVER (ON TIEBREAKS):** United States, 17 match points. **BRONZE (ON TIEBREAKS):** Uzbekistan, 17 match points.

INDIVIDUAL MEDALS

BOARD 1 GOLD: GM Gukesh Dommaraju. **SILVER:** GM Nodirbek Abdusattorov. **BRONZE:** GM Magnus Carlsen. **BOARD 2 GOLD:** GM Thai Dai Van Nguyen. **SILVER:** IM Toni Lazov. **BRONZE:** GM Ediz Gurel. **BOARD 3 GOLD:** GM Arjun Erigaisi. **SILVER:** GM Yu Yangyi. **BRONZE:** GM Tuan Minh Le. **BOARD 4 GOLD:** GM Shamsiddin Vokhidov. **SILVER:** GM Levon Aronian. **BRONZE:** GM Alan Pichot. **BOARD 5 GOLD:** Frederik Svane. **SILVER:** GM Benjamin Gledura. **BRONZE:** GM Velimir Ivic.

AMERICAN RESULTS

BOARD 1: GM Fabiano Caruana, 6½/10. **BOARD 2:** GM Wesley So, 6½/10. **BOARD 3:** GM Leinier Dominguez, 5½/9. **BOARD 4:** GM Levon Aronian, 8/10. **BOARD 5:** GM Ray Robson, 3/5.

Welcome to NEW YORK

The 2024 World Rapid and Blitz Championship is coming to the Big Apple. Here's what you need to know.

BY **RICK MASSIMO**

WHERE IS THE TOURNAMENT?

It's a big-money tournament, so it's probably fitting that it's being held on Wall Street: Cipriani 55 Wall Street for the Open section, across the street at 48 Wall Street for the Women's.

WHAT'S THE FORMAT?

The event starts with the rapid tournament Dec. 26-28, with a time control of G/15 with a 10-second increment per move. The Open section will play 13 rounds over three days; the Women's section, 11.

After a day off, the blitz portion begins Dec. 30 and calls for two days of G/3 with a two-second increment, held in two stages. The Open section will play 13 rounds and the Women's section 11 on the first day; on Dec. 31, the top eight in each section face off in four-game knockout matches until there's a winner.

WHO CAN PLAY?

Registration is closed, but the tournament was open to players over 2550 for the Open section, 2250 for the Women's, on any recent

FIDE rating list, whether standard, rapid, or blitz. National champions are eligible regardless of rating. FIDE will also invite a number of wildcard entries.

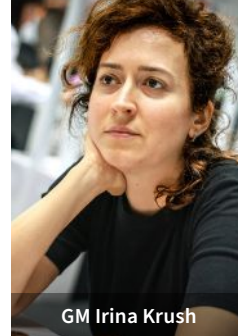
HOW MUCH MONEY IS AT STAKE?

The Open prize fund totals \$550,000 in the rapid championship and \$450,000 in the blitz; in the Women's section, it's \$228,500 in the rapid and \$200,000 in the blitz. In both sections the first prizes are \$90,000 and \$60,000 respectively.

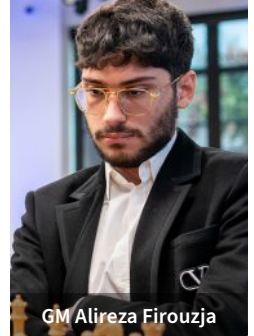
SO WHO'S SIGNED UP TO PLAY?

Players are still registering as we go to press, but we know that Magnus Carlsen will be in New York to defend his 2023 rapid and blitz titles. Other top confirmed players in the Open section include GMs Levon Aronian, Arjun Erigaisi, Alireza Firouzja, Anish Giri, Wesley So, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, and Wei Yi.

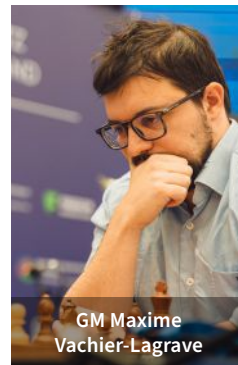
Former women's world champions Alexandra Kosteniuk and Mariya Muzychuk are scheduled to appear in the Women's rapid



GM Irina Krush



GM Alireza Firouzja



GM Maxime
Vachier-Lagrave



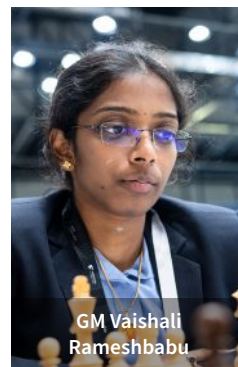
GM Mariya Muzychuk



GM Lei Tingjie



GM Magnus Carlsen



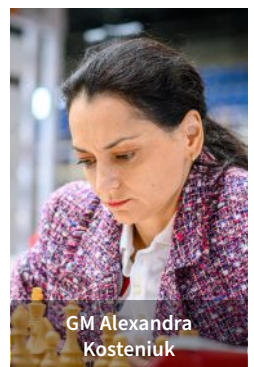
GM Vaishali
Rameshbabu



GM Wesley So



GM Levon Aronian



GM Alexandra
Kosteniuk



and blitz, along with former challengers and GMs Lei Tingjie and Humpy Koneru. GMs Harika Dronavalli and Vaishali Rameshbabu join from the gold medal-winning Indian Women's Olympiad team, while GM Irina Krush leads the American contingent.

HOW CAN I WATCH?

You can watch online at worldrapidandblitz.fide.com/watch-live. Games in both sections start at 2 p.m. each day. The streaming links may not be there yet, but the organizers say they will be before the tournament starts.

WHAT ELSE MIGHT A CHESS PLAYER WANT TO CHECK OUT IN THE AREA?

FM Davis Zong has you covered:

The Marshall Chess Club is more than a century old, and has been in its current location at 23 W. 10th St. since 1931. That means it's where Bobby Fischer played the Game of the Century, where he played the 1965 Havana international tournament by teletype and more. They've even got the set and table Magnus Carlsen and Sergey Karjakin played the 2016 World Championship on.

"If you were to enter the club on a tournament during weekday nights or weekend afternoons," Zong says, "you may find players ranging from elementary schoolers to seniors, enthusiastic game review sessions, and dense spectator crowds around intense games." He says the two-story club is on "a peaceful street between the busy sectors of Union Square and NYU, supplemented with a serene backyard tucked just below the street." From Wall Street you can catch the 2 or 3 train and be there in about 20 minutes.

Not far from the Marshall is the Chess Forum, at 219 Thompson St. This was one of Bobby Fischer's hangouts, and it is the original site of Nicolas Rossolimo's Chess Studio. The Chess Forum is pay-to-play — \$5 per hour for adults, while senior citizens get an 80% discount and kids are free! — but it's an experience not to be missed.

New York is known for its chess *al fresco*, and although it can get pretty *fresco* in late December, you can check out Washington Square Park, about another 20-minute subway ride, for the park chess experience. "Players are often up for friendly games," Zong says, "and you may meet anyone from eager beginners to undercover masters playing in the park." He also recommends Bryant Park, on 42nd Street between 5th and 6th avenues, and the Chess and Checkers House in Central Park around 64th Street, as great chess spots, albeit farther away.

One last tip for bibliophiles: Check out Fred Wilson's famed chess bookshop at 41 Union Square West (at 17th Street), Suite 718. Wilson has (per his website) "an intelligent selection of out-of-print and rare books" along with the latest titles, so you'll want to save some room in your suitcase. His posted hours are 12-7 p.m., Monday through Saturday, but you may want to verify before heading over.

WHAT ELSE?

But you can't live on chess alone — even though a lot of people have tried — and Zong recommends some non-chess sites in the area to check out, including the famous charging bull statue on Wall Street, as well as Oculus, at 50 Church St., "an architectural masterpiece meant to represent a dove in

flight." He also recommends the one World Observatory at the World Trade Center, "a classic tourist attraction" for its "breath-taking 360-degree view of the city from the 102nd floor of the tower." History (and Broadway) buffs may want to visit Trinity Church, a five-minute walk from the playing site at 89 Broadway — Alexander Hamilton is buried there.

I'M HUNGRY!

Ya gotta eat, so Zong recommends the "delicious steakhouse" Capital Grille at 120 Broadway and the Italian market Eataly at 101 Liberty St., both downtown near the tournament site. And Chinatown is only about 20 minutes' walk away, with numerous dim sum and other options "ranging from light dumpling snacks to a full Sichuan- or Guangdong-style meal." ↗





Alekhine at the Top

Watch and learn from an immortal at the top of his powers.

BY **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**

IT WAS CERTAINLY A GREAT achievement for Alexander Alekhine (1892-1946) when he dethroned the “invincible” Capablanca in their historic 1927 match, but that was not the end of Alekhine’s ascendancy: His successes in 1930 at San Remo and in 1931 at Bled were both virtual *tours de force*. In those years it seemed he could win from any kind of position against practically anyone. The way he powered through Vasja Pirc (White) at Bled is exemplary.

QUEEN’S GAMBIT DECLINED, TARRASCH DEFENSE (D32)

Vasja Pirc
Alexander Alekhine
Bled, 08.31.1931

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 c5 4. cxd5 cxd4 5. Qa4+ Bd7 6. Qxd4



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. **

6. Par Score 5 exd5
This is the best continuation; on 6. ... Nf6, White’s advantage increases with 7. e4. Black has sacrificed a pawn for central activity and some play.

7. Qxd5
After 7. Nxd5 Nc6, the position is about equal. **

7. Par Score 5 Nc6
A useful developing move, which also obstructs the White queen’s attack on the b7-pawn.

8. Bg5
This developing move harasses Black’s queen and aims to induce weaknesses. **

8. Par Score 5 Nf6
Alekhine simply develops another knight. White has to trade bishop for knight or retreat his queen.

9. Qd2
For the meantime, White withdraws his queen. **

9. Par Score 5 h6
Black “puts the question to the bishop.” Will it take the knight or retreat to h4? You may accept *full credit* for the quieter 9. ... Be7.

10. Bxf6
White answers the question by taking the knight. On the surface, the exchange gains time by forcing Black to take back. **

10. Par Score 4 Qxf6

But Black doesn’t really lose time. Instead, time has been gained for castling queenside.

11. e3
This is reasonable, since it clears the way for f1-bishop’s development. On 11. Nd5, Black would have had 11. ... Qd6, and the position would be about equal. **

11. Par Score 5 0-0-0
As expected, Alekhine castles queenside. Potential discoveries are in the air.

12. 0-0-0
White also decides to castle queenside, but this invites a little trouble. Perhaps 12. Nf3 was a bit safer, though Black would still be coming away with an edge. **

12. Par Score 5 Bg4
Suddenly, Black is threatening to gain the Exchange. Alekhine has somehow gotten the advantage.

13. Nd5
White, not liking any of the alternatives, hopes to gain defensive time with an attack to Black’s queen. **

13. Par Score 7 Rxd5
During his period of supremacy, Alekhine played moves like this in a snap. By sacrificing the Exchange, he keeps his attack going.

14. Qxd5 **

14. Par Score 7 Ba3
Another surprise! If 15. bxa3, there would follow 15. ... Qa1+ 16. Kc2 Bxd1+ 17. Qxd1 Qxa2+, and Black’s attack is irresistible (*1 bonus point* if you saw this).

15. Qb3

ABCS OF CHESS

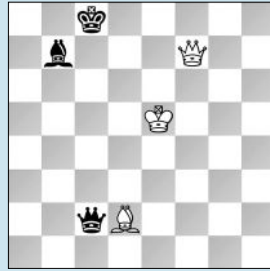
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 71.

DECEMBER EXERCISE:

Here is a technique you can employ to help solve composed two-movers: It may be better to determine where defenders are likely to go before considering your own move. Once you see the three or four plausible moves the opponent can make, search for an all-purpose move that satisfies every contingency. This way you will restrict your investigation to moves that are relevant, instead of striking out wherever the signposts on the chessboard lead you.

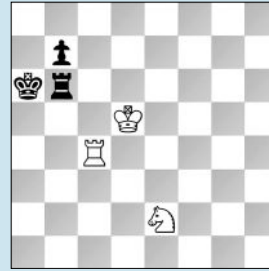
PROBLEM 1

Mating net



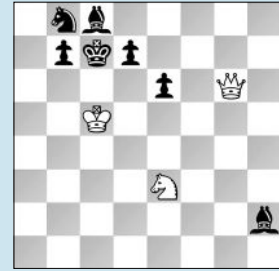
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



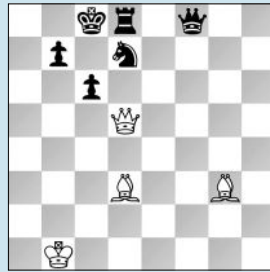
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



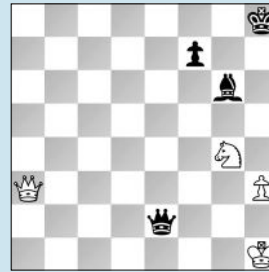
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



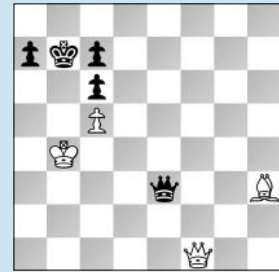
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



Pirc tries to hold the fort, but Alekhine's invaders are going to break through anyway. **

15. Par Score 4 Bxd1
Alekhine takes back the Exchange.

16. Qxa3
If instead 16. Kxd1, then 16. ... Qxf2; or if 16. Qxd1, then 16. ... Qxb2 is mate. Accept **1 bonus point** for analyzing all of that. **

16. Par Score 5 Qxf2
Material is now even, and Black threatens the f1-bishop as well as mate at c2.

17. Qd3
White tries to cope with both threats. A bleak future would result from 17. Kxd1 Qxf1+ 18. Kc2 Qxg2+. **

17. Par Score 5 Bg4
You may accept **full credit** for 17. ... Ba4, which may have been slightly better.

18. Nf3
White has to get out his pieces. There's little choice. **

18. Par Score 5 Bxf3
This is not played so much to win a pawn as to get rid of a useful defender.

19. Qf5+

White had counted on this check to avoid losing a pawn, but it doesn't save the game. **

19. Par Score 5 Kb8

20. Qxf3
For the moment, White keeps the position afloat. But the roof is about to cave in. **

20. Par Score 5 Qe1+

21. Kc2 **
As bad as it would have been, 21. Qd1 Qxe3+ 22. Qd2, trying to reach an inferior ending, offered more resistance.

21. Par Score 6 Rc8
Another serious discovery is menaced. White doesn't have good answers.

22. Qg3+
Trading queens would certainly reduce White's troubles. **

22. Par Score 6 Ne5
But it's not going to happen — Alekhine has blocked the check with a check! White must answer the discovery from the black rook.

23. Kb3
Essentially forced. **

23. Par Score 5 Qd1+

24. Ka3

If 24. Kb4 a5+ 25. Kxa5 Rc5+ (or 25. ... Qd2+) 25. Kb4 Qd6 it's just about over (**1 bonus point**). **

24. Par Score 6 Rc5
Pirc is caught in a web leading to mate or losing big material. For example, if 25. e4, play might continue 25. ... Ra5+ 26. Kb4 Qa4+ 27. Kc3 Rc5+ 28. Kd2 Qb4+, and White's game is hopeless.

25. 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

Senior Knights

A day of horseplay earned me a major championship

BY **GM JOEL BENJAMIN**

W

WHILE WORKING ON A BOOK about Bobby Fischer, I've noticed the champion won a lot of endgames with bishop against knight. Call me the anti-Fischer, but I seem to play with the knight more often. I suppose playing openings like the Nimzo-Indian and the Rossolimo Variation of the Sicilian would lead me there fairly frequently, but what happened one day in my basement a few years ago is still out of the ordinary.

Back in the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 U.S. Senior Championship was conducted online in October. Sitting at the same computer I'm typing from now, I beat two grandmasters in one day in knight versus bishop endings. One interesting feature of these games, against Patrick Wolff and Alex Yermolinsky respectively, is that our notion of one piece being superior has to be adjusted. We can see moments and possible variations where each piece shows its natural advantages over the other.

In the first game, I had a traditional good knight against a bad bishop.

MAKE A RUN FOR IT

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B50)

GM Joel Benjamin (2506)

GM Patrick Wolff (2552)

US Senior Ch. (5), lichess.org, 10.18.2020

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bb5+ Bd7 4. Bxd7+ Nxd7 5. 0-0 Ngf6 6. d3 g6 7. Re1 Bg7 8. c3 0-0 9. d4 cxd4 10. cxd4 e5 11. dxe5 Nxe5 12. Nxe5 dxe5 13. Nc3 Qb6 14. Qe2 Rfc8 15. Bg5 Bf8 16. Bxf6 Qxf6 17. Nd5 Qe6 18. Rac1 Rxc1 19. Rxc1 Rc8 20. Rc4 Kg7

21. Qc2 Rxc4 22. Qxc4 Qc6!?

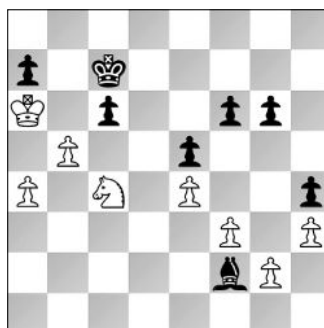


There is some logic in trading queens, as queen and knight tend to make a better combination than queen and bishop. Still, I was happy to see this move, as White's position will be very easy to play, which is especially welcome in rapid games. There was a sensible option in 22. ... Qd6.

23. Qxc6 bxc6 24. Ne3

The d5 outpost is gone, but Black's split pawns are a liability.

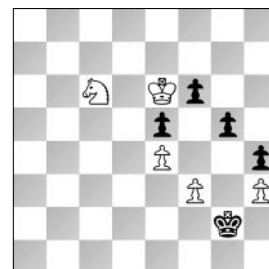
24. ... Kf6 25. Nc4 Ke6 26. Kf1 Bc5 27. Ke2 Bd4 28. f3 h5 29. b3 h4 30. h3 Bc5 31. Kd3 Bb4 32. a3 Bc5 33. b4 Be7 34. Na5 Kd6 35. Kc4 Bg5 36. Kb3 Kd7 37. Ka4 Be3 38. Nc4 Bd4 39. Ka5 Kc7 40. Ka6 f6 41. a4 Bf2 42. b5



White has made predictable progress, but is it enough to win the game?

42. ... Bd4?

Patrick missed a surprising way to save the draw. After 42. ... cxb5! 43. Kxb5 Bd4 should hold, and after 43. axb5 comes the key move, 43. ... g5!!, which subtly sets up Black's counterplay. (Notice that 42. ... g5 is less accurate because after 43. Nb2! cxb5 44. Kxb5! the knight heads for d5, maintaining serious winning chances.) The black king has to make a run for it, exposing the weaknesses of knights: After 44. Na5 Kd6! 45. Nc6 Kc5 46. Nxa7 Kc4 we see a different minor piece dynamic — the bishop controls the passed pawn from a distance, while the knight is far from the suddenly vulnerable kingside. 47. Nc6 Kd3 48. b6 Bxb6 49. Kxb6 Ke2 50. Kc5 Kf2 51. Kd6 Kxg2 52. Ke6 and now:



POSITION AFTER 52. Ke6

52. ... Kxh3! 53. Kxf6 g4! (not 53. ... Kg3 54. Nxe5 h3 55. Ng4 Kxf3 56. Kf5) is the brilliant save. 54. fxg4 (not 54. Nxe5 g3, when White has to be careful to draw) 54. ... Kxg4 55. Nxe5+ Kf4 eats the last pawn.

The alternative 52. ... Kxf3 comes up short: 53. Kxf6 g4 (53. ... Kxe4 54. Kxg5 wins) 54. Nxe5+ Kxe4 (54. ... Kg3 55. Nxe4 Kxh3 56. Kf5) and now (a) 55. Nxe4! Kf4 56. Nf2! Kg3 57. Kg5 Kxf2 58. Kxh4 Kf3 59. Kg5 and wins.

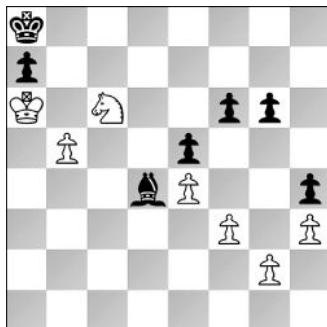
(b) 55. hxg4? is an obvious mistake, but it provides some fun variations that have entertained my chess campers. 55. ... h3 56. g5 and now 56. ... h2 57. Ng4 h1=N!! 58. g6 Ng3 59. Kg5 Nf5 draws, as well as 56. ... Kf4 57. Nd3+ Ke3 or 57. ... Kf3, but not 57. ... Kg3?? 58. g6 h2 59. g7 h1=Q 60. g8=Q+ Kh2 61. Qb8+ Kg1 62. Qb6+ Kh2 63. Qd6+ Kg2 64. Qd5+ Kg1 65. Qd4+ Kg2 66. Qe4+ Kg1 67. Qe1+ Kh2 (67. ... Kg2 68. Nf4+) 68. Qh4+ Kg2 69. Nf4+ Kg1 70. Qe1+ Kh2 71. Qf2 and mates.

The main line is long and certainly hard to calculate, but it was worth a try because passive defense offers no hope here.

43. Na5 cxb5 44. axb5 Kb8

With the bishop on a bad square the mad dash will come up short.

45. Nc6+ Ka8



46. Nxa7!

Faster and more aesthetic than picking off pawns with 46. Ne7.

46. ... Bxa7 47. b6 f5

47. ... Bb8 48. b7 mate is a nice touch.

48. bxa7, Black resigned.

White's king will gobble the black pawns.

In the previous game we could have seen the knight struggle with play on both sides of the board, even without the bishop. In this one it happened for real.

KNIGHT SHIFT

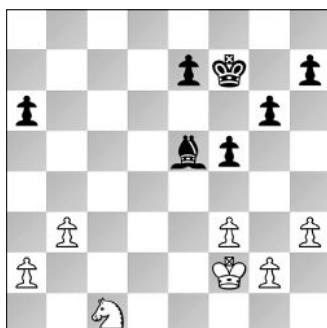
SICILIAN DEFENSE (B52)

GM Joel Benjamin (2506)

GM Alex Yermolinsky (2486)

US Senior Ch. (6), lichess.org, 10.18.2020

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bb5+ Bd7 4. Bxd7+ Qxd7 5. c4 Nf6 6. Nc3 g6 7. d4 cxd4 8. Nxd4 Bg7 9. f3 0-0 10. Nde2 Rc8 11. b3 b5 12. Nxb5 Nxe4 13. Rb1 a6 14. Nbd4 Nf6 15. Nc2 d5 16. Ne3 Nc6 17. cxd5 Nb4 18. Bb2 Nbx5 19. Bxf6 Nxf6 20. Qxd7 Nxd7 21. Nc4 Rab8 22. Kf2 Ne5 23. Nxe5 Bxe5 24. Rhc1 f5 25. h3 Kf7 26. Rxc8 Rxc8 27. Rc1 Rxc1 28. Nxc1



I was happy to reach this ending, not because I like it, but because the opening was a complete mess for me! Here the knight is not superior, but White's outside majority boosts my chances.

28. ... Ke6 29. Nd3

Objectively it was better to put the knight on e2.

29. ... Bd6 30. Nb2 Kd5 31. Ke3 e5

At the height of his powers, Yermo was one of America's greatest technicians. But precise play is not trivial in rapid games. 31. ... Bc5+ 32. Kd3 e5 would give Black better chances.

32. Na4!

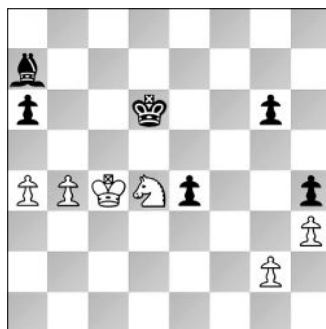
Now I've equalized. I think Yermo was pressing for the win, which he can do, at least for a while, without risk.

32. ... Bb4 33. Nb6+ Kc6 34. Nc4 Bc5+ 35. Kd3 Kd5 36. Ne3+!

The potential outside passed pawn protects me in the event of liquidation.

36. ... Ke6 37. Nc4 h5 38. a3 Ba7 39. Ne3 h4 40. Nc2 Bc5 41. Kc4 Kd6 42. b4 Ba7 43. a4 e4 44. fxe4 fxe4 45. Nd4!

The only move to hold the balance, though not a difficult one. After 45. b5? axb5+ 46. axb5 Ke5 White's kingside will collapse. Now 45. ... Ke5? 46. Nc6+ drops the bishop.



45. ... e3??

Black simply needs to play a waiting move to keep things balanced, e.g. 45. ... Bb6 46. b5 a5!? 47. Ne2 Ke5 48. Nc3 Kf4 (or 48...Ba7 49. Nd5 e3 50. Nc3 Kf4 51. Ne2+ Ke4 52. Nc3+ holding the line) 49. Kd5! (49. Nd5+? Kg3 50. Nxb6 e3 and the pawn goes through) 49. ... Kg3 50. Kxe4 Kxg2 51. Nd5 Bd8 52. Nf4+ Kg3 53. Nxc6 Kxh3 54. Kf3 Bc7.

46. Nf3! e2 47. Kd3 Kd5 48. b5 a5!

Black's only hope is to stretch the board; otherwise, White will just destroy the kingside pawns.

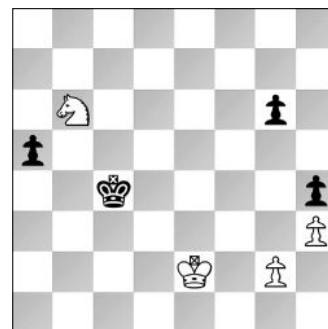
49. Kxe2 Kc4 50. Ne5+

Not having a lot of time to count, I decided to grab the bishop. The win was perhaps more straightforward with 50. Nxb4 Kb4 51. Kd3! Kxa4 52. Kc4 g5 53. Nf3 Ka3 (after 53. ... Be3 White can shift gears and win the bishop with 54. Ne5 Ka3 55. Nd7) and White wins after both:

(a) 54. Nxc5 a4 55. Ne4 Kb2 56. Nc3 a3 57. g4 Be3 58. h4 Bd2 59. Na4+ Kc2 60. Nc5.

(b) 54. g4 Kb2 55. h4 gxh4 (55. ... a4 56. h5) 56. g5 a4 57. g6 a3 58. g7 a2 59. g8=Q a1=Q 60. Qg7+ Kb1 61. Nd2+.

50. ... Kb3 51. Nd7 Kxa4 52. b6 Bxb6 53. Nxb6+ Kb5 54. Nd5 Kc4 55. Nb6+??



This seemed like a harmless repetition, adding precious seconds to my clock. I needed to play 55. Nf4, which wins as in the game.

55. ... Kb5??

A lesson to our readers — don't automatically repeat moves when you are trying to draw. Amazingly, after 55. ... Kc5 White cannot win, as my knight becomes misplaced: 56. Nd7+ Kd4 57. Nf8 (57. Nb6 Kc5 is no improvement) 57. ... a4 58. Kd2 a3 59. Kc2 g5 60. Ne6+ Ke3 61. Nxc5 Kf2 62. Kb3 (62. Nf3 Kxc2 63. Nxb4+ Kxc3) 62. ... Kxc2 63. Kxa3 Kg3 64. Kb3 Kf4 and White cannot preserve his last pawn.

56. Nd5 Kc4 57. Nf4! Kc3

After 57. ... g5 58. Ne6 Kc3 59. Kd1 White has gained a critical tempo and wins.

58. Kd1! Kb2 59. Nxc6 a4 60. Ne5! Kb3

Or 60. ... a3 61. Nc4+ Kb3 62. Nxa3 with an easy win.

61. Kc1 a3 62. Kb1, Black resigned. ♠

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

A First-Row Seat

With his new book, Peter Doggers reminds readers of some recent chess revolutions.

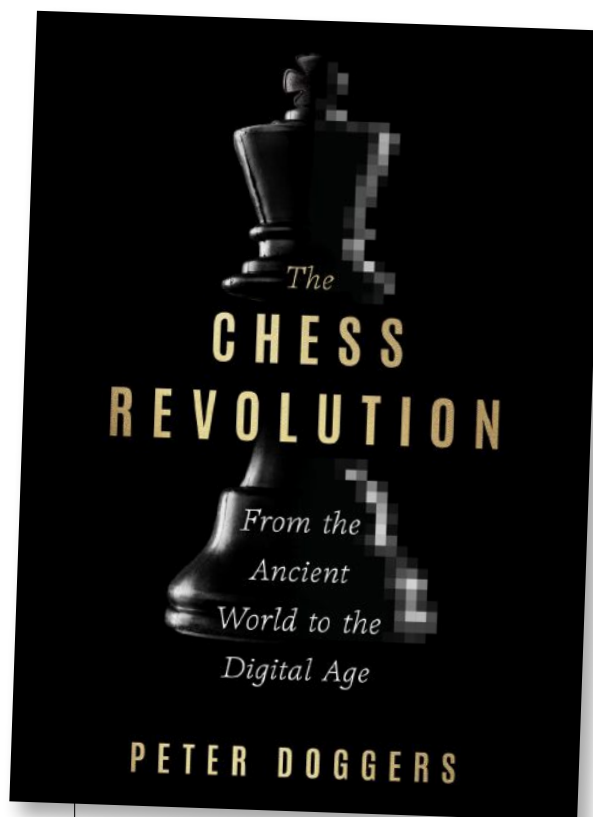
BY IM JOHN WATSON

C

HESS JOURNALIST Peter Doggers first caught my attention in 2006 with his ChessVibes website. It

had terrific video content from elite tournaments complete with player interviews, as well as stories about events and other chess news. At the time, this was fresh and exciting; this kind of coverage was rare and incomplete, and the chess streaming revolution was 10 years away. Just being able to see and hear from players I had followed for years was a delight, and Doggers' pioneering videos included post-mortem analysis between top players, as well as live analysis they gave after the games. After years of searching the internet for raw game scores, it was a joy to see the players themselves revealing their thoughts and impressions about positions while getting glimpses into their personalities. Not even 20 years later, fans all over the world are extremely familiar with the mannerisms, quirks, and senses of humor of everyone from elite players to instructors to streamers. Viewers tend to choose which chess streamers to watch based more on personalities than chess competence. In Doggers' new book *The Chess Revolution*, he describes this evolution of chess media in detail from a first-hand perspective.

As he developed his website and gained a following, Doggers became a full-time chess journalist and eventually signed on with *Chess.com*. His main job there has been director of news and events, which includes extensive writing and reportage. *The Chess*



Revolution covers a wide variety of chess subjects which are connected not so much by their content but by their relevance to Doggers' target audience. He summarizes this as follows: "the vast majority [or chess books] are intended for a chess-savvy audience that already knows what 1. d4 f5 is called ... or who Wilhelm Steinitz is What is missing is a book serving the contingent of new chess fans who've encountered the game as Netflix watchers or YouTube subscribers and are in desperate need of a good introduction to this sport and the world behind it."

This does not seem to describe your typical *Chess Life* reader, to be sure. But how often over the years have you been asked "What's a good book for my son/daughter who has just started playing?" — in my case, I'd say at least a hundred times. For that purpose, *The Chess Revolution* could serve well for anyone (especially a youngster) who plays mainly online and isn't familiar with chess culture outside of the moves and strategy, or for the numerous chess parents whose kids are addicted to the game, but either don't play themselves or feel ignorant about how chess fits into society. Moreover, many experienced players who haven't kept up with the recent changes in the technology and culture will find plenty of value here. Doggers' work also addresses questions often posed by the public; for example, "How good are chess computers?", "How has AI become so important in chess?", "What's all this about cheating (is it ruining the game?)", and "What do we know

about the differences between the way men and women think about and/or perform at chess?" It's a real struggle to structure such a disparate range of material, but Doggers gamely takes it on in just three parts.

Part I is called "Chess as a Cultural Phenomenon." In Chapter 1, Doggers provides an overview of the history of the game, going back to the origins of chess in India and Persia, followed by its development throughout Europe, with various rules changes, and culminating in the modern game around 1450. After some large leaps we arrive at

the first World Championship in 1886, followed by a list of Men's and Women's World Champions to the present day. Doggers then switches a bit abruptly to modern popular culture, citing chess scenes from some U.S. TV comedies and culminating with a lengthy description of the Netflix series *The Queen's Gambit*. This section reads well, and he clearly enjoys the material. Two sections follow, called "Chess and Politics" and "Chess and Sports," the latter highlighting famous boxers who enjoyed chess. Doggers also discusses chessboxing at some length.

Chapter 2, subtitled "Chess in the Arts," shows how chess meshes with traditional culture, including literature, music, and the visual arts. Doggers writes about chess as art in itself, including beautiful moves and beautiful games, and spends some time describing various types of chess sets and their designs. He details the work of Marcel Duchamp, who was a very strong master as well as a famous artist, and various works of art depicting chess. A lengthy section on chess and literature features Nabokov's *The Defense*, Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, and Stefan Zweig's *The Royal Game*, while a section on film highlights Humphrey Bogart's love for the game and Stanley Kubrick's use of chess in his movies. Doggers also discusses chess in music and the theater, including the musical *Chess*.

Chapter 3 examines how chess has assisted in the advancement of scientific research. Doggers concentrates primarily on psychology, saying, "Chess has been used to study many aspects of the human mind, including perception, attention, memory, learning, creativity, thinking, and decision-making." Chess studies have led the way in discovering how the mind processes and organizes material, and Doggers has an insightful section on skill acquisition, showing how the theory of the role of practice in improvement has evolved over the years. A lengthy section called "Women and Chess: What Science Says" cites a lot of research into the causes of women's underrepresentation in chess, and the differences (if any) between the genders when it comes to thinking and competing. There follows an overview of how the Elo rating system, databases, and engines have revolutionized the ability to do cognitive research. This chapter concludes with a section called "The Benefits of Chess," which emphasizes educational advantages of the game (especially chess-in-schools programs), and also how chess can enhance skills such as concentration, risk-taking, and patience.

Chapter 4 is called "Brilliance at the

Board: The Biggest Stars in Chess." Here the book loses some of its historical feel, as Doggers concentrates entirely on three modern players: Fischer, Kasparov, and Carlsen, the first two of whom he describes as his heroes, and the third whom he has covered exhaustively as a journalist. That's fine, because it would be impossible to do justice to 17 World Champions (and 17 Women's World Champions); still, comparing the champions' styles and personalities might have been more in tune with the rest of the book. In any case, Doggers sets forth a case for which of these players is the greatest of all time, a discussion which has endless appeal to many fans.

You can see how wide-ranging this work is, and how it lends itself to pleasurable browsing. The "revolution" part of *The Chess Revolution* really comes into its own in Parts II and III, which are relatively more focused by comparison.

Part II, titled "The Impact of AI: How the Computer Changed the Game," traces the development of chessplaying programs, beginning with Charles Babbage and Alan Turing and moving to early chess computers and chess computer competitions, then to the "Levy bet," in which David Levy bet that a chess computer couldn't beat him in a match (he ultimately lost, but only 21 years later!). The story of Kasparov's Deep Blue matches shapes this narrative, and was the beginning of the end of the debate, since it took less than a decade after Kasparov's defeat before humans could see no more reason at all to compete against computers and turned to using the engines for preparation. Doggers describes the advantages and pitfalls of modern preparation with examples everyone can understand. Then he turns to the revolution in engines that came with AlphaZero and neural network programs and that continues today. Part II concludes with an extensive chapter called "The Dark Side: Cheating in Chess." This is centered around the infamous Niemann controversy we were so recently inundated with, but includes a sort of "History of Cheating" going back to the Mechanical Turk in 1770.

Part III is entitled "The Online Revolution: How the Internet Changed the Game." In a sense, the book returns from the scientific side (engines) to contemporary cultural phenomena (life online, streaming, entertainment). This is Doggers' bread and butter, a world he is immersed in and has helped to create. He starts with the excitement of the early days of online play on chess servers (e.g., ICS, ICC, FICS) and ends with the wildly popular platforms Lichess and Chess.

com. Topics such as bullet chess and chess addiction arise naturally, and legendary characters abound. I was thrilled to see Mark Crowther praised; most people haven't even heard of this maverick character who has been gathering online game scores continuously for over 30 years now and posting them for the entire world to download and use. A large chapter is devoted to *Chess.com*, with countless details about developers, features and business decisions. I didn't realize that Lichess began as early as 2010; the story of its development is also absorbing — likewise Chess24 and Chessable, sites that were later bought by Play Magnus (which itself merged with *Chess.com* in 2022).

The final chapter is called "The Streaming Revolution," shifting to a space I'm largely detached from. But even I know the Chessbrahs, the Botez sisters, Levy Rozman, and Hikaru Nakamura. If you're interested in the history of chess streamers and economics of the business, Doggers supplies a lot of information: Nakamura and Rozman are each covered by large sections.

The epilogue discusses some fresh and forthcoming aspects of chess, such as various new worldwide events with ultra-fast time controls. I have to admit that the speeding up of the game (as seems to be happening in all sports) seems inevitable, if depressing for an old fogey like me. With an eye on where the game is heading, Doggers mentions a number of new event formats, a chess TV show, "classical" tournaments with two 45-minute games a day, and even a revival of Chess960. He sees content creators as a positive force, saying "While chess remains a cultural icon associated with positive features like intelligence, strategy, and cleverness, the influencers remind people how much they like the game and encourage people to pick it up for the first time, or for the fifth time."

The Chess Revolution is very well-written and enjoyable. I have to admit that a fair amount of this material has appeared in popular sources over the years and may seem old hat to the engaged and well-read fan. But I think that the majority of players will learn about many important facets of chess culture. Furthermore, anyone who doesn't feel up to speed with the latest in chess technology and the chess media environment will appreciate the way Doggers writes about those subjects. ♦

Doggers, Peter. The Chess Revolution: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age. New York: Puzzlewright Press, 2024. ISBN 978-1454959236. 408 pp. \$29.99.

TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar

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

Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2024 National K-12 Grades Championships

DECEMBER 6-8, 2024, MARYLAND

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

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT

2025 World Amateur Team & U.S. Team East

FEBRUARY 15-17, 2025, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Parsippany Hilton Address: 1 Hilton Ct., Parsippany, N.J. 07054 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: New Jersey Chess Federation Email: Worldamateurtteam@njscf.org Phone: n/a Website: <http://njscf.org> TLA ID: 45828

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 KCF All-Girls National Championships

APRIL 4-5, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Address: 2233 S Dr Martin Luther King Jr Dr, Chicago, IL 60616 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: David Heiser Email: david.heiser@renais-sanceknights.org Phone: n/a Website: <https://allgirls.knights.org/> TLA ID: 45885

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of Dec. 31, 2023, for the 2023 Grand Prix.

FINAL 2023 GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Congratulations to the 2023 Grand Prix Champion

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.

GM JIANCHAO ZHOU

Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1. GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	562.94
2. GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMENEZ	NY	481.29
3. GM MIKHAIL ANTIPOV	MO	194.33
4. GM ARMAN MIKAELIAN	--	157.10
5. GM RAHUL P SRIVATSHAV	--	128.74
6. FM SHARVESH R DEVIPRASATH	TX	121.10
7. IM SAFAL BORA	MI	115.33
8. GM ALEXANDER FISHBEIN	TN	111.47
9. IM JUSTIN WANG	TX	108.62
10. GM VIKTOR MATVIISHEN	TX	106.09

2023 Awards

\$12,500 in cash prizes
First Prize \$5,000

2nd: \$2,500	3rd: \$1,000
4th: \$900	5th: \$800
6th: \$700	7th: \$600
8th: \$500	9th: \$300
10th: \$200	

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

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2024 Michigan Action Championship

DECEMBER 7, 2024, MICHIGAN

Event site: Oakland Center at Oakland University Address: 312 Meadow Brook Rd, Rochester, MI 48309 Overall prize fund: \$2,550 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michigan Chess Association Email: jeffchess64@gmail.com Phone: 8109557271 Website: <https://www.michess.org/> TLA ID: 44993

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Coats & Toys for Kids Day Grand Prix

DECEMBER 7, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$764 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 45910

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight International Shareware Day Grand Prix

DECEMBER 14, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$764 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 45911

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Harry Nelson Pillsbury Memorial

DECEMBER 15, 2024, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center Address: 219 Littleton Road, Westford, MA 01886 Overall prize fund: \$2,500 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Massachusetts Chess Association Email: info@masschess.org Phone: 6038912484 Website: <http://www.masschess.org> TLA ID: 45407

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Winter Solstice Grand Prix

DECEMBER 21, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$764 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 46348

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

34th annual North American Open

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024, NEVADA

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

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

49th annual Eastern Open

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024, VIRGINIA

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

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight National Chocolate Candy Day Grand Prix

DECEMBER 28, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$764 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 46350

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

15th annual Eastern Open Blitz Championship

DECEMBER 28, 2024, VIRGINIA

Event site: Hyatt Regency Crystal City Address: 2799 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA 22202 Overall prize fund: \$500 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44917

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

33rd annual North American Blitz Championship

DECEMBER 29, 2024, NEVADA

Event site: Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) Address: 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S, Las Vegas, NV 89103

Overall prize fund: \$3,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Email: director@chess.us Phone: n/a Website: chessstour.com TLA ID: 44904

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

New Year's Day 2025 Ticks Jeff Jones Memorial GP

JANUARY 1, 2025, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$764 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 46354

GRAND PRIX

\$2,000 January 2025 Championship

JANUARY 3-5, 2025, TEXAS

Event site: The Houston Chess Studio Address: 250 Patton St., Suite H, Houston, TX 77009 Overall prize fund: \$1,500 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Edgar Acosta Email: poisonpawnschessclub@gmail.com Phone: 2818444139 Website: <https://www.poisonpawns.club> TLA ID: 46252

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

57th Virginia Open

JANUARY 3-5, 2025, TEXAS

Event site: Marriott Washington Dulles Airport Address: 45020 Aviation Drive, Dulles, VA 20166 Overall prize fund: \$8,000 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA Email: mhoffpauir@aol.com Phone: 7578464805 Website: <https://www.vachess.org> TLA ID: 46390

HERITAGE EVENT • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • GRAND PRIX

2025 Tim Just Winter Open

JANUARY 3-5, 2025, ILLINOIS

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

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

13th annual Boston Chess Congress

JANUARY 3-5, 2025, MASSACHUSETTS

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

GRAND PRIX

Dewey Beach Open 2025

JANUARY 4-5, 2025, DELAWARE

Event site: Hyatt Place Address: 1301 Coastal Highway, Dewey Beach, DE 19971 Overall prize fund: \$5200 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Delaware Chess Association Email: connect@delawarechessassociation.org Phone: 302-593-3752 Website: <http://Delawarechessassociation.org> TLA ID: 46249

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight National Spaghetti Day Grand Prix

JANUARY 4, 2025, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$764 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 919-422-2535 Website: DragonKnightChess.com TLA ID: 46351

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Eagle Day Grand Prix

JANUARY 11, 2025, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall prize fund:** \$764 **GP Points:** 10 **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Dragon Knight Chess **Email:** jon@dragonknightchess.com **Phone:** 919-422-2535 **Website:** DragonKnightChess.com **TLA ID:** 46352

GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2025 Winter Open & Scholastic

JANUARY 17-19, 2025, FLORIDA

Event site: Holiday Inn at Lake Buena Vista **Address:** 13351 State Road 535, Orlando, FL 32821 **Overall prize fund:** \$8,500 **GP Points:** 20 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Larry Storch **Email:** info@centralfchess.org **Phone:** n/a **Website:** https://www.centralfchess.org/home **TLA ID:** 45557

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

16th annual Golden State Open

JANUARY 17-20, 2025, CALIFORNIA, N.

Event site: Doubletree Berkeley Marina Hotel **Address:** 200 Marina Blvd., Berkeley, CA 94710 **Overall prize fund:** \$25,000 **GP Points:** 150 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 45890

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

57th annual Liberty Bell Open

JANUARY 17-20, 2025, PENNSYLVANIA

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

GRAND PRIX

The 2025 Cardinal Open

JANUARY 24-26, 2025, OHIO

Event site: Doubletree by Hilton Akron Fairlawn **Address:** 3180 W. Market Street, Akron, OH 44333 **Overall prize fund:** \$10,000 **GP Points:** 60 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Progress With Chess **Email:** stacia@progresswithchess.org **Phone:** n/a **Website:** https://progresswithchess.org/cardinal **TLA ID:** 46437

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

Land of the Sky XXXVII

JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 2, 2025, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Crowne Plaza Resort Asheville **Address:** One Resort Dr, Asheville, NC 28806 **Overall prize fund:** \$11,000 **GP Points:** 30 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Wilder Wadford **Email:** info@landofthesky.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** https://landofthesky.us/ **TLA ID:** 44223

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

16th annual Southwest Class Championships

FEBRUARY 13-17, 2025, TEXAS

Event site: Westin Hotel Dallas Fort Worth Airport **Address:** 4545 W John Carpenter Freeway, Irving, TX 75063 **Overall prize fund:** \$35,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 45893

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

9th annual George Washington Open

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Marriott Hotel **Address:** 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, VA 20166 **Overall prize fund:** \$17,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 45891

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

32nd annual Western Class Championships

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 2, 2025, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Hotel Orange County Airport **Address:** 418800 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 **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 45892

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

22nd annual Southern Class Championships

MARCH 7-9, 2025, FLORIDA

Event site: Delta Hotels Orlando Celebration **Address:** 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall prize fund:** \$17,000 **GP Points:** 80 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 46246

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

29th annual Mid-America Open

MARCH 21-23, 2025, MISSOURI

Event site: Clayton Plaza Hotel St. Louis-Clayton **Address:** 7750 Carondelet Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 120 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 46238

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

The Princeton Open

APRIL 16-20, 2025, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village **Address:** 201 Village Blvd., Princeton, NJ 08540 **Overall prize fund:** \$60,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 46241

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

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival

MAY 2-4, 2025, FLORIDA

Event site: Hilton Melbourne at Rialto Place **Address:** 200 Rialto Place, Melbourne, FL 32901 **Overall prize fund:** \$20,000 **GP Points:** 100 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Space Coast Chess Foundation, Inc. **Email:** suresh231975@gmail.com **Phone:** 6168811094 **Website:** https://www.spacecoastchessfoundation.org/event/spacecoastopen **TLA ID:** 46260

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

34th annual Chicago Open

MAY 22-26, 2025, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall prize fund:** \$100,000 **GP Points:** 200 **FIDE Rated:** Y **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chesstour.com **TLA ID:** 46255

Regional

ALABAMA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

MARCH 7-9, 2025

22nd annual Southern Class Championships (FL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

ALASKA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

49th annual Eastern Open

December 26-29, 27-29 or 28-29, 2024 - 8 rounds, Hyatt Regency Crystal City

\$30,000 GUARANTEED including \$2,500 in Senior prizes!

8-rd Swiss, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, 2799 Richmond Highway, Arlington VA 22202. Parking \$25, free airport shuttle. In 6 sections: Premier 12/26-29, U2200 to U1300 12/26-29 or 27-29, U1000 12/28-29.

Premier (2000/up): \$3000-1500-800-500-400, clear/tiebreak 1st \$100 bonus, top USCF U2300 \$1000-500. FIDE, 150 GPP. See peakrating.us.

U2200: \$1700-900-500-400-300, top U2000 \$600-300. FIDE rated.

U1900: \$1700-900-500-400-300, top U1700 \$400-200.

U1600: \$1400-700-500-300-200, top U1400 \$400-200.

U1300: \$1300-700-400-300-200, top U1100 \$300.

U1000: \$800-500-300-200-100.

Cannot play below Online Regular rating minus 100 points.

Unrated prize limits: U1000 \$150, U1300 \$300, U1600 \$450, U1900 \$750, Senior prize \$200.

Senior over 50 bonus prizes: Top born by 12/29/74, across all sections combined, \$1200-600-400-300.

Mixed doubles: best male/female 2-player team (average under 2200) combined score: \$1000-500-300. May play in different sections; register before both players begin rd 2.

See chessevents.us for more info.

Top 5 sections entry fee: \$148 at chessaction.com by 12/23, \$170 (no checks, credit cards OK) at site or online until an hour before round 1.

Under 1000 Section: all \$50 less.

Re-entry (except Premier): \$80.

Unofficial USCF ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.

USCF membership required. See chessevents.us for special rates.

4-day: 40/80, SD/30; d30. Reg. ends 12/26 12 noon, rds. 12/26 1 & 7, 12/27-28 11 & 5, 12/29 10 & 4.

3-day: Rds 1-3 G/30, d10. Reg. ends 12/27 10 am, rds 12/27 11, 1, 3 & 5, merges with 4-day at 5 pm.

2-day: G/30, d10. Reg. ends 12/28 10 am, rds. 12/28 11, 1, 3 & 5, 12/29 10, 12, 2 & 4. U1000 only.

1/2 pt bye OK all (limit 3), must commit before rd 3.

Questions: chesstour.info.

Bring set, board, & clock if possible- none supplied.

Hotel rates: \$134-134-159-184, link at chessevents.us, reserve by 12/5 or rate may increase.

Entry: chessaction.com. \$15 charge for refunds. No mail entries.

Email: director@chess.us.

Blitz tournament 12/28 9:30 pm, enter at site 12/28 by 9:10 pm.

AMER. SAMOA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

ARIZONA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 29, 2024

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

JANUARY 17-20, 2025

16th annual Golden State Open (CA-N)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 2, 2025

32nd annual Western Class Championships (CA-S)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

ARKANSAS

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

CALIFORNIA

DECEMBER 14, 2024

December Swiss (Clovis Chess Club)
Event site: Clovis Senior Activity Center Address: 735 3rd St, Clovis, CA 93612 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points:

n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Joel Rockey Email: chessclubclovis@gmail.com Phone: 559-341-2139 Website: https://clovischessclub.com/TLAID: 46381

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 29, 2024

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

JANUARY 17-20, 2025

16th annual Golden State Open (CA-N)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 2, 2025

32nd annual Western Class Championships (CA-S)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

COLORADO

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

CONNECTICUT

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

13th annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DELAWARE

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

57th Virginia Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 4-5, 2025

Dewey Beach Open 2025 (DE)
See Grand Prix.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

DECEMBER 28, 2024

15th annual Eastern Open Blitz Championship (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FLORIDA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

MARCH 7-9, 2025

22nd annual Southern Class Championships (FL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

GEORGIA

APRIL 8, 2024-MONTHLY ON SATURDAY

Pizza Scholastic

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

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

MARCH 7-9, 2025

22nd annual Southern Class Championships (FL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 5-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)
See Grand Prix.

GUAM

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

16th annual Southwest Class Championships

Feb 13-17, 14-17 or 15-17, 2025 (Presidents Weekend), Irving, Texas

\$35,000 guaranteed prizes, GM & IM norms possible!

Master Section: 9-SS, Feb 13-17, 40/80, SD/30; d30. **Expert through Class E:** 7 rounds, Feb 14-17 or 15-17, 40/80, SD/30; d10 (3-day rds 1-2 G/60, d10).

Westin Dallas Fort Worth Airport, 4545 W John Carpenter Fwy, Irving TX 75063. Free parking, free airport shuttle.

In 7 sections, top 3 FIDE-rated. Unr may enter A-E. See peakrating.us.

Master (USCF 2100/up or FIDE 2000/up): \$4000-2000-1500-1200-1000-800-600, clear/tiebreak 1st \$200, FIDE U2300/Unr \$1800-900. FIDE ratings used, 200 GPP (Enhanced).

Expert (1900-2199), **Class A** (1700-1999), **Class B** (1500-1799): each \$2000-1000-500-300-200.

Class C (1300-1599), \$1600-800-500-300-200.

Class D (Under 1400), **Class E** (Under 1200): \$800-400-300-200-100.

Unrated prize limits: E \$100, D \$200, C \$300, B \$400, A \$500.

Mixed doubles: \$1000-600-400. All sections OK, rds. 1-7, must average under 2200. See chessevents.us.

FIDE ratings used in Master, Feb. Official Ratings used in Expert/below, unofficial USCF ratings or USCF Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated; **Cannot play** below USCF Online Reg. rating-100 points.

Master Section entry fee: \$278 at chessaction.com by 2/12, \$300 later or at site by 6 pm 2/13. **Titled/foreign entry & minimum prizes:** see chessevents.us.

Expert to Class C entry fee: \$168 at chessaction.com by 2/12, \$190 later or at site until 1 hour before rd 1.

Class D or E sections: Entry fees \$70 less than Expert through C.

Re-entry (except Master): \$80.

No checks at site, credit cards OK. USCF membership required. See chessevents.us for special USCF dues with magazine if paid online with entry.

No Cellphone possession during play (in bag near table OK).

5-day schedule (Master): Reg. ends Thu 6 pm, Thu 7, Fri 1 & 7, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 3:30.

4-day schedule: Reg. ends Fri 6 pm, Rds Fri 7 pm, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 3:30 (no 4-day Master).

3-day schedule: Reg. ends Sat 10 am, rds Sat 11, 2 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 3:30 (no 3-day Master).

Half point byes OK all, limit 2; must commit before rd 3.

All: Bring clock, set, board if possible- none supplied. See chessevents.us for rules, details.

Hotel rates: \$127-127, use link at chessevents.us or 972-929-4500, reserve by 1/28 or rate may increase.

Entry: chessaction.com. \$15 service charge for refunds.

Email: director@chess.us.

Blitz tournament Sun. 9:30 pm, pm, enter at site Sun. by 9:10 pm.

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

HAWAII

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 28-31, 2024

2nd World Chess Festival (HI)

See Grand Prix.

IDAHO

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

ILLINOIS⁷

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

2025 Tim Just Winter Open (IL)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 24-26, 2025

The 2025 Cardinal Open (OH)

See Grand Prix.

FEBRUARY 8, 2025

2025 Greater Chicago K-12 Championship

Event site: McCormick Place Address: 2301 S Dr Martin Luther King Jr Dr, Chicago, IL 60616 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: David Heiser Email: david.heiser@renaissance-

knights.org Phone: n/a Website: <https://greaterchicago.knights.org/> TLA ID: 45884

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IU)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

INDIANA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

2025 Tim Just Winter Open (IL)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 24-26, 2025

The 2025 Cardinal Open (OH)

See Grand Prix.

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IU)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

IOWA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 28, 2024

2nd Hall of Fame Memorial (NE)

See Nebraska.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IU)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

KANSAS

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 28, 2024

2nd Hall of Fame Memorial (NE)

See Nebraska.

KENTUCKY

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

JANUARY 24-26, 2025

The 2025 Cardinal Open (OH)

See Grand Prix.

LOUISIANA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

JANUARY 11, 2025

New Orleans G/30 Senior Open

Event site: NOLA VFW Post 8973 Address: 531 Lyons St, New Orleans, LA 70115 Overall prize fund: \$600 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Downriver Chess Club of New Orleans Email: info@downriverchess.com Phone: 202-656-9754 Website: <https://downriverchess.com> TLA ID: 46277

FEBRUARY 13-17, 2025

16th annual Southwest Class Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAINE

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

MARYLAND

MARYLAND CHESS TOURNAMENTS (NORTH PENN CHESS CLUB)

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

DECEMBER 1, 2024, MARYLAND

Charm City CC 2024 December Open Tournament

Event site: The DoubleTree Hilton Hotel Address: 4 W University Parkway, Baltimore, MD 21218 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Alan Horowitz Email: charmcitychess@gmail.com Phone: 9175735775 Website: http://www.charmcitychess.com/new_tournament/ TLA ID: 46441

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

34th annual NORTH AMERICAN OPEN

Dec 26-30, 26-29 or 27-29, 2024, Las Vegas - GM & IM norms possible!
\$130,000 PRIZE FUND UNCONDITIONALLY GUARANTEED!

Open Section: 9 rounds, Dec 26-30, 40/90, SD/30; d30.

Other sections: 7 rounds, Dec 26-29 or 27-29, 40/90, SD/30; d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60 d10).

At Horseshoe Casino Resort, 3645 Las Vegas Blvd So, Las Vegas NV 89103. Free parking for guests.

In 8 sections. Open Section uses December FIDE ratings, other sections Dec official USCF ratings. Top 3 sections are also FIDE rated.

Open Section: \$10000-5000-3000-2000-1300-1000-800-700-600-500, clear/tiebreak win \$300 bonus, top FIDE U2400/Unr \$3000-2000-1000, 300 GPP.

Under 2300, Under 2100, Under 1900: Each \$7000-4000-2000-1200-800-600-500-500-400-400.

Under 1700: \$6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-500-400-400.

Under 1500: \$5000-2500-1300-1000-700-600-500-400-300-300.

Under 1300: \$4000-2000-1000-800-600-500-400-400-300-300.

Under 1000: \$1500-1000-600-400-300-300-200-200-200-200.

Prize limits: 1) Unrated limit U1000 \$300, U1300 \$500, U1500 \$700, U1700 \$1000, U1900 \$1500, U2100 \$2000. 2) Under 26 games by 12/23 list, limit U1000 \$800, U1300 \$1500, U1500 or U1700 \$3000. 3) If any post-event Regular OTB or Regular Online rating posted 12/20/23-12/20/24 or current Online Regular rating was more than 40 points over section maximum, limit \$1500. 4) Balance of any limited prize goes to next player(s) in line.

Cannot play below Online Regular rating minus 100 points.

Mixed doubles: \$2000-1000-500-300-200. See chessevents.us.

Top 6 sections entry fee: \$245 at chessaction.com by 9/20, \$275 by 12/23, \$300 later online or at site until 1 hour before round 1. Open Section \$800 additional fee if not USCF-rated 2300+ and if not FIDE rated 2100+.

Special entry fee: U1000 Section \$150 less, Senior 65/over in U1300/up, \$100 less. Re-entry (no Open) \$120.

Titled player entry: See chessevents.us.

Unofficial uschess.org ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.

5-day late reg. ends 12/26 10 am, rds 12/26-28 11 & 6, 12/29 10 & 4:30, 12/30 10 am (Open Section).

4-day late reg. ends 12/26 5 pm, rounds 12/26 6 pm, 12/27-28 11 & 6, 12/29 10 am & 4:30 pm.

3-day late reg. ends 12/27 10 am, rounds 12/27 11, 2:30 & 6, 12/28 11 & 6, 12/29 10 & 4:30.

1/2-pt byes OK all, limit 3 (limit 2 in last 4 rds). Must commit before round 3.

Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied.

USCF membership required; see chessevents.us for special rates.

Special room rate at Horseshoe \$109-109. Use link at chessevents.us or 800-833-3308. Rooms may sell out by Nov 15.

Entry: chessaction.com. No mail entries, no checks. Refunds, \$15 service charge.

Questions, email: chestour.info, director@chess.us.

Blitz tournament 12/29 10:30 pm. Enter online by 7 pm 12/29 for lowest fee.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 28, 2024

15th annual Eastern Open Blitz Championship (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

57th Virginia Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 4-5, 2025

Dewey Beach Open 2025 (DE)
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 17-20, 2025

57th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

9th annual George Washington Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MASSACHUSETTS

DECEMBER 15, 2024

Harry Nelson Pillsbury Memorial (MA)
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

13th annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 8-9, 2025

57th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)--OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY
See New York.

MARCH 15-16, 2025

57th annual New York State High School Championship, GRADES 9-12 (grades 6-8 also permitted but with prize restrictions)
See New York.

MICHIGAN

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

JANUARY 24-26, 2025

The 2025 Cardinal Open (OH)
See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MINNESOTA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MISSISSIPPI

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

MISSOURI

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

DECEMBER 28, 2024

2nd Hall of Fame Memorial (NE)
See Nebraska.

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MONTANA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

NEBRASKA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

DECEMBER 28, 2024

2nd Hall of Fame Memorial
Event site: Double Tree by Hilton Address: 3650 S 72nd St, Omaha, NE 68124 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Bruce G Draney Email: bruceykins49@hotmail.com Phone: 4023126335 Website: http://kingregistration.com TLAID: 45625

NEVADA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 29, 2024

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

JANUARY 17-20, 2025

16th annual Golden State Open (CA-N)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 2, 2025

32nd annual Western Class Championships (CA-S)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

NEW JERSEY

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)
See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

57th Virginia Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

The PRINCETON OPEN – A New CCA Event!

April 16-20, 17-20 or 18-20, 2025 - New Site For Easter Weekend!

\$60,000 guaranteed prizes, GM & IM norms available!

Open Section: 9 rounds, Apr. 16-20, 40/80, SD/30; d30, FIDE rated, GM & IM norms possible.

Other sections: 7 rounds, Apr. 17-20 or 18-20, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60, d10). U2200 & U2000 are FIDE rated.

Westin Princeton Hotel at Forrester Village, about halfway between New York City and Philadelphia, near Princeton University in NJ. Free parking.

In 7 sections:

Open: \$5000-3000-2000-1000-800-600-500-400, clear or tiebreak 1st \$200 bonus, top FIDE 2250-2399 \$2000-1000, top FIDE U2250/Unr \$2000-1000. 200 GPP.

U2200, U2000, U1800: Each \$3000-1500-1000-700-500-400-300-300.

U1600, U1400: Each \$2000-1000-800-600-500-400-300-300.

U1100: \$1000-700-500-400-300-300-200-200.

FIDE ratings used in Open, Apr. official USCF in others. unofficial or USCF Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.

Mixed Doubles: male+female 2-player team scores in Rounds 1-7 among all sections: \$1000-600-400 (limit \$400 to teams with an unrated). Team average U2200, may play different sections, register before both begin round 2.

If under 26 games rated by Apr. 2025 list, limit \$600 U1100, \$1000 U1400, \$1400 U1600, \$1800 U1800.

Unrated limits: \$200 U1100, \$400 U1400, \$600 U1600. \$800 U1800.

Cannot play below Online Regular Rating-100 points. If any post-event Regular OTB or Regular Online rating posted 4/14/24-4/14/25, or current Online Regular Rating, was more than 40 pts over section max, prize limit \$500.

Entry fee: \$228 online by 4/14, \$250 later or at site. \$500 more to play in Open Section for US players U2200/Unr USCF and U2100/Unr FIDE. GMs, foreign IMs/WGMs in Open: free. US IMs/WGMs & FIDE foreign in Open: \$100 less. U1100 section, \$80 less. Seniors 65/over in U1400/up: \$80 less.

5-day (Open only) reg. ends Wed 6 pm, rds Wed 7 pm, Thu 1 pm & 7 pm, Fri 11 & 5, Sat 10 & 4, Sun 10 & 3:30.

4-day reg. ends Thu 6 pm, rds Thu 7 pm, Fri 11 & 5, Sat 10 & 4, Sun 10 & 3:30. No 4-Day Open.

3-day reg. ends Fri 10 am, rds Fri 11, 2 & 5, merges with 4-day Fri at 5 pm. No 3-Day Open.

Half-point byes: OK all, limit 3 (limit 2 in last 4 rds). must commit before rd 3. \$15 charge for refunds

See chessevents.us for details, cellphone rules, etc.

Foreign titled players: see chessevents.us for minimum prizes.

Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied.

Hotel Chess rate: \$165-165-165-165, use link at chessevents.us (or call 609-452-7900); reserve by 3/26 or rate may increase.

Blitz tournament Sat 9:30 pm, register by 8:45 pm.

Entries, registration list: chessaction.com.

Email: director@chess.us.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

13th annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 4-5, 2025

Dewey Beach Open 2025 (DE)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 17-20, 2025

57th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 8-9, 2025

57th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)-- OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY

See New York.

MARCH 15-16, 2025

57th annual New York State High School Championship, GRADES 9-12 (grades 6-8 also permitted but with prize restrictions)

See New York.

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 5-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW MEXICO

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW YORK

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

57th Virginia Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

13th annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 4-5, 2025

Dewey Beach Open 2025 (DE)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 4, 2025

Walden Knights Chess Club Tournament (Swiss)

Event site: Josephine-Louise Public Library **Address:** 5 Scofield Street, Walden, NY 12586 **Overall prize fund:** \$100 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Ramello Simmons **Email:** ramellosimmons@gmail.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** n/a **TLA ID:** 46357

JANUARY 17-20, 2025

57th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 8-9, 2025

57th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)-- OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY

Event site: Saratoga Hilton Hotel, Saratoga City Center and Saratoga Courtyard by Marriott **Address:** Lower 8

sections for grades 5 and below at Saratoga Hilton (and adjacent Saratoga City Center), 534 Broadway; Middle School (K-8) Sections at Courtyard By Marriott, 11 Excelsior Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessour.com **TLA ID:** 46314

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 15-16, 2025

57th annual New York State High School Championship, GRADES 9-12 (grades 6-8 also permitted but with prize restrictions)

Event site: Saratoga Springs Courtyard Hotel by Marriott **Address:** 11 Excelsior Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 **Overall prize fund:** \$2,000 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Continental Chess **Email:** director@chess.us **Phone:** n/a **Website:** chessour.com **TLA ID:** 46315

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 5-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NORTH CAROLINA

DECEMBER 7, 2024

Dragon Knight Coats & Toys for Kids Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 14, 2024

Dragon Knight International Shareware Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 21, 2024

Dragon Knight Winter Solstice Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 28, 2024

Dragon Knight National Chocolate Candy Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 1, 2025

New Year's Day 2025 Ticks Jeff Jones Memorial GP (NC)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

57th Virginia Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 4, 2025

Dragon Knight National Spaghetti Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 11, 2025

Dragon Knight Eagle Day Grand Prix (NC)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 31-FEBRUARY 2, 2025

Land of the Sky XXXVII (NC)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 5-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

NORTH DAKOTA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

N. MARIANA ISLANDS

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

OHIO

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

JANUARY 24-26, 2025

The 2025 Cardinal Open (OH)

See Grand Prix.

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OKLAHOMA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

FEBRUARY 13-17, 2025

16th annual Southwest Class Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OREGON

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

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

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

57th Virginia Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 4-5, 2025

Dewey Beach Open 2025 (DE)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 17-20, 2025

57th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 24-26, 2025

The 2025 Cardinal Open (OH)

See Grand Prix.

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

9th annual George Washington Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

APRIL 16-20, 2025

The Princeton Open (NJ)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 5-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

PUERTO RICO

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

RHODE ISLAND

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

SOUTH CAROLINA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

MAY 5-4, 2025

30th Space Coast Open Chess Festival (FL)

See Grand Prix.

SOUTH DAKOTA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

TENNESSEE

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

TEXAS

DECEMBER 6-8, 2024

\$2,000 December 2024 Championship (TX)

See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

\$2,000 January 2025 Championship (TX)

See Grand Prix.

FEBRUARY 13-17, 2025

16th annual Southwest Class Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MARCH 21-23, 2025

29th annual Mid-America Open (MO)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

U.S. MIN. OUT. ISLS.

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

UTAH

SEPTEMBER 7, 2024-WEEKLY

Chess Knight

Event site: Kiln (Lehi) Address: 2701 N Thanksgiving Way #100, Lehi, UT 84043 Overall prize fund: \$2,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Rob Harker Email: utahchessknight@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.utahchess.org> TLA ID: 39726

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

VERMONT

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

MARCH 8-9, 2025

57th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)-- OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY

See New York.

MARCH 15-16, 2025

57th annual New York State High School Championship, GRADES 9-12 (grades 6-8 also permitted but with prize restrictions)

See New York.

VIRGIN ISLANDS, U.S.

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

VIRGINIA

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships Event site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott Address: 45020 Aviation Drive, Dulles, VA 20166 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: IA/O Anand Dommalapati Email: t2024nay@capitalareachess.com Phone: 1-703-627-5314 Website: <https://www.capitalareachess.com/2024nay> TLA ID: 45554

DECEMBER 26-29, 2024

49th annual Eastern Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 28, 2024

15th annual Eastern Open Blitz Championship (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

57th Virginia Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 17-20, 2025

57th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

FEBRUARY 21-23, 2025

9th annual George Washington Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WASHINGTON

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2024

34th annual North American Open (NV)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WEST VIRGINIA

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

57th Virginia Open (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 17-20, 2025

16th annual Golden State Open (CA-N)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WISCONSIN

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

JANUARY 3-5, 2025

2025 Tim Just Winter Open (IL)

See Grand Prix.

HERITAGE EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

FEBRUARY 1-2, 2025

Michael A. Selig Memorial/58th NorthEastern Open

Event site: DoubleTree by Hilton Address: 123 E. Wisconsin Ave., Neenah, WI 54956 Overall prize fund:

\$1,400 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Nietman Email: mike.nietman@charter.net Phone: 608-467-8510 Website: <https://www.wisconsinchess.org/> TLA ID: 46256

MAY 22-26, 2025

34th annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WYOMING

DECEMBER 18-23, 2024

2024 North American Youth Championships (VA)

See Virginia.

WANT MORE TOURNAMENTS IN YOUR AREA?

Why not organize one?

You can both run and play in a small event. Many of them wouldn't be held if the organizer/TD couldn't play.

Want to know more?

Contact Membership at membership@uschess.org. We'll be glad to help you be part of the promotion of American chess!



Capital Area Chess invites Youth (Under 18) players born on or after Jan 1st 2006 and from the North American Federations (USA, Canada and Mexico) to the

2024 North American Youth Chess Championships
Dec 18th – Dec 23rd 2024
Washington Dulles Airport Marriott
Dulles, Virginia

<https://www.capitalareachess.com/2024nay>
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Solutions

PAGE 10-11 QUIZ

1. a. The set and pieces were part of “Yoko Ono: Music of the Mind” at London’s Tate Modern. “Play as long as you can remember where all your pieces are,” were her instructions. **2.** b. In Barbra Streisand’s 2023 memoir. **3.** b. The original text used descriptive notation. **4.** d. Interview in *Chess Canada*, September-October 1974. **5.** b. The game is Maróczy – Herman Voigt, Philadelphia 1906, according to *Chess Warrior*, by Laszlo Jakobetz. **6.** c. The exercises were outlined in Jorgens Mueller’s 1904 book *My System*. **7.** a. It’s a variant of checkers. **8.** c. It was *Three Moves Ahead*, by Bob Rice, published in 2008. **9.** b. Wilhelm Steinitz objected to it, either because he found red unlucky or because of his poor eyesight, according to *The Kings of Chess*, by William Hartston. A new board had to be found. **10.** Albert “Buddy” Simonson was 18 when he defeated Leonardas Abramavicius at the 1933 Olympiad in Folkestone. **11.** c. The story comes from Microsoft cofounder Paul Allen, in “*The Innovators*,” by Walter Isaacson. **12.** a. That’s according to NBC News: www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/tongue-controlled-touchscreens-hit-market-year-rcna133270. **13.** José Capablanca, in *José Raúl Capablanca, A Chess Biography* by Miguel A. Sánchez. **14.** c. Kasparov was known for taking his wristwatch off during a game. The luxury watchmaker Audemars Piguet claimed in an advertisement he put it back on when a game’s outcome was decided. **15.** b. In his *Boys’ Life* column in August 1968.

PAGE 11 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. 30. Qxf6!, Black resigned. If 30. ... gxf6 31. Nh7+ Ke8 32. Rg8 mate. **PROBLEM 2.** 44. Rg8+! Nxg8 (44. ... Kh7 45. Qf5 mate) 45. Qxg8+ Kf6 46. h4! threatens mate in two with h4xg5+ or Be3xg5+. If 46. ... Qg7 47. Qe6 mate. **PROBLEM 3.** 18. Qxg6! Qxh4 19. Bg5! wins. If 19. ... Qg4 20. h3 Qd7 21. Bf6 and mates; if 19. ... Ne7 20. Qxf7+. **PROBLEM 4.** Fastest is 78. Kf5! or 78. Kf6!, threatening 79. g5. The game went 78. Kf5 Kxd5 79. b7 Nd4+ 80. Kf6, Black resigned. **PROBLEM 5.** 22. Ng4! gxf5 (22. ... Qxf5 avoids immediate mate but of course loses) 23. Bh6+ Ke7 24. Bg5+ Kf8 25. Bf6 followed by Rh1-h8 mate. **PROBLEM 6.** 27. Nxc3! dxc3 28. Qc4+ Kh8 29. Qf7, Black resigned.

PAGE 23 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. 26. ... Bxb2+! Boom! **27.** Kxh2 White doesn’t have a choice; 27. Kh1 Qh4 is even worse. **27. ... Qh4+** Or 27. ... Rh6+ 28. Kg1 Qh4, reaching the same position. **28. Kg1 Rh6 29. f4 exf3 e.p. 30. Rxf3 Bxf3 31. Bf1 Qh2+ 32. Kf2 Bxg2!** Or 32. ... Rf6. **33. Qxb4 Bxf1+** and, facing mate in a few moves, **White resigned.** Canino – Zatoniskih, Women’s Olympiad 2024. **TACTIC 2.** 34. Bb4! There are many good moves, but this one is deadly because of the threat to exchange the dark-squared bishop. Black is left without a defender of the g5-pawn and the position is hopeless. **34. ... Bxb4 35. Rxb4+ Kh8 36. Qxb4!** Oops — the rook on f8 is unprotected. **36. ... Nc6** If 36. ... Qe8, then 37. Qd6 Nf7 38. Qf4 Qd8 (or 38. ... Nxb5 39. Qe5+

39. Rg7 and it is curtains for Black. **37. Qxf8+ Rxf8 38. Rxb5** Black could resign but carries on a bit longer. **38. ... Nxd4 39. Ne5 Bxb5 40. Bxb5 Nxb5 41. Rc1, Black resigned.** Yip – Li Yunshan, Women’s Olympiad 2024. **TACTIC 3.** 21. ... Nd4! Ouch! A nasty, nasty move, that threatens ... Nd4-c2, ... Ba6-b7 and, I’m sure, other things too. White undoubtedly soon realized that the party is rapidly coming to an end. **22. Rxd4?** Desperation of a kind. Of course, the rook on d2 is untouchable: 22. Qxd2 Nf3+ and White can resign. According to the engines, White should have tried 22. Rb1, but after 22. ... Nc2 23. Qc1 Bb7 24. Rc4 Bxg2 25. Rxc2 (or 25. Kxg2? Ne3+) 25. ... Rxc2 26. Qxc2 Bh3 Black has a position that a player like Krush would win while blindfolded and sleep deprived. **22. ... Qxd4 23. Nc5 Re2, White resigned.** Pham Bich Ngoc – Krush, Women’s Olympiad 2024. **TACTIC 4.** 23. ... d4! A thematic and beautiful breakthrough that secures Black a clear advantage. **24. Nd3** Obviously White cannot capture the pawn: 24. cxd4 Rc2 25. b3 Rxf2 is a disaster. **24. ... Rc7** It was even better to play 24. ... Rc8 25. cxd4 Rd6 26. Kb1 Rxd4. **25. cxd4 Bxd4 26. Re2 Rd7 27. Kb1 Rb5 28. Rc1 a5 29. Rec2 e5 30. Nc5 Rc7 31. Ne4 Rcb7?** It was far more accurate to play 31. ... Rxc2 32. Rxc2 f5 33. Nc3 Rc5, with a position similar to what Black achieves a bit later in the game, but without allowing White any counterplay in the meantime. **32. Rc7+ Rxc7 33. Rxc7+ Ke6 34. Rc2?** White should have kept the rook active with 34. Nc3!. **34. ... f5 35. Nc3 Rc5 36. Nd1 Rd5** The U.S. board one should have played 36. ... h5! 37. Rd2 g5 and White would regret defending so passively. **37. a3?** The active 37. Rc8!? was much better. **37. ... e4 38. Re2!** **g5 39. g4?** The engine recommends 39. b4, which loses a pawn and which White unsurprisingly didn’t have an appetite for shortly before the time control. After the text move, however, White remains passive. **39. ... f4xg4 40. Rxe4+ Kf5** and Black had a winning advantage, which was duly converted. **41. Re8 h5 42. Kc2 Kg6 43. Re4 Rd7 44. Re6+ Kf5 45. Ra6 Ra7** It was much better to play 45. ... h4 46. Rh6 Kf4 and White’s defense will soon crumble. **46. Rd6 Be5 47. Rd8 Rc7+ 48. Kd3 Rb7 49. Kc2 Ke6 50. Rg8 Bf6 51. Ra8 h4 52. Ra6+ Kf7 53. Ne3 h3 54. g4xh3 g4xh3 55. Ng4 Bg7 56. Rxa5 Rxb2+ 57. Kc1 Kg6, White resigned.** Fuad Kamel Jamaliyah – Tokhirjonova, Women’s Olympiad 2024. **TACTIC 5.** 30. ... f4! Boom — **White resigned.** There’s no way to organize a defense, much less a counterattack: If 31. Qg4 Rb8 32. Bc1 Qd3 33. Bb2 Qb3 and White can do nothing but try to delay the inevitable mate. And 31. exf4 Rb8 is equally devastating. Peralta – Caruana, Open Olympiad 2024. **TACTIC 6.** 35. Bxb6! A stunner that rocked Black’s spine. However, the engine claims 35. Bg5! would have been even stronger. If Black captures the bishop, it quickly goes downhill: 35. ... h4xg5 36. Nxb5+ Kh6 37. Ng4+ Nxg4 38. h4xg4 and Black is toast. And White gets a clear advantage after 35. ... Qe6 36. Ng4 Qxf5 37. exf5 h4xg5 38. f4xg6+ Kg8 (if 38. ... Kxg6, then 39. Nfxe5+ Kh7 40. Nxf6+ gxf6 41. Nc6 and White wins) 39. Ra1 Nxg4 40. Rxa6 e4 41. Nxb5 Ne4 42. Rxa7 Nxg6 43. Kf1. But GM Wesley So instead preferred the more shocking text move. **35. ... g4xh6!** Black cannot capture with the king: 35. ... Kxh6 36. Ng4+ Nxg4 37. h4xg4 and White wins. **36. Qxf6 Qe6?** Black should have preferred 36. ... Rf7 37. Qc6,

although White still has a clear advantage. **37. Ng4! a5** Or 37. ... Qxf6 38. Nxf6+ Kg7 39. Nd5 with a large, if not decisive, advantage for White. **38. Qf5!** Threatening Rf1-c1 and Ng4-f6+; Black’s position falls apart. **38. ... Kg7 39. Qh5! Nh8 40. Nh4 Kh7 41. Nxb6!, Black resigned.** A little combination to round off the game. So – Pragganandhaa, Open Olympiad 2024. **TACTIC 7.** 19. ... Bf6!! This incredibly strong move was quite possibly overlooked by the former Women’s World Champion. The immediate threat is, of course, 20. ... Bg5, winning White’s queen. **20. Rxb6** Or 20. Nd2 Bg5 21. Qg1 (if 21. Qf2, then 21. ... Ncd3+ wins White’s queen) 21. ... b3! 22. Kb1 (22. axb3 Nxb3+ wins for Black) 22. ... bxc2+ 23. Kxc2 Nxe4+ and Black wins. **20. ... Ned3+ 21. Bxd3 Bxd4 22. Qg5 b3 23. ... Be5!** is possibly even better, but the text move is plenty nasty. **23. Bc4 Be5** Or 23. ... Rhg8 24. Qd2 d5 (or 24. ... bxc2 25. Kxc2 Be5 and Black is winning) 25. exd5 Be5 and Black wins. **24. Rxb6 Rxb6** White’s position is in full collapse, and the end comes promptly. **25. axb3 Bxg3 26. Nd2 d5 27. exd5 exd5 28. Be2 Re8 29. Bf3 Nxb3+ Or 29. ... Bf4 30. Qf6 Nxb3+ and Black wins. 30. Kb1 Bf4, White resigned.** Ushenina – Yip, Women’s Olympiad 2024. **TACTIC 8.** 37. Kf2!! Rather than trying to break through immediately, White removes access to some crucial squares, thus eliminating Black’s counterplay. Black, meanwhile, cannot improve her position. The game continued **37. d5 Rxd5 38. Rxd5 exd5 39. Qxf5+ Ke8 40. Qc8+ Kf7 41. Qf5+ Ke8 42. Qxd5 Qe3+** and while the game carried on a while longer, White was unable to make any progress: **43. Kg2 Ke7 44. g6 Qe2+ 45. Kg3 Qe1+ 46. Kg4 Qg1+ 47. Kf4 Qh2+ 48. Ke4 Qh4+ 49. Ke3 Qxh6+ 50. Kf2 Qh2+ 51. Kf1 Qh3+ 52. Kf2 Qh2+ 53. Kf1 Qh3+ 54. Kf2 Qh2+ 55. Kf1 Qh3+, draw.** Balabayeva – Krush, Women’s Olympiad 2024. **37. ... Qd7** Black’s alternatives also do not provide any relief: a) 37. ... Rd6 38. d5 Rxd5 39. Rxd5 exd5 40. Qxf5+ Ke8 41. Qxd5 and White is winning — notice what a difference the position of White’s king makes; b) 37. ... Kg6 38. Qxf5+ exf5 39. Rxe7 Kxg5 40. Kf3 (or 40. Rxb7 Kg6 41. Rb7) 40. ... Kxh6 41. Kf4 and White is winning. **38. Qf3 Kg6 39. Qe3 Re8 40. d5** and White decisively breaks through. **TACTIC 9.** 37. ... Bf6!! A mind-blowing sacrifice that was missed by Yip in the game. The game continuation was **37. ... Bd8!?** **38. Qd2 Qa4 39. Rf1 Rc4 40. Qd1 Qxb4 41. Qb3 Qc5** and Black had a decisive advantage and soon won, Georgescu – Yip, Women’s Olympiad 2024. **38. Bxf6** Or 38. e5 Bxe5 39. Bxe5 dxe5 40. Qxe5 Na3+ 41. Rxa3 Qxa3 and Black is winning. **38. ... e5!!** The point! All of a sudden White’s king is missing its essential defender and Black is winning by force, e.g., **39. Bxe5 dxe5** and White has to give up a lot of wood just to delay mate.

PAGE 53 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. Mating net: White mates in 2: **1. Qe8+ Kc7 2. Ba5 mate.** **PROBLEM 2. Mating net:** It’s over in 2 with **1. Ra4+ Kb5 2. Nc3 mate.** **PROBLEM 3. Mating net:** White ends it in 2: **1. Nd5+ exd5 2. Qb6 mate.** **PROBLEM 4. Mating net:** It’s mate in 2: **1. Qxc6+ bxc6 2. Ba6 mate.** **PROBLEM 5. Mating net:** White terminates Black in 2: **1. Qf8+ Kh7 2. Nf6 mate.** **PROBLEM 6. Mating net:** White mates in 2: **1. Qa6+ Kxa6 (1. ... Kb8 2. Qc8 mate) 2. Bc8 mate.**

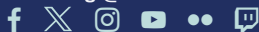
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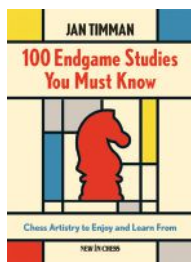
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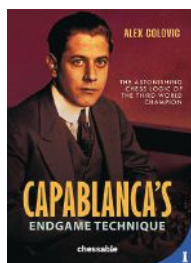


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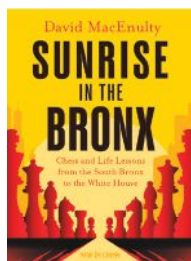
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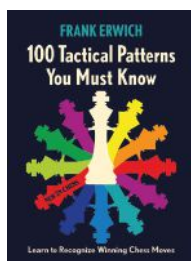
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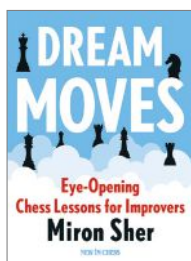
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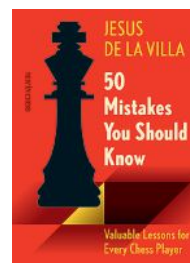
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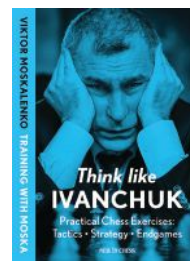
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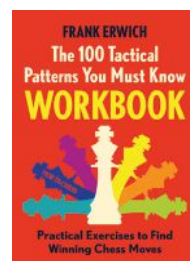
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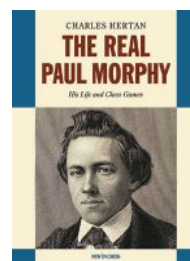
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