



UNKNOWN AMERICAN GAMES • **A PEEK**
INSIDE SILMAN'S ARCHIVE • ANDY ANSEL

ALEKHINE'S NEW JERSEY VICTORY • **THE LOST**
SUPERTOURNAMENT OF 1929 • THOMAS SHUPE

ENDINGS • **YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW**
THE PHILIDOR POSITION? • ALEX FISHBEIN

AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE

ACMCHESS.COM • ISSUE #34 • 2023

WHERE GREAT MINDS MEET

Two Conquerors

U.S. CHESS TITANS,
CARUANA AND NAKAMURA,
VICTORIOUS IN EUROPEAN
SUPERTOURNAMENTS

John Burke



American Continental

Rises from
31st Seed to World Cup

NEW CHESS ROCKY - IN THE MAKING!?

**Josiah
Stearman**

Winners' Narratives

**3RD CAIRNS CUP
IN SAINT LOUIS**

Anna Zatonskih

**NATIONAL OPEN
IN LAS VEGAS**

Illia Nyzhnyk

**OREGON STATE
CHAMPIONSHIP
IN PORTLAND**

Zoe Tang

Award-winning? Yep, that's us... again!

2023

BEST OVERALL MAGAZINE

Chess Journalists of America Awards

GAME ON!

BETH HARMON'S
NEW CHALLENGE
ON NETFLIX



IT'S A GAME NOW: The Queen's Gambit

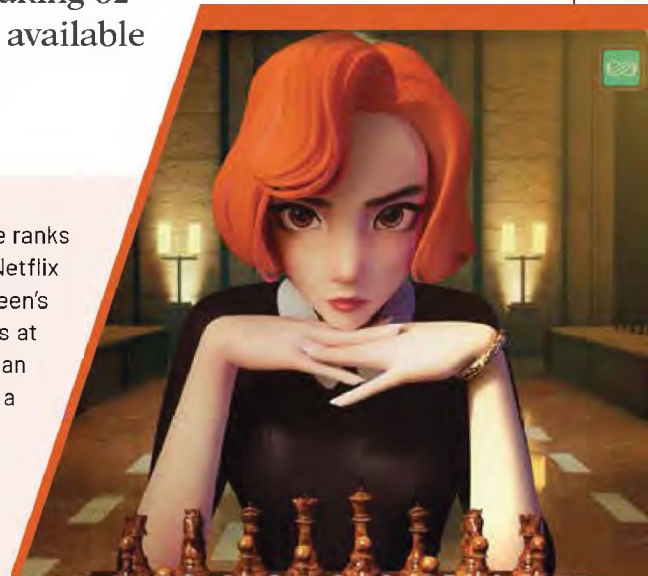
Beth Harmon is back!

The Queen's Gambit TV Series reached a record-breaking 62 million households in 28 days. From July 25, 2023, it's available on Netflix as an interactive game via mobile devices.

By Josip Asik

Launched in July 2020, the TV series *The Queen's Gambit* rapidly ascended the ranks to become one of Netflix's most iconic shows. Fast forward to July 2023, and Netflix unveiled a brand-new collection of games. Leading their offering is 'The Queen's Gambit Chess' game, followed by over 65 other titles, all available to members at no extra fees, ads, or in-app purchases. For those on Apple devices, these can be found under the "Mobile Games" section, while Android aficionados have a dedicated "Mobile Games" tab.

While the game has revived interest in *The Queen's Gambit*, Netflix confirmed they currently have no plans to continue the TV series.



Simone McDermott

We spoke to **Simone McDermott**, Lead Game Designer at UK-based ROCKWATER Games, the development studio behind *The Queen's Gambit Chess*. Simone's journey into the chess realm began when she was enthralled by *The Queen's Gambit* mini-series.

With whom from the chess world did the game development team collaborate to ensure the game's authenticity and relatability?

Specifically, were Garry Kasparov and Bruce Pandolfini, who were consultants for the series, involved in the game's development?

Our Head of Technology, Paul Hughes, worked closely with UK-based Grandmaster Simon Williams on an evaluation of the latest iteration of the engine and its representation of various player ELO values. We then collaborated with Liverpool's historic chess club, and a broad range of chess players, to ensure that this side of the game feels as authentic as possible on mobile. The result is a scalable chess AI engine that simulates opponents that are akin to playing comparable players in real life.

Could you describe the target demographic for this game?

We've designed three versions of this journey, to cater to novice, intermediate and advanced players - all of whom we hope will enjoy learning and being challenged on their level. And then, for players who want to test their skills at playing chess, they can play against AI or take their challenge online to match against other players.

What kind of interaction can players expect with the character of Beth Harmon within the game? How does her role in the game serve as a guide for those learning chess?

Throughout the game, Beth's character will appear to guide you through puzzles and lessons. Just like in the show, she's exceptionally knowledgeable and an enthusiastic, encouraging friend. During matches is where you'll get to experience the magic of Beth's power for yourself. Here, players can choose to use what we call 'tactical highlights'; intuitive

UI elements that give you handy visual guidance, helping you to spot openings you can take advantage of and warning you when your pieces are at threat.

Did you draw inspiration from or incorporate elements of any past chess games or software while developing this game? If so, could you provide examples of which ones?

The core development team of *The Queen's Gambit Chess* has amassed over 10 years of experience creating some of the most feature-rich and visually impressive chess simulations ever. The most recent of which was 2017's *Chess Ultra*, a game that was described by Kotaku as "the Gran Turismo of chess". If you've never played *Gran Turismo*, you can think of it as being called the 'Rolex of timepieces'. We've naturally gained a deep understanding of the game from our previous titles, but *The Queen's Gambit Chess* is an entirely new approach that is both a heartfelt love letter to the show and a new benchmark for chess on mobile.



CHESS JOURNALISTS
OF AMERICA



2023
AWARDS

Best Overall Magazine American Chess Magazine

Chess Journalist of the Year

Pete Tamburro, Senior Editor



AWARDS

Best Historical Article

John Hilbert

"Not Without Hope"

American Chess Magazine Issue 30

Best Analysis

Sarunas Sulskis

"The Magnificent Three"

American Chess Magazine Issue 29

Best Interview

Pete Tamburro

"25 Questions for Bruce Pandolfino."

American Chess Magazine Issue 28

Best Tournament Report - Nat/Intl

Irina Krush

"A Triumph of Experience and Youth!"

American Chess Magazine Issue 27

Best Tournament Report - State/Local

Alex Fishbein

"Rebirth of High Level Chess in Wyoming"

American Chess Magazine Issue 27

Best Print Article by a Junior

Grayson Rorrer

"U.S. Teenage Sharks"

American Chess Magazine Issue 31

Best Personal Narrative

Jon Edwards

"Human Champion of 'Computer Chess'"

American Chess Magazine Issue 31

Best Single Chess Magazine Cover

Nenad Milosavljevic (Design),

Stevan Dobrojevic (photo),

Vladimir Vuksan (Art),

and **Josip Asik** (script)

American Chess Magazine Issue 28

Best Instructive Lesson

Jacob Aagaard

"Play it Along With Sam"

American Chess Magazine Issue 31

HONORABLE MENTION

Best Interview

Jimmy Adams

"An Interview With Liz Garbus"

American Chess Magazine Issue 30

Best Tournament Report - State/Local

Paul Swaney

"A Double Clean Sweep!"

American Chess Magazine Issue 27

Best Analysis

John Burke

"Nepo Again!"

American Chess Magazine Issue 28

Best Instructive Lesson

Jacob Aagaard

"Play it Along With Sam"

American Chess Magazine Issue 32

Best Humorous Contribution

Pete Tamburro

"Unfortunate Chess Quotes"

American Chess Magazine Issue 30



THE LATEST NEWS

BAKU WORLD CUP

Caruana and Dominguez Spearhead U.S. Charge

Fabiano Caruana and Leinier Dominguez are the only two US players who successfully navigated through intense competition to secure their spots among the top 16 at the World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan. However, the endgame of the Women's competition will continue without the presence of American ladies.

In the 4th round, Caruana defeated fellow American Ray Robson with a score of 1½-½. Dominguez emerged victorious over Poland's Radoslaw Wojtaszek after a tie-break. This round also saw the exit of two key American figures: Hikaru Nakamura was eliminated in a tie-break by India's rising star R. Praggnanandhaa, while Wesley So succumbed to the reigning European champion, naturalized Serbian (formerly Russian) Alexey Sarana. A notably intense showdown took place between Magnus Carlsen and Vincent Keymer. The former world champion, after suffering a loss in the first game, mounted a remarkable comeback to seal the win.

Come the fifth round, Caruana will face off against Poland's Jan-Krzysztof Duda. Dominguez, on the other hand, aims to avenge So's loss as he squares off against Sarana. Carlsen is up against the formidable challenge of the legendary Vassily Ivanchuk.

At the start of the tournament, 206 players entered the Open Section, while half that number competed in the Women's Section. The USA was represented by a robust team of 14 players. Beyond those already mentioned, the men's roster featured Sam Shankland, Awonder Liang, Christopher Yoo, Timur Gareyev, Gregory Kaidanov, and Josiah Stearman. The three U.S. representatives in the women's section were Irina Krush, Carissa Yip, and Jennifer Yu.

The finalists of this grueling competition will secure their places in the 2024 Candidates Tournament in Toronto, Canada.



WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

JU WENJUN DEFENDS WORLD TITLE AGAINST FELLOW CHINESE CHALLENGER



Chinese GM Ju Wenjun successfully defended her title in a Women's World Championship match against her compatriot challenger GM Lei Tingjie. The match was a 12-game encounter held in the Chinese cities of Shanghai and Chongqing, from 4-24 July. The prize fund was €500,000 with a 60-40 split in favor of the winner.

The challenger took the lead after winning game 5. Then, after a couple of draws, the Champion leveled the score by winning game 8. The decisive moment of the match was the very last rollercoaster game which Ju managed to win.

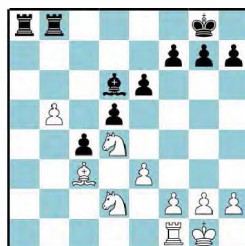
This is Ju Wenjun's fourth Women's World Champion title. Now she shares this record with her compatriot GM Hou Yifan.

D04

Ju Wenjun	2564
Lei Tingjie	2554

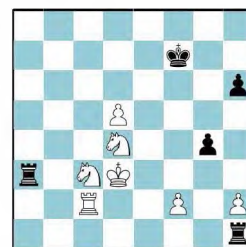
Chongqing 2023, Game 12

1.d4 d5 2.♂f3 ♀f6 3.e3 c5 4.dxc5 e6 5.b4 a5 6.c3 axb4 7.cxb4 b6 8.♂b5+ ♀d7 9.♂xd7+ ♀bxd7 10.a4 bxc5 11.b5 ♀c7 12.♂b2 ♀d6 13.0-0 0-0 14.♂bd2 ♀fc8 15.♂c2 c4? 16.♂c3 ♀c5 17.a5 ♀b3 18.♂xf6? ♀xa1 19.♂xa1 ♀xa5 20.♂c3 ♀xc3? 21.♂xc3 ♀cb8 22.♂d4



22...e5? 23.♂f5 ♀f8 24.♂xe5 ♀xb5 25.g4

g6 26.♂d4 ♀b2?! 27.♂b1 ♀g7 28.♂xg7 ♀xg7 29.♂c3 ♀a5 30.♂d1 ♀b6 31.♂de2 ♀b3 32.♂g2 h6 33.♂f3 f6 34.♂c1 ♀f7 35.♂f4 d4 36.exd4 g5 37.♂fe2 f5 38.gxf5 ♀xf5+ 39.♂e3 g4 40.♂f4 ♀b8 41.d5 ♀f6 42.♂c2 ♀a8 43.♂b5 ♀b6 44.♂d4 ♀a3+ 45.♂e4 c3 46.♂fe2 ♀b2 47.♂d3 ♀b1 48.♂xc3 ♀h1



49.f3 gxf3 50.♂xf3 ♀f1 51.♂d4 ♀e7 52.♂c4 ♀f4 53.♂b2 ♀h4 54.♂b7+ ♀f6 55.♂b2 ♀a8 56.♂c5 ♀h3 57.♂cb5 ♀e3 58.d6 ♀e5 59.♂c6+ ♀e4 60.d7 ♀d3 61.♂d6+ ♀f4 62.♂b8

Black resigned

WCC MATCH, Shanghai & Chongqing, China, July 4 to 24, 2023

Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Score
Ju WENJUN	½	½	½	½	0	½	½	1	½	½	½	1	6½
Lei TINGJIE	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	0	½	½	½	0	5½

FIDE RATINGS on August 1, 2023

A NEWLY MARRIED CHESS COUPLE

HIKARU & ATOUSA!

Although it is no news that chess players often form families with each other, the latest news at the end of July was the marriage of GM Hikaru Nakamura, world number-two and the best American player according to the current rating list, and seven-time Iranian women's champion WGM Atousa Pourkashiyan, who switched federations to the U.S. last December.

At the Norway Chess supertournament in Stavanger, Hikaru delivered an outstanding performance, clinching a memorable victory. It was during this event that the public caught a glimpse of him alongside Atousa, which some might argue hints at the pivotal role her support played in his successful campaign. (see page 8 -Ed).

American Chess Magazine wishes all the best to the newly-wedded couple!



FIDE Ratings - Top 10 Open			
1	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2835
2	Hikaru Nakamura	USA	2787
3	Fabiano Caruana	USA	2782
4	Ding Liren	CHN	2780
5	Ian Nepomniachtchi	FID	2779
6	Alireza Firouzja	FRA	2777
7	Anish Giri	NED	2769
8	Wesley So	USA	2769
9	Viswanathan Anand	IND	2754
10	Richard Rapport	ROU	2752

FIDE Ratings - Top 10 Women			
1	Hou Yifan	CHN	2628
2	Ju Wenjun	CHN	2568
3	Aleksandra Goryachkina	FID	2557
4	Humpy Koneru	IND	2553
5	Kateryna Lagno	FID	2552
6	Lei Tingjie	CHN	2550
7	Alexandra Kosteniuk	SUI	2532
8	Tan Zhongyi	CHN	2523
9	Nana Dzagnidze	GEO	2511
10	Mariya Muzychuk	UKR	2511

Lee and Mishra Secure US Junior Chess Titles

13-year-old Alice Lee from Minneapolis stormed to her first title win at the Junior Girls' Championship, finishing a 1½-point ahead of Ruiyang Yan. Lee secured her decisive championship victory with the black pieces against top-seed Carissa Yip, who had to settle for a shared third-fourth place with newcomer Zoey Tang.

More thrills were seen in the boys' tournament in which 14-year-old Abhimanyu Mishra claimed his first U.S.



Junior title. Mishra drew his last-round game, whereas his main competitor Arthur Guo lost and thereby finished half a point behind the winner, together with Andrew Hong, Brandon Jacobson and Balaji Daggupati. Simultaneously, the Senior Championship was taking place. Here, the captain of the US Women's National Team, Melikset Khachiyan, emerged victorious in a field of ten players. He finished 1½ points ahead of Alex Shabalov, and two full points ahead of Vladimir Akopian.



FIDE Ratings - USA Top 10 Open	
1	Hikaru Nakamura 2787
2	Fabiano Caruana 2782
3	Wesley So 2769
4	Levon Aronian 2742
5	Leinier Dominguez 2739
6	Sam Shankland 2708
7	Ray Robson 2699
8	Samuel Sevian 2698
9	Jeffery Xiong 2693
10	Grigoriy Oparin 2681

Chess Rating System Revamp?

FIDE has initiated a public discussion regarding proposed changes to the current rating system, addressing concerns of rating deflation. The proposals, formulated by the FIDE Qualification Commission and mathematician Jeff Sonas, consist of two main corrective measures: 'compression' and 'calculation improvements'. 'Compression' involves a one-time rating boost for players rated below 2000 on the January 2024 list, while 'calculation improvements' include raising the minimum rating and adjusting the initial rating calculation. Feedback from the chess community is encouraged and can be sent to qualification@fide.com before September 30, 2023. Final changes, subject to approval by the FIDE Council, will be implemented from January 2024.

FIDE Ratings - USA Top 10 Women	
1	Irina Krush 2447
2	Alice Lee 2388
3	Carissa Yip 2364
4	Anna Zatonskih 2364
5	Annie Wang 2356
6	Gulrukhbegim Tohirjonova 2350
7	Nazi Paikidze 2316
8	Atousa Pourkashiyan 2310
9	Katerina Nemcova 2305
10	Thalia Cervantes Landeiro 2303

ACM CARES ABOUT THE FUTURE OF CHESS!

As predicted in ACM issue #33, this summer was as busy for all of us at ACM as it was for competitors, arbiters and organizers – due to the incredible number of tournaments played all over the world. It was not easy for players to hop from one tournament to another, and that is why we are very grateful to our contributors, who found the time to write during their action-packed schedules. As a consequence we have aimed to report on the most significant successes of American players, as well as winners of tournaments played in the U.S. over the past couple of months. Their personal stories reveal a variety of emotions, deep preparation, relentless fighting spirit, a little luck, and informative annotations. Nowadays it is not easy to win a single game of chess, let alone a tournament. Thus their efforts in sharing their experiences and creating entertaining articles are even more appreciated!

Of course, there's more to the game of chess than just winning. In conjunction with our authors, our goals include helping readers to understand strategic elements of the game, requirements of modern chess preparation, psychological aspects of the game, and to acquaint them with important events and personalities past and present. Also, by showcasing beauty on the chessboard, readers will share the thrills and spills that our noble game has to offer, either through analysis of games or the challenge of test positions. And we always aim to present tip-top examples to promote these benefits to an even wider community.

All of these factors – and more – have again resulted in *American Chess Magazine* being voted the best overall U.S. chess magazine for 2023 by the 'Chess Journalists of America', with the added distinction of nine more awards and five honorable mentions!

In the same connection, a particular joy for all of us at ACM is the privilege of working with the 'Chess Journalist of the Year' – our Senior Editor, Pete Tamburro! I may be biased, but I truly believe that this is the most justified award in this year's contest as Pete's knowledge and experience, fueled by incredible energy and attention to detail, have surely raised the bar even higher for other U.S. publications...

On a separate note, ratings in chess have been among the most frequent topics in any chess-related conversations over the past decade or so. It is of course no news that chess has been booming worldwide, and the number of newcomers to the game represents a highly satisfying feat in itself. However, until these newcomers (particularly very young players) begin to enter tournaments, it is very difficult to assess their actual or



potential playing strength which correlates to their rating. The problem appears to lie in the system of calculating ratings.

Back in the day when I started playing chess, the rating floor was 2200 with pretty similar conditions for gaining FIDE titles as are employed today. FIDE's decision to lower the floor to 1000 and increase the famous "K" (development coefficient) for players new to the rating list (from 20 to 40) has created some confusion, to say the least. For example, there should be a significant difference in playing strength between players rated 1200 and 1600, or 1400 and 1800... However, such comparisons and evaluations have more often than not proved to be wrong!

Suppose we have a player who is currently rated 1300. In a game versus an 1800-rated opponent, it can be expected that the higher-rated player will win. However, in the event of a loss, he or she will lose big time – at least 0.92 points multiplied by their K (usually 20). If the 1300-rated player was instead rated roughly 1600, the loss of the higher-rated player would be about 0.64 points multiplied by K. To recover from this, the same 1800-rated player would need to win a game against at least a 2200-rated opponent, or two games against one with their own rating, or three games against 1600-rated opposition.

The anomalies of the existing rating system have incited many players with ratings between 2000 and 2200 to speak out and create a hiatus in order to denote accurately their overall achievements on the chessboard. At present, instead of encouraging this category of players to enter tournaments, there is evidence that they get discouraged. To be sure, FIDE fully intends to increase the rating floor (read our news page in this issue), but the principal question remains – to what extent?

I invite you to join the public discussion, because this issue should be addressed immediately and as widely as possible, since it will determine the future of competitive chess in the years to come.

Time to sign off now...until our next issue #35 in October!

Yours in chess,
Dusan Kronic, Managing Editor



Editor-in-Chief / CEO
JOSIP ASIK

Managing Editor
DUSAN KRNIC

Deputy Editor
JIMMY ADAMS

Senior Editor
PETE TAMBURRO

Features Editors
GRAYSON RORRER
ZOEY TANG
ALEC GETZ

Art Director
VLADIMIR VUKSAN

Art Designer
NENAD MILOSAVLJEVIC

Contributing Editors and Writers

JOHN BURKE	ANNA ZATONSKIH
JOSIAH STEARMAN	ILLIA NYZHNYK
JACOB AAGAARD	SARUNAS SULSKIS
DYLAN LOEB MCCLAIN	BRIAN KUEHL
ALEX FISHBEIN	JON EDWARDS
DR. J. COREY BUTLER	KIRK GHAZARIAN
ANDY ANSEL	LUCA BARILLARO
CARSTEN HANSEN	NIKOLA NESTOROVIC

Contributing Artists and Photographers

LENNART OOTES, DAVID LLADA, MARIA EMELIANOVA,
TIM HANKS, STEVAN DOBROJEVIC, HARALD FIETZ

Cover photo: Josiah Stearman, St. Louis 2023
Photograph by Lennart Ootes

Website: www.acmchess.com
Correspondence: office@acmchess.com
Emails to the editor: editor@acmchess.com

Letters to:
American Chess Magazine
2028 E Ben White Blvd, Ste 240-2969,
Austin, TX 78741

ISSN 2572-2808

American Chess Magazine®

©2023 BY AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE LLC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION OF ANY MATERIAL
OF THIS ISSUE IN WHOLE OR IN PART IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

EDITORIAL, PRODUCTION AND CORPORATE/SALES OFFICE: 1 FISHER DRIVE, #314, MOUNT VERNON NY 10552. PHONE: 846-350-5218.
AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE (ISSN 2572-2808) IS PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY BY AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE LLC, 30 N GOULD ST, STE R, SHERIDAN, WY 82801. CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS IS LOCATED AT 1 FISHER DRIVE, #314, MOUNT VERNON NY 10552. APPLICATION TO MAIL AT PERIODICAL POSTAGE PRICE IS PENDING AT NEWBURGH NY 12550. POSTMASTER: PLEASE SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE, 2028 E BEN WHITE BLVD, STE 240-2969, AUSTIN, TX 78741.
FOR SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES OR CHANGE OF ADDRESS: AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE, 2028 E BEN WHITE BLVD, STE 240-2969, AUSTIN, TX 78741.
VISIT US ONLINE: WWW.ACMCHESS.COM. CANADIAN AND FOREIGN SURFACE ADD \$20 EXTRA PER YEAR PAYABLE IN U.S. FUNDS. SINGLE COPY PRICE IS \$24.99.

AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE #34
August 2023



CONTENTS

Issue
#34

08



Fabiano Caruana



Hikaru Nakamura

08

European
Supertournaments
TWO CONQUERORS
CARUANA AND NAKAMURA
GM John Burke

19

ACM VISITS
WEST PALM BEACH
Pete Tamburro

20

Anna Zatonskih Triumphs
in 3rd Cairns Cup
ANNA'S COMEBACK
IM/WGM Anna Zatonskih

23

An Interview With
Anna Zatonskih
FROM UKRAINE TO
AMERICA – THE RISE OF
A CHESS CHAMPION
Dusan Kronic

28

2023 American Continental
Championship
US JUNIOR STORMS INTO
THE WORLD CUP!
IM Josiah Stearman

34

2023 American
Continental
Championship
GM NORM FOR
17-YEAR-OLD
CALIFORNIAN
IM Kirk Ghazarian

36

The Magnificent Three (1)
GIRI GIVES A HEARTY
WELCOME TO THE NEW
WORLD CHAMPION –
AND HIS KING!
GIRI – LIREN
GM Sarunas Sulskis

38

SMALL CHESS LECTURES (1)
GM Nikola Nestorovic

40

Introducing the 2023
Oregon State Champion
WONDERGIRL ZOXY!
WIM Zoey Tang

44

Chess Training
MASTERCLASS
GM Jacob Aagaard &
GM Sam Shankland

50

Illia Nyzhnyk Wins
in the City of Sin
LUCKY LAS VEGAS
GM Illia Nyzhnyk

57

National Open
MY FIRST
GM-SCALP?
WELL...ALMOST!
WIM Zoey Tang

59

The Magnificent
Three (2)
FIROUZJA
REMAINS
AFLOAT BY
AN INVISIBLE
KNIGHT
PROMOTION
CARLSEN – FIROUZJA
GM Sarunas Sulskis

62

Unknown American Games
SILMAN'S HIDDEN GEMS
Andy Ansel

66

Openings Have Become
Less Predictable
and More Fun
A NEW CHESS ERA!
Dylan Loeb McClain

68

Sheridan Wyoming Open
A CHESS HOME IN
THE OLD WEST
Brian Kuehl

70

Chess Psychology
TWO TYPES OF THINKING
Dr. J. Corey Butler

72

The Magnificent Three (3)
SIX QUEENS ON
THE BOARD!
KOSTENIUK – KHOTENASHVILI
GM Sarunas Sulskis

74

Chess Tech
A HORIZON EFFECT
Jon Edwards

75

SMALL CHESS LECTURES (2)
Discover The Threats
GM Nikola Nestorovic

76

Chess and Finance
INVESTORS OR GAMBLERS
Luca Barillaro

78

Endings
YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW
THE PHILIDOR POSITION?
GM Alex Fishbein

83

Chess History
THE LOST
SUPERTOURNAMENT
OF 1929
Thomas Shupe

88

Book Reviews
FRESH LEAVES
FROM THE BOOKSHELF
FM Carsten Hansen

91

SOLUTIONS TO
THREATS EXERCISES
FROM PAGE 75

92

TOURNAMENT
REVIEWS
IM Grayson Rorrer

98

5X5
Where Grandmasters
Advise Young Players
GM RAHUL
SRIVASTHAV PEDDI



Anna Zatonskih Photo St. Louis Chess Club



U.S. Chess Titans, Caruana and Nakamura, Victorious in European Supertournaments

Two Conquerors

Fabiano Caruana claimed victory at the Superbet Classic in Romania, while at Norway Chess, it was Hikaru Nakamura who emerged as the champion, turning the tables on Caruana in a decisive final round.

■ By GM John Burke



▲ Fabiano Caruana Photo by Lennart Ootes



▲ Hikaru Nakamura Photo by Lennart Ootes

As

most of the elite events are nowadays shifting to quicker rates of play, it is quite a treat for American superstars to have won two out of three classical tournaments so far in 2023. With Tata Steel Masters now being a distant past in terms of classical events, the Superbet Classic in Romania in the first half of May was marked by Caruana's triumph. Fabi was close to repeating the same success at Norway Chess in early June — but fell only one game short of it, as Nakamura managed to steal the show there by defeating him in the very last round.

The two most recent elite classical tournaments — the Superbet Classic in Romania (May 6–14) and Norway Chess (May 29–June 9) were a joy to watch for American fans, as the former was won by Fabiano Caruana, and the latter by Hikaru Nakamura.



John Burke was the 2020 US Junior Champion. The young grandmaster from New Jersey had already stunned the chess world in 2015 by breaking the record as youngest player ever to surpass 2600+ ELO. John's most notable victories include the 2018 U.S. Masters, the 2018 New York International Championship, and the 2019 Washington International Open. In 2021 he shared first at the Cherry Blossom Classic in Dulles, VA, and also in the World Open in Philadelphia, PA.

Romania

The Superbet Classic held in Bucharest, capital of Romania, featured quite a strong field, including the newly crowned World Champion Ding Liren, the World Championship runner-up Ian Nepomniachtchi, and the young talent Alireza Firouzja.

Nevertheless, Caruana prevailed over all of them, winning the event without losing a single game. Not only that - he was never in any serious danger of losing.

He won a complicated game against Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in round 3, but the one that really attracted my attention was his positional victory in the very next round against Nepo.

D32

Fabiano Caruana	2764
Ian Nepomniachtchi	2795

Superbet Classic, Bucharest 2023

1.d4 ♘f6 2.♘f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 c5



5.e3 As I mentioned in my previous article about the Ding - Nepo match (ACM #33, pp. 8-25), the line 5.cxd5 cxd4 6.♗xd4

exd5 is very popular for Black amongst elite players due to its solidity. After 7.e4 dxe4 8.♗xd8+ ♔xd8 9.♖g5 ♗e6 10.♖xe6+ fxe6, this is a typical endgame that could arise, in which it is very difficult for White to prove an advantage.

5...♖c6 6.cxd5 exd5 7.♗b5 cxd4 8.♖xd4 ♗d7 Black accepts the structural disadvantage of an isolated pawn, but everything else about his position is fine. His bishop will find a nice home on d6 and he has ideas of drumming up threats against White's king. Meanwhile, White's dark-squared bishop is stuck at home on c1. It will probably be deployed to b2 after White plays his pawn to b3.

9.0-0 ♗d6 10.♖f3 ♗e6 11.b3 a6 12.♗d3



12...♗e5 This knight trade helps Black

in a few ways. First of all, it takes away a potential blockader of the d5 pawn, making it easier to push ...d5-d4 at some point. It also removes a defender of the kingside. Finally, it brings his bishop to e5, which is a fantastic square, pressuring both the h2 pawn and the c3 knight.

13.♖xe5 ♗xe5 14.♗b2 ♖c8 15.♖c1 0-0 16.f4 White blunts the diagonal and kicks the bishop away from its fantastic square, but the cost is that the e3 pawn is now weak.

Normally, White would prefer to keep his pawn on f2 with 16.♗d2, and prepare the trade of bishops by playing ♖e2, but he is not in time to prevent Black from getting rid of his weakness.



16...d4! 17.exd4 ♗xd4 18.♖a4 ♗f4 19.♗xf4 ♗xf4 and the position is totally equal.

SUPERBET CHESS CLASSIC, Bucharest, Romania, May 6-16, 2023

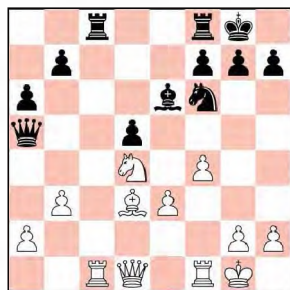
Rk	Name	FED	Elo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts
1	Fabiano Caruana	USA	2764		½	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	½	5½
2	Wesley SO	USA	2760	½		½	½	1	½	½	½	½	½	5
3	Richard RAPPORT	ROU	2745	½	½		½	½	1	½	½	½	½	5
4	Anish GIRI	NED	2768	½	½	½		½	½	½	1	½	½	5
5	Alireza FIROUZJA	FRA	2785	½	0	½	½		0	½	1	1	1	5
6	Jan-Krzysztof DUDA	POL	2724	½	½	0	½	1		½	½	½	½	4½
7	Maxime VACHIER-LAGRAVE	FRA	2741	0	½	½	½	½	½		½	1	½	4½
8	Liren DING	CHN	2788	½	½	½	0	0	½	½		½	1	4
9	Ian NEPOMNIACHTCHI	RUS	2795	0	½	½	½	0	½	0	½		1	3½
10	Bogdan-Daniel DEAC	ROU	2700	½	½	½	½	0	½	½	0	0		3

NORWAY CHESS, Stavanger, Norway, May 28 - Jun 9, 2023

Rk	Name	Fed	Rtg	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts
1	Hikaru NAKAMURA	USA	2775		3	3	1½	10	10	1½	1½	10	3	18½
2	Fabiano CARUANA	USA	2764	0		10	1½	1½	3	0	3	3	3	16
3	Dommaraju GUKESH	IND	2732	0	1½		1½	1½	10	1½	3	1½	3	14½
4	Anish GIRI	NED	2768	10	10	10		1½	10	1½	1½	1½	3	13
5	Wesley SO	USA	2760	1½	10	10	10		10	1½	10	3	1½	12½
6	Magnus CARLSEN	NOR	2853	1½	0	1½	1½	1½		1½	1½	10	1½	11½
7	Shakhriyar MAMEDYAROV	AZE	2738	10	3	10	10	10	10		0	1½	1½	11
8	Alireza FIROUZJA	FRA	2785	10	0	0	10	1½	10	3		3	0	10½
9	Nodirbek ABDUSATTOROV	UZB	2731	1½	0	10	10	0	1½	10	0		3	9
10	Aryan TARI	NOR	2642	0	0	0	0	10	10	10	3	0		6

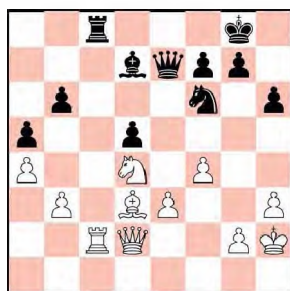


16...♙c7 17.♘e2 ♙b6 18.♙d4 ♙xd4
19.♘xd4 ♙a5



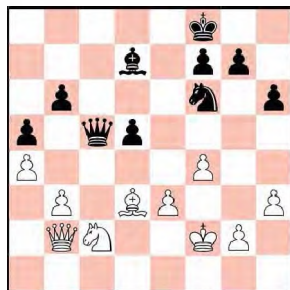
Both sides have weak pawns now, but at least White has managed to trade off the dark-squared bishop. His outpost on d4 cannot be attacked by the opponent's bishop, while Black's potential outpost on e4 is firmly controlled at the moment. We could say this gives White an optical edge, but in reality it's hard for him to make anything of this. The knight on d4 looks nice, but doesn't do much.

20.♙e2 ♙fe8 21.h3 ♙d7 22.♙xc8 ♙xc8
23.♙b2 ♙c5 24.a4 a5 25.♙d2 b6
26.♙b1 ♙a3 27.♙h2 h6 28.♙b2 ♙e7
29.♙c2



Both sides have been shuffling around with little change in the position, and Caruana decides that he wants to fight for control of the c-file.

29...♙c5 30.♘f3 ♙xc2 31.♙xc2 ♙c5
32.♙d3 ♙f8 33.♘d4 ♙g8 34.♙g1 ♙f8
35.♙f2 ♙e7 36.♙b2 ♙f8 37.♘c2



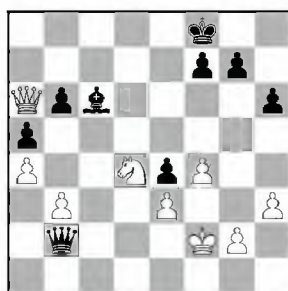
37...♘e4+ This move isn't objectively bad, but it clarifies the structure in a way that makes it easier for White to play. He

now has the imbalance of knight vs. bishop and no longer has to worry about the weak e4 square.

Upon 37...♙d6 I guess Nepo was concerned about some queen infiltration by White, but there's actually nothing to fear. 38.♙d4 ♙e7=

38.♙xe4 dxe4 39.♘d4 ♙c6 40.♙e2
Things can easily get tricky now. As Black, you see ideas of White's queen invading and it's easy to get frightened.

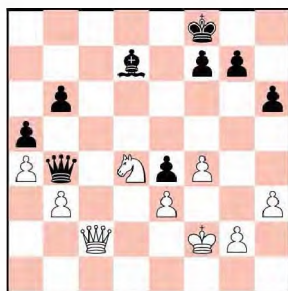
40...♙c3 41.♙a6 ♙d2+ 41...♙b2+! would basically force a draw, since White can't find shelter for his king.



- A) Not 42.♘e2? ♙xb3 43.♙c8+ ♙e8 when Black is clearly better.
B) 42.♙e2 ♙xe2+ 43.♙xe2 ♙d7 is equal.
C) Critical is 42.♙g3 ♙d2! 43.♙xc6 ♙xe3+ 44.♙g4 g6! This is easy to miss from afar. Black's king will have a perfect shelter on g7, and White's king is very exposed. Black should have at least a draw here.

42.♘e2 ♙b4 43.♙c8+ ♙e8 44.♙c2
Now there are concrete problems. White has a simple plan of playing ♘d4 followed by ♙xe4.

44...♙d7 45.♘d4



45...f5? 45...♙e7 runs into 46.♙c7 winning. However, 45...♙g8! is an insane computer defense that gives Black the best drawing chances. He just gives up the pawn, but he gets his king out of Dodge and improves his bishop. 46.♙xe4 ♙e6 47.♙c2 ♙d5 48.♙c8+



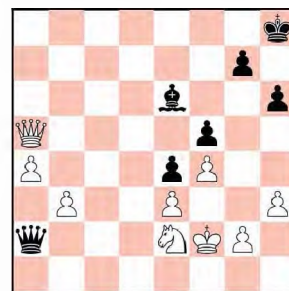
▲ Ian Nepomniachtchi Photo by Lennart Ootes

♙f8 The endgame without queens is fine for Black, because his bishop is so well-placed, targeting b3. (48...♙h7?? 49.♙f5+)

46.♙c7 Now Black's position is riddled with holes. It's well known that a queen and knight coordinate well together, because a knight is the only piece that can move in a way that a queen cannot.

46...♙d2+ 47.♘e2 ♙e6 48.♙xb6 ♙f7 49.♙d4 ♙a2 50.♙a7+ ♙g8 51.♙a8+ ♙h7 52.♙xa5 ♙h8 Some slight challenges remain, since Black's queen is active and White's knight is currently pinned.

53.♙d8+ ♙h7 54.♙a5 ♙h8



55.b4! Allowing ...♙c4 is a brave, but well-calculated decision.

55...♙c4 56.♙d8+ ♙h7 57.♙d1 ♙b3 58.♙d7 ♙e6 59.♙b5 A nice queen maneuver – now ...♙c4 isn't possible at all, because ♙xf5 comes with check.

59...♙h8 59...♙c4 60.♙xf5+ ♙h8 61.♙g4+-.



Fabiano Caruana Photo by Lennart Oates



60. ♖c5 g6



61. ♗e1 Finally the pin is broken and the rest is easy.

61... ♗g8 62. ♖d6 ♗f7 63. ♖d2 ♖xa4 64. ♖d4 ♗c4 65. ♗f2 h5 66. ♗g3 ♖a3 67. b5 ♖d3 68. ♖c1 ♗xb5 69. ♖c7+

69... ♗f8 69... ♗g8 70. ♖d8+ ♗f7 71. ♖d5+ ♗g7 72. ♖e5+ ♗f7 73. ♖e6+ ♗g7 74. ♖e7+ ♗h6 75. ♖e6 ♖xe3+ 76. ♗h2+-

70. ♖c5+ Black resigned, as he loses the bishop, and furthermore ♖xb5 will leave White's e3 pawn defended, ending all counterplay.

As good as Fabi's performance was, it could have been even better, had he not missed a great opportunity to beat Firouzja in round 6.

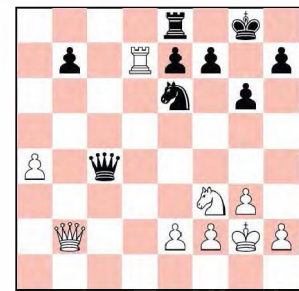
A11

Fabiano Caruana	2764
Alireza Firouzja	2785

Superbet Classic, Bucharest 2023

1. c4 c6 2. ♖f3 d5 3. g3 g6 4. ♖a4 dxc4 5. ♖xc4 ♗g7 6. d4 ♗e6 7. ♖a4 ♗d5 8. ♖bd2 ♖f6 9. ♖c2 ♖a5 10. ♗g2 c5 11. 0-0 cxd4 12. b4 ♖d8 13. ♗b2 0-0 14. ♗xd4 ♖c6 15. ♗c3 ♗c8 16. ♖b2 a5 17. bxa5 ♖xa5 18. ♗ac1 ♖h5 19. ♗xg7 ♖xg7 20. ♗xc8 ♖xc8 21. ♗c1 ♖d8 22. ♖e5 ♗xg2 23. ♗xg2 ♖e6 24. ♖df3

♖d5 25. ♗c3 ♗a8 26. ♗d3 ♖c5 27. ♗d7 ♗e8 28. a4 ♖c4 29. ♖xc4 ♖xc4

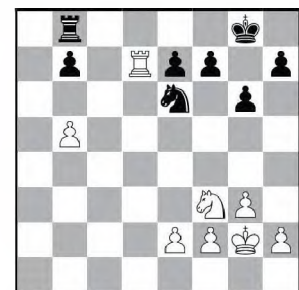


Caruana has been nurturing a slight advantage throughout the whole game, and can now choose between two favorable endgames.

30. ♖b5 This gets the queens off the board and maintains White's dominant rook placement.

30. ♖xb7 ♖xa4 (30... ♖c5 fork doesn't work because of the counter-pin. 31. ♗c7) 31. ♗xe7 ♗xe7 32. ♖xe7 White is a clear pawn up, but all the pawns are on the same side of the board, which helps the defender's drawing chances.

30... ♖xb5 31. axb5 ♖c5 31... ♗b8! Surprisingly enough, it was better to just ditch the pawn immediately and aim to expel White's rook as quickly as possible.



After 32. ♗xe7 ♗f8 33. ♗d7 ♖e8 34. ♗d5 ♗c8, Black is a pawn down, but his rook is now able to enter the game, and White's b-pawn is not that easy to defend in the long run, so Black has great drawing chances.

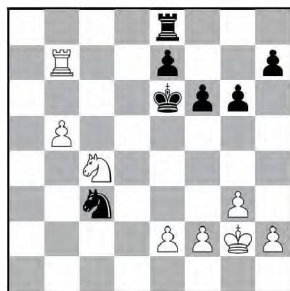
32. ♗c7 b6 Black has temporarily maintained the material balance, but the issue is that White's rook is now completely unassailable. It can remain on the seventh rank as long as it wants.

33. ♖e5 f6 34. ♖c4 ♖a4 With every move, Black drifts further into passivity by insisting on holding on to his pawn.

34... ♖e4! was not an easy decision, and it's definitely a far worse situation for Black than the previous variation I

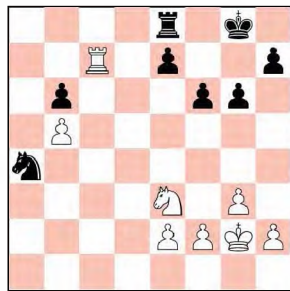


showed, in which he gave up a pawn. Still, it was the best choice. 35.♖b7 (35.♘xb6 ♕d6) 35...♗c3 36.♖xb6 ♕f7 37.♖b7 ♕e6



It's not easy for White to make progress. For example, 38.b6 looks like the most natural move ever, but there's a trap. 38...♗b5! Now White's rook is stuck!

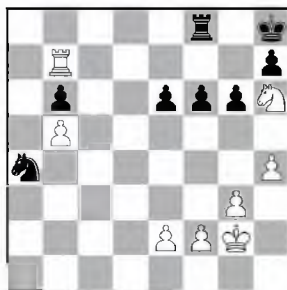
35.♗e3



35...e6? Finally, this should be the decisive mistake. Firouzja wanted to stop the knight from coming to d5, but the cure is worse than the disease. Now the seventh rank is completely open and White's rook dominates.

36.♖b7 ♖c8 37.♗g4 ♖f8 38.♗h6+ ♔h8 39.♗f7+ After 39.h4!+- White's rook and knight are ideally placed and Black is

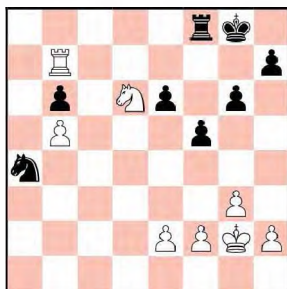
totally paralyzed.



Therefore, a slow expansion would be the best approach. White will play g4-g5, cementing his knight and closing a potential mating net around Black's king.

39...♗g8 40.♗d6?! Again, returning with ♗h6+ and maintaining the bind was the best approach.

40...f5 Black has gained some chances again, since his king has some room to breathe now.



41.♗c4? Presumably, this had been Caruana's plan all along, and it explains why he transferred his knight away from h6. He thought he was simply winning the b6 pawn, and the game with it, but he missed his opponent's defense.

41...♖f7 Oops. Tragically for White, this forces a draw on the spot, as not only does it save the b6 pawn, but it also forces a trade of rooks or a repetition.

42.♖b8+ ♖f8 43.♖b7 ♖f7 44.♖b8+ ♖f8 45.♖b7 **Draw**

A huge missed opportunity.

Norway

Norway Chess, held in Stavanger, is always one of the most exciting tournaments on the annual calendar, as it features some format changes that are unique to the top level. One such change is that the time control is two hours for all moves, with a 10-second increment only after move 40. This means that once you get low on time, you are practically playing a blitz game, as the difference between a 10-second increment and the usual 30-second increment is quite significant. The other change is that in the event of a draw in the classical game, the players play an Armageddon game with the same colors, with the winner earning 1½ points and the loser 1 point. If the game ends decisively in classical, the winner earns 3 points and the loser earns 0. This format increases the motivation to win in classical and thus encourages fighting chess.

This field was even more stacked than in Romania, as it featured the world's highest rated player, Magnus Carlsen, and some fearsome young talents – Dommaraju Gukesh from India, Nodirbek Abdusattorov from Kazakhstan, and the Iranian-French Alireza Firouzja again. But still, the Americans showed their stuff, and the tournament came down to a race between Caruana and Nakamura.

In the first eight classical games, Caruana won four and lost only one. He started off with a bang by beating Carlsen in round 1 – his first victory in classical over the Norwegian in eight years!

C11

Fabiano Caruana	2764
Magnus Carlsen	2853

Norway Chess, Stavanger 2023

1.e4 e6 The French Defense is a rare guest at the elite level, but it's certainly not a bad opening to use from time to time. Magnus has shown a willingness to trot it out occasionally.

▼ Playing hall in Bucharest Photo by Lennart Ootes





▲ Fabiano Caruana vs. Magnus Carlsen

Photo by Lennart Ootes

2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 ♟f6 3...♗b4 leads to the Winawer Variation, in which Black gives up his dark-squared bishop to damage White's pawn structure, and is generally considered risky for Black.

4.e5 ♟fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♟f3 ♟c6 7.♗e3 This can be considered the main line of the French, and tens of thousands of games have been played from here. Black has numerous approaches.



7...a6 This is a very logical and flexible approach, aiming to expand with ...b7-b5 before making further commitments.

7...cxd4 8.♟xd4 ♖b6 is a very direct variation, in which Black takes a "poisoned" b2 pawn while delaying his development. **7...♗e7** used to be more popular, just aiming to castle kingside immediately, but it's not as common nowadays.

8.♟e2 Moving the knight out of the way of the incoming ...b5-b4, and preparing to solidify White's pawn chain with c2-c3.

8...♖b6 Attacking the b2 pawn and attempting to disrupt White's coordination.

8...b5 loses its bite with the knight no longer on c3. And after **9.c3** White has every reason to be happy here, since his pawn chain is quite compact and it will be hard for Black to break it down, leaving White with a nice long-term space advantage.

9.♖c1 ♗e7 10.c3 0-0 11.g3 White plans to develop his bishop to g2 or h3 and castle, and if he does so unhindered, he will have a clear advantage based on his extra space. However, he is still two full moves from doing that, so Black can and should try to fight against the pawn mass while he has the chance.

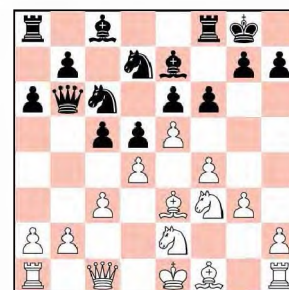
11...f6 11...a5 was played by Nepo, among others, and serves multiple purposes. One such purpose is that it gains space on the queenside, preventing b2-b4 by White in many instances. **12.♗g2 cxd4**



A) 13.cxd4 ♖a6 is another purpose of the ...a7-a5 idea – Black now has this move available, targeting the e2 knight and making it hard for White to castle.

B) Upon 13.♟exd4 ♟c5 14.0-0 you'll notice that the a5 pawn does a very nice

job of preventing White from playing b4, which would dislodge the c5 knight.

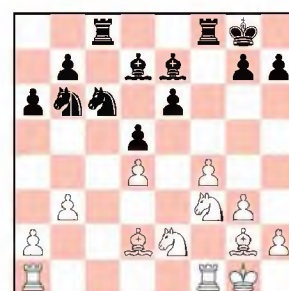


12.♗g2 12.♗h3 was White's other option, attacking the e6 pawn. The position may look closed for now, but it can easily explode at any moment, as shown in this correspondence game. **12...cxd4 13.♟exd4 ♟cxe5!?** A speculative piece sacrifice. **14.fxe5 fxe5 15.♟b3 d4 16.♗g5 ♖xf3 17.♗xe7 ♖f7 18.♗a3 ♖c6 19.♖f1 ♖e4+ 20.♟d1 ♟f6** D.Stewart - P.Berthelot 2091, ICCF email 2020. White was able to keep his king safe and eventually won.

12...cxd4 13.cxd4 It's tempting to attack the e6 pawn with **13.♟exd4?**, but White should be careful about letting the center explode with his king still in it. **13...fxe5 14.♟xe6 ♟c5! 15.♟xf8 ♟d3+ 16.♟f1 d4** Black is breaking open the position, and the sacrificed rook on f8 is of little consequence.

13...♖a5+ 14.♟c3 ♟b6 15.exf6 ♗xf6 16.b3 ♗d7 17.0-0 White has managed to castle safely and retains a small edge. It's not a huge edge, since the hole on e5 is well-protected and the backward pawn on e6 is not a big deal at the moment, but it's still a long-term plus. Black's knight on b6 also seems a bit silly, since the b3 pawn controls its entry square on c4.

17...♖ac8 18.♖d2 ♗e7 19.♟e2 ♖xd2 20.♗xd2



20...♖c7 20...♗a3 strikes me as the move worthy of consideration. Such bishops can often be really annoying, preventing occupation of the c-file. **21.♗c1 ♗d6**

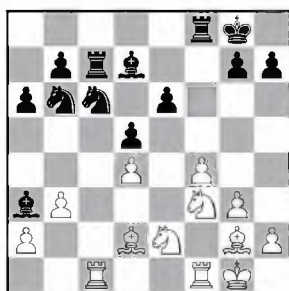


Obviously Black does not want to trade off his good bishop. 22.♖b2? is an attempt to get the rook to c1 after all, but now the bishop is just staring at its own pawn on d4. After 22...♖b4!, Black has ideas in ...♙c2 and ...♗d3, and he is doing well.

21.♙ac1 Creating a sneaky threat of ♖a5.

21...♙fc8 This is the most natural way to deal with the threat, but it's slightly inaccurate.

21...♖a3



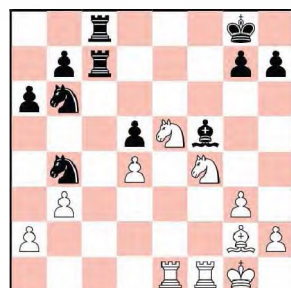
A) 22.♙c2 ♙fc8 23.f5? no longer works, since White's rook is loose on c2. Hence 23...♗xd4!

B) 22.♖a5 ♙xc1 23.♙xc1 ♗xa5 24.♙xc7 ♙c8 25.♙xc8+ ♙xc8 doesn't look fun for Black with his weak e6 pawn and bad bishop, but with rooks off the board he should probably be able to grovel and hold the draw in the long run.

22.f5 White's dark-squared bishop can actually come in from a different direction. The threat is ♙f4. Now things get really dangerous for Black.

22...♖a3! After 22...♗b4 23.♙xc7 ♙xc7 Black has control of the c-file and things may look fine, but White's pieces now come flooding in. 24.fxe6 ♙xe6 25.♗f4 White will start to gang up on the d5 pawn. 25...♙f5 (25...♙f7 26.♗e5) 26.♗h4.

23.♙ce1 ♖b4 24.♖xb4 ♗xb4 25.fxe6 ♙xe6 26.♗f4 ♙f5 27.♗e5



CARLSEN'S STRUGGLE

Finally, a result which surprised everyone was that of Magnus Carlsen. After losing to Caruana in the first round of the Norway Chess, he drew the rest of his classical games. To be fair, he did go 7/8 in the Armageddons, but still, this was an uncharacteristically poor performance. To put it in perspective,

it was the first time he had gone without a victory in a classical tournament in 16 years, when he would have been a teenager. It was also only his third minus score in a classical tournament in the last 13 years. Interestingly, those other minus scores both took place at Norway Chess – in 2015 and 2017. For some reason he seems to struggle on his home turf.

I get the impression that Magnus' motivation in classical chess is waning. With 2900 so far away and the World Championship title having been surrendered, I'm not sure he's willing to put in the intense opening preparation that is needed at that level. He's already



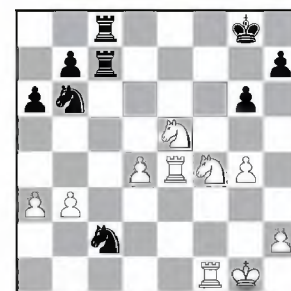
spoken numerous times of the frustration of preparing for classical chess, where the engines reign supreme and it's so hard to get an advantage from the opening. There's not much more left for him to accomplish that he hasn't already done, so I think he just wants to enjoy the game. If he finds the motivation for classical chess again and puts in the effort, I think he is still the best player in the world by far, despite this recent poor showing. In contrast to classical, he still seems to have a love for speed chess, in which he is still completely dominant.

In fact, about a month after this tournament, he dominated the Croatia Rapid and Blitz event, including scoring an unprecedented 9/9 on one of the days in blitz against the best players in the world. So overall, I would say that there's no reason to overreact to him having one bad tournament, especially since he has a history of performing badly at this particular event. I'm sure he'll rebound, like he always does.

Black's control of the c-file looks nice, but it doesn't really bring him much, as the game has shifted toward the center. The d5 pawn is what's important, and all of White's pieces are perfectly coordinated. For starters, ♗xd5 is a threat, uncovering an attack on the f5 bishop.

27...g6 28.g4 If 28.a3 then 28...♗c2. Then White's rook is attacked so he doesn't have time to take the d5 pawn, and Black barely hangs on.

28...♖e4 29.♖xe4 dxe4 30.a3 ♗d4d5 30...♗c2! looks like a jab at nothing, but it would have given Black great chances to save the game. 31.♙xe4

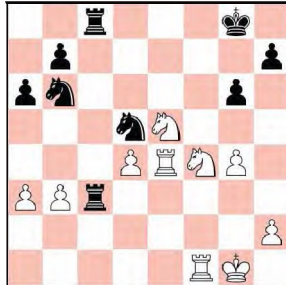


31...♙e7! Here's the whole point – as it is actually not easy to prevent ...♗xd4. Then could follow 32.♙c1 ♗xa3 (Not 32...♗xd4?? 33.♙xc8+ ♗xc8 34.♙xd4 ♙xe5 35.♙d8+-) 33.♙xc8+ ♗xc8 34.♗d5 ♙e6=.



31. Exe4 Ec3 ? I assume Magnus missed the next move, after which everything collapses.

31... dxf4 32. Exxf4 d5 33. E4f3 Ec3 is still far from easy for White. He's a pawn up, but Black is so active, and his passed pawn is firmly blocked.



32. d7 ! A really, really nice move, totally breaking Black's coordination. This is the type of move which is easy to overlook, as you often don't consider moves which place pieces on squares that are defended.

32... Exb3 ? A further mistake, ending the game instantly.

32... dxf4 33. d6+ cg7 34. Exxf4 Now Black's blockade has been broken and White has activity with his rooks, so it's a completely different story than before. If 34... Exb3 ? then 35. Ee4 and the rook will invade on e7.

Trading rooks by 32... Ec1 may have been the best chance, but it still looks hopeless. After 33. dxb6 dxb6 34. Exc1 Exc1+ 35. cf2 White is a clean pawn up and should win.

33. dxd5 dxd5 34. Ee5 The knight can't stay on d5, meaning the f6 square will be available to White's knight and the e7 square will be available for his rook. In other words, the floodgates will open and Black's king will be hunted down.

34... dc3 34... Eb5 35. Exd5 Exd5 36. d6++ . Or 34... de3 35. d6+ cf7 (35... ch8 36. Ee7) 36. Exe3 Exe3 37. d5++ .

35. d6+ Black just **resigned** rather than drag out the agony. White has multiple good paths now.

35. d6+ cf7 36. d5+ cg7 37. Ee7+ cg8 (37... ch6 38. d6+-) 38. d6+ cf8 39. Efe1+- This seems like the most human line to me. d7+ is coming and White remains completely dominant.



▲ Hikaru Nakamura

Photo by Lennart Ootes



▲ Dommaraju Gukesh

Photo by Lennart Ootes

18. Eac1 Eb8 19. ab1 d5 20. de5 Eb7 21. d3 Ea8 22. df4 f5 23. df3 d8 24. Ee1 db3 25. Ec2 db6 26. Ee5 Eac8 27. Exc8 Exc8 28. Ee2 Ea8 29. Ee3 cc6 30. de5 Ed7 31. dg5 da5 32. h4 dc6 33. cc1 dxe5 34. Exe5 h6 35. dh3 Ec8 36. Ee1 a5 37. db5 Ec7 38. Ee3 Ed6 39. d3 a2 40. df4 xd4 41. Ed2 e5 42. dg6 df6 43. Ee2 Ed4 44. d1 db3 45. Ed2 Ed8 46. h5 g4 47. Ee3



Nakamura has played an exemplary game so far, but both players are very low on the clock, and the unique time control means they'll have to practically play blitz for the rest of the game, which means anything is still possible.

47... $\text{d4}??$ This was pretty much the only way to blunder, walking straight into a pin after White moves his bishop, revealing the d2 rook.

48. $\text{Ee2}??$ The most natural move, and the right idea, but it actually misses the boat! The reason is very subtle.

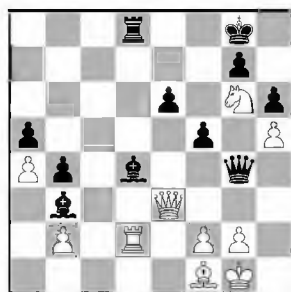
48. $\text{cf1}!!$ is very difficult to play, since 48. Ee2 attacks the queen, while this move does not.

D40

Dommaraju Gukesh	2732
Hikaru Nakamura	2775

Norway Chess, Stavanger 2023

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. dc3 c5 4. e3 df6 5. df3 dc6 6. a3 dxc4 7. Exc4 a6 8. 0-0 b5 9. d3 db7 10. Ee1 Ec7 11. Ee2 Ed8 12. Ed1 cxd4 13. exd4 Ee7 14. a4 b4 15. de4 dxe4 16. Exe4 0-0 17. Ee3 da5



The point is that Black is simply frozen in this pin and has no good way to rectify it. He also has to deal with the threat of Bxb3 . Here are some example variations:

A) 48... Bxe3 49. Bxd8+ Qf7 50. Bf8 mate.

B) 48... Qa2 49. b3+ .

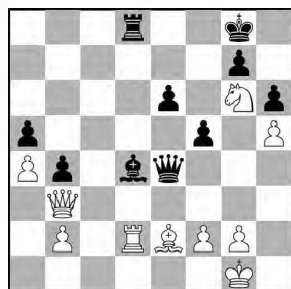
C) 48... Bxh5 49. Qf4!+ .

D) 48... Qxa4 49. Bxe6+ Qh7 50. Qe7+ .

White doesn't have an instant knockout, but Black's king is very unsafe, and Qd3 is coming. He also still has to deal with the d-file pin and lacks coordination, meaning he should lose in the long run.

48... Qe4! This is the move that saves Black, and in fact wins the game.

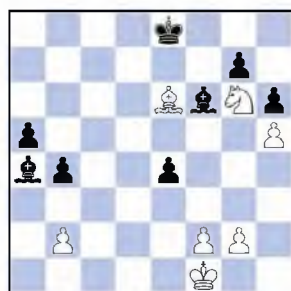
49. Bxe4 If 49. Bxb3



49... Qxf2+ Now we see the difference – if the bishop was on f1 instead of e2, this tactic would never work. 50. Qxf2 Bxd2+ .

49... fxe4 50. Qf1 Or 50. Qe7+ Qf7 51. Qc6 Qxf2+ winning.

50... Qf6 51. Bxd8+ Qxd8 52. Qe5 Qxa4 53. Qc4 Qf8 54. Qxe6 Qf6 55. Qg6+ Qe8



Nakamura is now a pawn up with the bishop pair and a dominating position, and he went on to win easily.

56. b3 Qb5+ 57. Qe1 Qc3+ 58. Qd1 Qd4 59. Qd5 Qxf2 60. Qxe4 Qd4 61. Qd5 Qd7 62. Qh4 Qd6 63. Qg8 Qd7 64. Qf7 Qf6 65. Qf3 Qc6 66. Qg6 Qd5 67. Qc2 Qc3 68. Qf5 Qe7 69. Qg6 Qf6 70. Qd3 Qf7 71. g4 Qe6

White resigned

Naka's game against Tari was a great example of how a strong player can outplay their opponent seemingly out of nothing.

C27

Hikaru Nakamura	2775
Aryan Tari	2642

Norway Chess, Stavanger 2023

1. e4 e5 2. Qc4 Nakamura is known to employ The Bishop's Opening a lot in online games, and here he decides to trot it out in classical too. It avoids a lot of solid, theoretical openings, such as the Petroff and the Berlin.

2... Qf6 3. d3 Qc5 4. Qc3 4... Qf3 would have transposed back into the Italian, while this move takes the game into independent territory.

4... c6 5. Qb3 d6 6. h3 0-0 7. Qf3 a5 8.0-0 Qbd7



In contrast to normal Italian positions, in which White has a pawn on c3 and can try to push for d4 at some point, his plans are different here. He can try to relocate the knight to g3 via e2 at some point. There are also ideas of Qh4-f5 . Finally, Qh1 followed by Qh2 , trying to push f4, is always something to look out for.

9. a3 b5 10. Qa2 a4 11. Qh4 Qa7 I like this move a lot, preparing ... Qc5 , freeing up the c8 bishop to take the white knight if it lands on f5, as well as preparing to redirect the black knight to e6.



Aryan Tari

Photo by Lennart Ootes

12. Bf3 Qc5 13. Qf5 Qxf5 14. Bxf5 Qe8



All things considered, Black should be satisfied with the outcome of the opening. He's gained some nice queenside space and has no weaknesses. The only fear is that White's bishop on a2 could become an unopposed monster if the position opens up in the future, especially if White pushes f2-f4 under favorable conditions.

15. Qd2 Qe6 16. Qe2 d5! Very nice, gaining space and blunting the a2 bishop.

17. exd5 Qxd5 17... cxd5! was somewhat stronger. It's always difficult to judge such recaptures, since it's hard to say whether the center pawns will prove to be strong or vulnerable. In this particular position, White can't really target them largely due to his clumsy knight on e2. Right now it's only getting in the way, and it only serves the purpose of preventing Black from playing ... Qd4 . In the meantime Black will consolidate his position with ... Bc8 and ... Qb8 and maintain a slight edge.

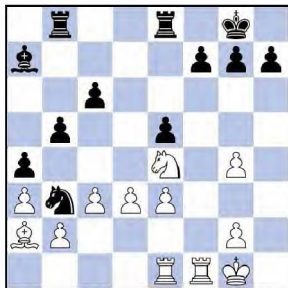


18.♖ae1 ♔d6 19.♗g4 ♜ad8 20.♜g3 ♜d4 21.♜g5 ♜b8 21...f6 looks a bit scary, opening the diagonal, but it works concretely. 22.♜e4 ♜d7 23.♜xf6 ♜xg4 24.hxg4 gxf6 25.♜xf6+ ♜f7 26.♜xe8 ♜xe8 27.c3 ♜b3 28.♜xb3 axb3 29.g3. These types of unbalanced endgames are tough to judge. Here White has two pawns and a rook for two minor pieces. Black's pawns are somewhat weak but they're not easy to pick off, and White will struggle to create a passed pawn, so it's approximately equal.



22.♜e3! Now White is getting somewhere. The pin is really annoying, and if ...♜xe3 ever happens Black will have to worry about the f7 pawn.

22...♗g6 23.c3 ♜xe3 24.fxe3 ♜b3 25.♜e4 ♜xg4 26.hxg4

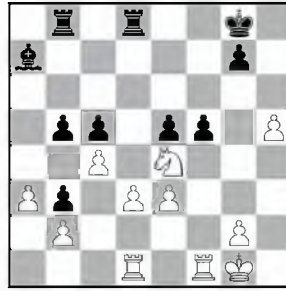


26...c5?? As surprising as it may seem, this move basically loses the game straight away by allowing White to favorably clarify the pawn structure.

26...♜bd8! 27.d4 In contrast to the game continuation, White can no longer fix the pawn structure, and Black's bishop is not blocked. The position is still equal.

27.♜xb3 axb3 28.c4 Now Black's bishop is stuck behind its own pawns, while White's knight on e4 is unassailable. Such positions, in addition to being objectively good for White, are also easy to play for the first player, as there is little to no counterplay to be concerned about.

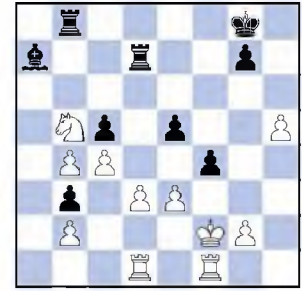
28...♜ed8 29.♜d1 ♜d7 Maybe 29...h5 was the last try, attempting to undermine the e4 knight's position. 30.gxh5 f5



This is the trick – if ♜xf5, then bxc4 is possible. 31.♜c3 b4 32.♜d5 bxa3 33.bxa3 It still looks hopeless though.

30.♜f2 h5 Tari does it now, but he's just down a tempo, and White's king comes to e2 quickly, defending the only target – the d3 pawn.

31.gxh5 f5 32.♜c3 b4 33.♜b5 f4 34.axb4



34...♜b6 Black has to keep the bishop alive, but he's down material and White's pawns will start to roll in the center. The rest is pretty straightforward.

35.exf4 cxb4+ 36.♜f3 exf4 37.d4 ♜bd8 38.♜d3 ♜c8 39.♜c1 ♜d5 40.c5 ♜g5 41.♜d6 ♜c6 42.cxb6 Black resigned, as 42...♜xc1 falls for 43.b7+.



▲ Hikaru Nakamura vs. Fabiano Caruana

Photo by Lennart Ootes

The script for the last round was perfectly set. Nakamura was trailing Caruana, and as luck would have it, they were playing each other. Only a win in the classical game would enable Hikaru to snatch first place for himself.

C58

Hikaru Nakamura	2775
Fabiano Caruana	2764

Norway Chess, Stavanger 2023

1.e4 e5 2.♜f3 ♜c6 3.♜c4 ♜f6 4.♜g5 In a must-win situation, Nakamura decides to go for the sharpest possible line. There are pros and cons to this decision. On the one hand, the positions that arise are very concrete, and one mistake by either player can have huge consequences. On the other hand, the forcing nature of the play can

potentially favor Caruana, as his moves may be forced and obvious, especially since the opening has been so well-explored.

4...d5 There are other speculative options like the Traxler with 4...♜c5, but modern engines have shown us that this is pretty much the only sound reply for Black.

5.exd5 ♜a5 6.♜b5+ c6 7.dxc6 bxc6





8.♟d3 This is the mainline for White nowadays, preparing to meet ...h7-h6 with ♟e4.

8.♟e2 used to be the most popular move, and it's not bad by any means, but Black has a number of good ways to develop freely, so it's not to everyone's taste to play this position for White. 8...h6 9.♟h3 Interestingly enough, this strange knight placement was pioneered by Steinitz, and later taken up by Fischer, so it can't be that bad!

8...♟d5 9.♟f3 ♟d6 10.0-0 ♟f4 Black rushes to take the bishop and ruin White's pawn structure before he has the chance to secure it with ♟e1 followed by ♟f1.

11.♟c3 ♟xd3 12.cxd3 0-0 All this has been played many times before. White's d-pawns look terrible on the surface, but they control some central squares, and an extra pawn is an extra pawn, after all. He may be able to liquidate the weakness by playing d4 at some point. Black does have the bishop pair, but his knight on a5 is out of the game for now. He would like to play ...c5 and ...♟c6 to reactivate it, but that would potentially leave his c5 pawn as a weakness.

13.b3 ♟e8 14.♟e1 c5 15.♟a3 ♟c6 16.♟e4 ♟f8 The c5 pawn is immune for various tactical reasons.



17.♟c1 17...♟xc5 f5! 18.♟xf8 fxe4 Or 17.♟xc5 ♟g4! and Black has various ideas of ...♟a5 and ...♟d4 coming up. For example, the natural 18.h3 fails completely here, due to 18...♟xf3 19.♟xf3 ♟d4 20.♟d1 ♟b5! 21.♟b4 a5 22.♟b7 ♟c7 23.♟xf8 ♟xf8+.

17...f5?? The first new move of the game, and unfortunately, a completely losing preparation.

17...♟b4 is the correct way to save the c5 pawn. 18.♟xb4 cxb4 White has tried both ♟c5 and ♟g3 here, and the theme remains the same in each – White has

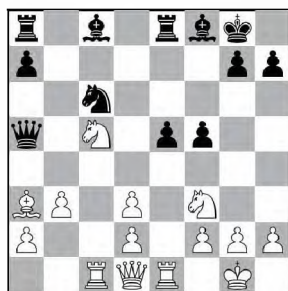


▲ Left to right: Wesley So, Nodirbek Abdusattorov, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Aryan Tari, Fabiano Caruana, Anish Giri, Hikaru Nakamura, Magnus Carlsen, Alireza Firouzja and Dommaraju Gukesh. Photo by Lennart Ootes

a material plus, but Black has enough compensation in the form of his bishop pair in an open position.

18.♟xc5! Correctly calling the bluff. The only move you have to be concerned with as White is 18...♟a5, which appears to win material and was surely Caruana's intention.

18...♟d5 However, on closer inspection, White has a brilliant reply to 18...♟a5.

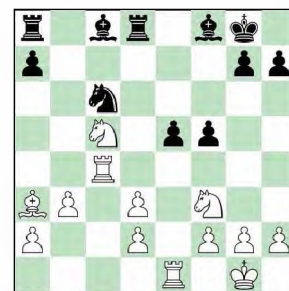


19.♟g5! Very unexpected, since White apparently ignores the action on the queenside and launches an unprovoked attack on the other side of the board, as ♟h5 is basically impossible to stop. Here are some variations to demonstrate this. 19...♟xa3 (19...h6 20.♟h5+; 19...g6

20.♟f3!+-) 20.♟h5 h6 21.♟xe8 hxg5 22.♟xc6+-.

19.♟c2 Now, Black is two pawns down, and White's c5 knight is excellent, completely dominating the position and preventing Black from developing any counterplay.

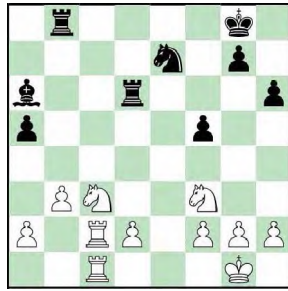
19...♟d8 20.♟c4 ♟xc4 21.♟xc4



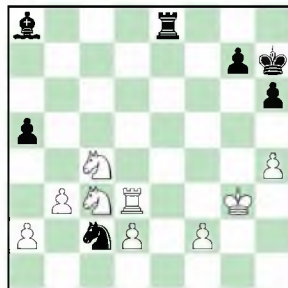
The queens come off the board and White retains a winning advantage. To be honest, not much of note happened for the rest of the game. The only way that Black could turn things around is if Nakamura commits a grave error, and he didn't, as he steadily maintained his advantage until the end.

21...♟d5 22.♟ec1 ♟d6 23.♟b2 ♟e7 24.♟4c2 ♟b8 25.d4 exd4 26.♟xd4 a5

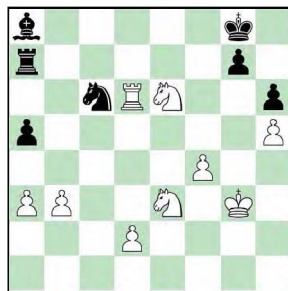
27.♟f3 h6 28.♟a4 ♙a6 29.♟c3 ♖c5
30.♙a3 ♖c6 31.♙xd6 ♖xd6



32.♟a4 ♟d5 33.♖c6 ♖xc6 34.♖xc6
♟b4 35.♖d6 ♙b7 36.♟c3 ♖e8 37.h4
f4 38.♖d4 ♖f8 39.♟e5 ♖e8 40.♟c4
f3 41.gxf3 ♙xf3 42.♟h2 ♟c2 43.♖d3
♙a8 44.♟g3 ♟h7



45.♟e3 ♟b4 46.♖d6 ♟c6 47.♟cd5
♖f8 48.♟c7 ♙b7 49.♟e6 ♖f7 50.f4
♙a8 51.h5 ♖a7 52.a3 ♟g8



53.f5 ♖e7 54.♟f4 ♖a7 55.d4

Black resigned

Even though this loss must have hurt for Caruana, he can still look back at the tournament as a positive result, since he won the most classical games of any participant and showed a generally high level.

As for Nakamura, it must have been a great feeling to win the tournament without a loss in classical. He's performed well in every classical tournament he's played since returning from his semi-hiatus as a streamer in February of 2022, increasing his rating from 2736 to 2787 since then, which is a remarkable achievement at that level. ■



▲ Raphael Clemente, Sherryl Muriente (West Palm Beach Downtown Development Authority) and Pete Tamburro

ACM Visits West Palm Beach

By **Pete Tamburro**, Senior Editor

Photos by Gail V. Haines

Sometimes you just have to meet people. When we had our feature story on two unlikely guys, Josh and Franklin, creating a chess park, it not only became obvious that they should get recognition for what they have accomplished, but that an in-person presentation would be good PR for them rather than just mailing it to them.

Their PR guy, Tony Thiessen, rose to the occasion. I drove 1350 miles to do my part and showed up at the appointed time. Franklin and Josh greeted me warmly. I played a little chess. Then the TV camera crews showed up. The Florida magazine photographer showed up. It was a happening!

I got interviewed by two TV stations, which gave it decent airtime. The story carried to a regional radio station. The magazine did a piece on it. Quite literally, millions of people got to see, hear or read about it. My 15 minutes of fame!

But it was also their 15 minutes — Josh and Franklin, West Palm Beach and the Downtown Development Authority. I got to meet the government people who ran with the ball from their end — and it was at least a half-dozen of them. It just goes to show the combination of a town, individually motivated chess players, and their PR mover and shaker together put forth a perfect team effort.

The tips in issue 33 on how to do it plus the orchestrated event all demonstrated how chess can be promoted. The Fern Street Chess Park is a welcoming place, so if you're in the neighborhood... ■



▲ Pete Tamburro, Josh Koehler and Franklin Rivers

ANNA ZATONSKIH TRIUMPHS IN 3RD CAIRNS CUP DESPITE HAVING THE LOWEST RATING!

Anna's Comeback

■ By IM/WGM Anna Zatonskih

Delve into the champion's perspective as Anna Zatonskih shares her first-hand experience for ACM readers.

Anna Zatonskih has been among top U.S. female players for nearly two decades. She holds the titles of International Master and Woman's Grandmaster. Anna is a four-time U.S. Women's Champion, Olympic silver medallist in 2004, and bronze medallist in 2008 with an individual gold medal on board one! She also won an individual silver medal on board one at the 2017 Women's World Team Championship. Anna is married to GM Daniel Fridman and they have a daughter and a son.

▲ Anna Zatonskih

Photo St. Louis Chess Club

As I am getting older, I am more and more rooting for the older generation. Among my role models in chess are: Pia Cramling, who is now 60-years-old, and continues to play at the highest level, then Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant, who became a grandmaster at the age of 41, and Monika Socko from Poland, who has three children and successfully combines a chess career with family affairs. She became European champion at 44!

These examples have always given me hope that not everything is lost for me and that I have not yet spoken my last word in chess.

One of the prerequisites for this is to have good playing conditions and circumstances. This is even more important when you get older. Tournaments in St. Louis are perfect for this as they are well-organized with excellent playing and living conditions. It is always a great pleasure to return to St. Louis. Before the tournament I mentioned that this is the best chess city on the planet and I am ready to repeat my words.

If you love chess and everything connected with it, then St. Louis is the place to visit. There is a special chess climate here. An amazing club, the World Chess Hall of Fame, a chess museum, universities with chess programs, chess cafe and more. Perhaps here is the highest density of GMs in the world.

This was the third edition of the Cairns Cup and the first since the end of the pandemic. It's great that the organizers managed, as in previous years, to have a strong and interesting tournament, featuring

3rd CAIRNS CUP, Saint Louis, MO, Jun 1-13, 2023

Rk	Name	Ti	FED	Rtg	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Pts
1	Anna ZATONSKIH	IM	USA	2327		1	½	1	½	½	½	1	1	6
2	Alexandra KOSTENIUK	GM	SUI	2523	0		1	1	0	1	1	½	½	5
3	Irina KRUSH	GM	USA	2436	½	0		0	1	1	½	½	1	4½
3	Bella KHOTENASHVILI	GM	GEO	2470	0	0	1		1	½	1	0	1	4½
5	Nana DZAGNIDZE	GM	GEO	2510	½	1	0	0		½	0	1	1	4
6	Harika DRONAVALLI	GM	IND	2510	½	0	0	½	½		1	½	½	3½
6	Elisabeth PAEHTZ	GM	GER	2477	½	0	½	0	1	0		1	½	3½
8	Gunay MAMMADZADA	IM	AZE	2456	0	½	½	1	0	½	0		½	3
9	Zhansaya ABDUMALIK	GM	KAZ	2497	0	½	0	0	0	½	½	½		2

*** GM Humpy KONERU from India had to withdraw after round 4 due to health issues. Since she played less than 50% of the games, her results were deleted in accordance to the FIDE rules.

eight GMs and two IMs. In addition to two former world champions (Koneru and Kosteniuk) the leading chess players of their respective countries were present: Germany, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, India and USA.

Before the start of the tournament, I singled out the two favorites: the winner of the previous tournament, Humpy Koneru, who, unfortunately, this time had to withdraw after round 4 due to illness, and former world champion Alexandra Kosteniuk, now representing Switzerland. But in general, any of the participants could claim victory, which I eventually managed to prove.

As the lowest-rated player I got off to a successful start, making a draw in a difficult clash with Nana Dzagnidze, who has always been a tough opponent for me. After that I managed to beat Bella Khotenashvili with the black pieces. In both of these games, I was accompanied by a bit of luck, without which, as you all know, such tournaments cannot be won.

These two games set an unexpected rhythm for me: a draw with White, a victory with Black. A white draw against Paehtz was followed by a black win over Kosteniuk – in one of my best games in recent years.

C02

Alexandra Kosteniuk	2535
Anna Zatonskih	2327

Cairns Cup, St. Louis 2023

I have played Alexandra Kosteniuk many times and somehow I have an excellent score against her. It was 4-1 in my favor before this game and 5-1 after!!! In online, blitz and rapid events I am not so impressive – she has a very good score against me in non-classical games.



▲ Anna Zatonskih

Photo St. Louis Chess Club

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 c5 4.c3 ♘c6 5.♗f3 ♙b6 6.♘a3 Alexandra has never played this line and this move came as a surprise to me. I knew it existed but I was not aware of recent theoretical developments after the text.

6...cxd4 7.cxd4 ♘d7 8.♗e2 Here a big strategical decision presented itself to me. 8.♗c2 can be met by either 8...♙c8 or 8...♗b4. 8...♗b4+ 8...♗xa3 9.bxa3 ♗ge7 10.0-0 ♗f5 11.♗e3 is slightly better for White. 9.♗f1



The computer tells me 9...♗xa3 yields Black the advantage, but to me this

wasn't so obvious, since I have to give up my dark-squared bishop and defend for the next moves. I knew that initiative is a strong side of Kosteniuk, so I was concerned if I should go for it.

9...♗xa3 10.bxa3 ♗a5 And, like every book about the French Defense says, I am trying to exchange my light-squared bishop. In 99% of positions arising from the French it is good strategy for Black.

11.♙d3 11.a4 was an interesting option for White but 11...♗c4 is a very important element in that I have the possibility to castle queenside in the future.

11...♗a4 11...a6 was an alternative, when after, for example, 12.♙b1 ♗b5 13.a4 ♗xd3 14.♙xb6 ♗c8! 15.♗a3 ♗xe2+ 16.♗xe2 ♗c4 17.♙b3 ♗xa3 18.♙xa3 ♗d7 is equal.

12.♗d2 Or 12.♙b1 ♙c7 13.♗d2 ♗c8 14.h4 ♗e7 with a lot of play ahead.

12...♗c4 12...♗c8 13.♙b1 ♙c7 leads to the same position as in the previous line.

13.♙b1 ♙c6 Suddenly there are tactics in the air! 14...♗c2 is a threat! If 15.♙xc2 ♗e3+ wins a queen.



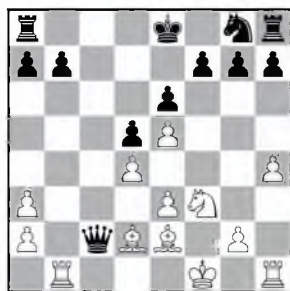
14.♙c3?! The first critical decision in the game. Two other moves would have been more convenient for Alexandra.

14.♗g1 is the most logical and most human move to play. Then, after 14...♗e7 15.h4 the position is complicated and about equal.

14.h4!? is a very interesting option, based on a queen sacrifice after 14...♗c2



(I was seriously considering 14...♖e7 just to complete my development.) 15.♖xc2 ♖e3+ 16.fxe3 ♖xc2 This was a possible try! All my pieces are on the back rank and only the queen is out!



During the game I had a lot of fear about whether or not I should win such a queen.

A) 17.♖xb7 Now the computer says there is only one move to keep the advantage for Black. 17...a6! An unpleasant move to play since I still don't develop my pieces, but it stops the annoying check on b5. 18.♖f2 ♖c8 19.♖b3 ♖e7 20.♖c1 ♖d8 21.♖b4 0-0 22.♖d6 ♖a7. B) 17.♖b5+! ♖f8 18.♖e2 a5 19.♖hc1 ♖g6 20.g4 ♖ would have been a complete mess.

14...♖e7 15.♖b4?! Again, 15.♖g1 would have been better.

15...♖c8 16.♖g5 The b7 pawn is taboo. It may be surprising, but Black is winning after both 16.♖xc4? dxc4 17.♖xb7 c3 and 16.♖xb7? ♖xd2+ 17.♖xd2 ♖xb7 18.♖xb7 ♖c1+.

16...♖c7



17.♖d1? After this mistake White is lost. 17.♖g1 was necessary. Then, after 17...h6 18.♖xc4, Black is better, but nowhere close to winning.

17...♖xd1 18.♖xd1 ♖a6! All Black's pieces are better positioned, and White's doubled a-pawns are already targeted for capture.

19.♖g1 ♖c6 20.♖b3 ♖xa3 I heard somewhere that free pawns should be grabbed (smile).

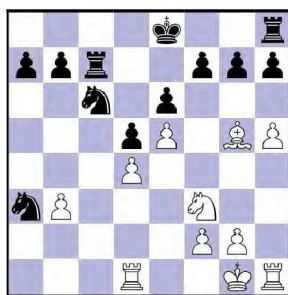
21.h4 ♖xb3 22.axb3 ♖a3 White is a pawn down without any compensation.

23.h5



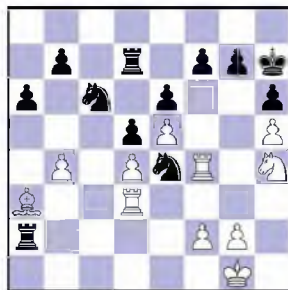
▲ Jeanne Cairns Sinquefield, Anna Zatonskih, and Rex Sinquefield

Photo St. Louis Chess Club

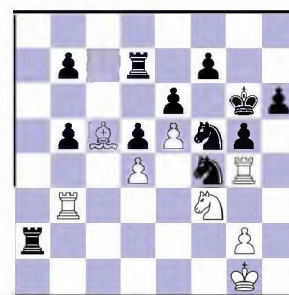


23...h6! The last finesse! The remaining part doesn't need any specific commentary, since there was more than one way to win. I managed to convert my advantage without any flaws, and eventually won this game.

23...♖b5 would allow 24.h6, after which there might be some counterplay for White. 24.♖d2 ♖b5 25.♖h4 0-0 26.♖g4 ♖h7 27.♖e1 ♖fc8 28.♖d3 ♖e7 29.♖d2 ♖c2 30.♖b4 ♖c6 31.♖d2 ♖e7 32.♖b4 ♖c7 33.♖h4 ♖c3 34.♖d6 ♖d7 35.♖b4 ♖c7 36.♖d6 ♖d7 37.♖b4 ♖e4 38.♖f4 ♖c6 39.♖a3 ♖a2 40.b4 a6



41.f3?! ♖g3 42.♖g4 ♖xh5 43.b5 axb5 44.♖c5 g5 45.f4 ♖xf4 46.♖e3 ♖e7 47.♖f3 ♖f5 48.♖b3 ♖g6



49.♖h2?! ♖h5 50.♖xf4 gxf4 51.♖e1 ♖e3 52.♖h3 ♖g5 53.g3 ♖f5 54.♖f3+ ♖g6 55.gxf4 ♖f2 56.♖b6 ♖e7 57.♖a5 ♖e8 58.♖e1 ♖e2 59.♖xb5 ♖a8 60.♖a5 b6 61.♖b4 ♖e3 White resigned

What followed was a draw with White against Dronavalli and then again a win with the black pieces. This time I managed to take advantage of Mamadzada's opening mistake. Finally, in the eighth round, I won my only game with the white pieces against the strong young GM Zhansaya Abdumalik, who did not play very well in this tournament. Surprisingly, all results of the other participants were in my favor, so I could even claim first place with one round to go!

E32

Anna Zatonskih 2327

Zhansaya Abdumalik 2497

Cairns Cup, St Louis 2023

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 ♖b4 4.♖c2 0-0 5.a3 ♖xc3+ 6.♖xc3 b6 7.♖g5 c5



■ By Dusan Kronic

■ **Was meeting and marrying your husband Daniel one of the turning points in your chess career?**

It had a definitely positive influence on both of us. When we met, I had a rating of 2425 and I achieved my peak rating of 2537 in 2011. My husband Daniel Fridman had a rating of 2563 when we started dating, and peaked at 2670 some years later.

■ **Which period of your career do you find to have been most successful for you?**

It was probably 2010–2012.

■ **Over the years, you have certainly established numerous friendships thanks to chess? Who are your best (chess) friends?**

I don't want to mention my friends because I am afraid to miss someone or the list will be too long. Just before the 2023 Cairns Cup I spent time with my good friends in New York, Olga and Gennady Sagalchik. I have also met Rusa Goletiani, together with whom I played so many tournaments when I just came to the USA. It gave me positive energy to play competitive chess. I want to thank everyone who supported me during my chess career and believed in me! I have talked to many friends during tournaments and their words of support were very important to me! I am still in touch with many of my chess friends who stopped actively playing chess. Many now have kids and usually our main topic is not chess.

■ **Similarly, you must have established many rivalries, too. Who were (are) your most worthy opponents?**

I have played so many important decisive games in the U.S. Championship vs Irina Krush, so I would name her.

■ **Speaking of women in chess, how difficult is it to be part of this world? What does one need in order to have a long and successful career like you?**

As you can see in the rating lists, I almost stopped playing chess after I had each child and then came back. It is not easy. In 2015 when my son was born, I skipped the U.S. Championship, World Women's Championship and World Team Championship. My son was part of the American team in 2016 and 2018 and he

Photo: St. Louis Chess Club

The Rise of a Chess Champion FROM UKRAINE TO AMERICA

■ **When and how did you learn to play chess? What attracted you to the game?**

I learned to play chess when I was 4-5 years old. Both my parents played chess and taught me. They have supported me for many years.

■ **How have you developed as a player? Did you receive any coaching? Who were your chess idols then, and now?**

My father is a FM and my mom is CM. They were my first coaches. They met each other at a chess tournament. By the way, I met my husband at a chess tournament as well. I am wondering if any of our kids will continue this wonderful tradition. I don't remember my childhood idols, but probably Kasparov and Karpov. Their world championship matches marked an important period in the development of chess for my generation.

■ **How important do you find it to read chess books? Which one is your favorite?**

Nowadays we have computers and many

books are ebooks. Chessable have developed their own way to read books. Books on strategy are more important, especially if you don't have a coach.

My System by Nimzowitsch had a huge influence on my chess understanding. I think I have read all of Dvoretsky's books, which I can recommend. I want to read Sam Shankland's book on endgames.

■ **When and how did you decide to move from Ukraine to the U.S.? How did this change and affect your play and life?**

I have represented the USA since 2003. I began a totally new life. Just like all immigrants it was not easy at all – and that is a long story to tell. I immigrated as someone with extraordinary ability in chess.

Luckily for me, in 2003-2004 the U.S. Women's Team had obtained some good sponsorship, including the Kasparov Chess Foundation, and we had training sessions with many great coaches including Garry Kasparov himself!



7...♗b7 or 7...h6 8.♗h4 ♗b7 are more popular options for Black.
8.dxc5 bxc5



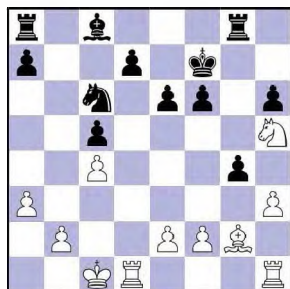
9.♖h3 I chose this rare move, which leads to an almost forced endgame. Also, it scores very well for White. Another way to develop for White is 9.e3, followed by ♗d3 and ♖e2.

9...h6 10.♗xf6 ♗xf6 11.♗xf6 gxf6 12.♖f4 ♖c6 13.♖h5 f5 14.0-0-0 f6?! Opening up the road for her king.

15.g4! If White plays in a slow manner, simply developing pieces like e3 and ♗e2, Black would have time to bring the king to e7 and release the bishop from c8, with an equal game or even take the initiative. 15.e3 ♖f7 16.♗e2 ♖e7. That's why I decided to break through quickly.

15...fxg4 16.♗g2 Perhaps it was more precise to go 16.♗g1 f5 17.♗g2 ♖f7 18.h3±.

16...♖f7 17.h3 ♗g8



18.♖f4?! 18.♖g3 is superior. After the exchange on c6, the knight is rushing to the beautiful e4 square.

18...g3 18...♗b8! was the only way to exploit White's inaccuracy. An interesting line here follows 19.♖xe6!? gxh3 20.♗d5 dxe6 21.♗xc6 ♗g4 22.♗xh3 ♗xc4+ 23.♖b1, which looks pretty equal. For example, 23...e5 24.♗xh6 ♗f5+ 25.♖a1 ♗d4.

19.fxg3 ♗xg3 20.♗xc6 dxc6 21.♗d6 Immediately going after all Black's pawns on the sixth rank.

21...e5 22.♖h5 ♗xh3 23.♗xf6+ ♖e7 24.♗xh3 ♗xh3 25.♗xh6 ♗e6 26.♗h7+ ♖d6 Of course, 26...♗f7 was an alternative, but I guess my opponent wanted to avoid the pin.



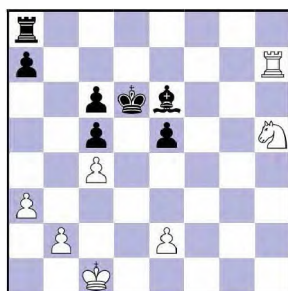
▲ Irina Krush vs. Anna Zatonskih

Photo St. Louis Chess Club



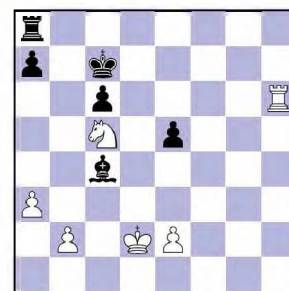
▲ Zhansaya Abdumalik

Photo St. Louis Chess Club



27.♖g3?! It was not necessary to give up the pawn on c4. I counted on my knight activity to be a more important factor. Best was 27.b3!, after which Black needs to find a series of only moves in order to activate her pieces. 27...♗g8 28.♗xa7 ♗g1+ 29.♖d2 ♗f5 30.♗b7±. 27...♗xc4 28.♖e4+ ♖d5 29.♖c3+ ♖d6 30.♖e4+ ♖d5 31.♗h4! The position is equal, but much more difficult to play for Black.

31...♗a6 32.♖c3+ ♖d6 33.♗h6+ ♖d7 34.♖d2 ♗c4 35.♖e4 ♖c7 36.♖xc5



36...♗g8?! Errors come out of difficulties. Note my previous comment on move 31.

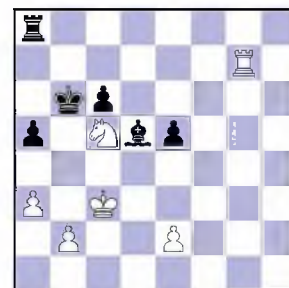
36...♗d8+ 37.♖e3 a5 is a computer suggestion for Black's defensive setup. White is still somewhat better, but it's not at all easy to break through.

37.♖c3 a5 If 37...♗f8, then 38.♗e6! maintains the advantage effectively.

38.♗g6 My position literally plays itself, whereas Black needs to apply extreme care. 38...♗d5? And then it just happens – after suffering for a long time, my opponent blunders decisively.

39.♗g7+ All of a sudden there are mating threats.

39...♖b6



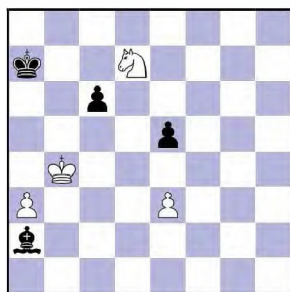


40.b4? It is difficult not to make such a logical move, especially on move 40, when you need to get through the time control.

40.♖d7+ was a correct start to the winning sequence, based on perfect geometry between my knight and my opponent's loose pieces. 40...♙a6 (Or 40...♙b5 41.a4+! ♙a6 42.e4!+-)

41.e4 ♙a2 42.b3 ♜h8 43.♙c4+- With mating threats appearing on the board, Black is faced with huge material losses.

40...axb4+? 41.♙xb4 ♜a7 42.♜xa7 ♙xa7 43.e3? It is hard to believe, but the only winning move was 43.♖d7! and upon 43...e4 44.♖f6+-, 43...♙a2 44.♖d7



44...e4? Looks perfectly logical, but it's losing for Black. A miraculous computer save was possible in this position, which is almost impossible

helped me by taking off all the pressure, so I did not keep thinking about good and bad moves until the next game!

Over the last few years my results had declined and I was thinking, maybe it is time to give up high level competitive chess. Then, all of a sudden, I won the Cairns Cup and that has given me extra motivation to continue. You have to accept certain things and learn everything about yourself in order to figure out why we all play good or bad games. Because chess players never play on the same level every game.

Being a mother is certainly one of the best things in life for a woman. How difficult is it to maintain the balance between daily family duties and chess improvement?

It is impossible sometimes. That's why I stopped playing actively when my daughter was five years old. It was more important to spend more time at home with her. I am still trying to find the right balance. That's why I often refuse invitations for long tournaments, but I never miss any Chess Olympiad! I have played in all Olympiads since 2004!

Your children are raised in a chess family. Do they have any connections with chess?

My son began to develop an interest in chess recently. He attends a chess club and has participated in tournaments since last April. I hope he will continue playing.

You've lived in many countries: Ukraine, USA, Germany... When and where did you feel best?

I have split my time between the USA and Germany, since my husband is German (Latvian

born). Of course my heart lies with Ukraine right now!

Of all the countries you have visited or lived in, where did you like it best and why?

Curacao!! It was such a pleasant tournament and I played an underwater match there! Also Norway and Iceland – with their amazing natural environment. Many places in Romania too, since I had visited this country 20 times before immigrating to the USA. I also love the Netherlands and Latvia.

We can't avoid asking you on the lasting war in Ukraine. How does it affect you and your family?

I was born in Mariupol but I haven't lived there since 1996. I left Ukraine in 2002. Of course I have many relatives and friends in Ukraine. It is just so hard to think that real war is happening in your country. You know about it from newsreels and magazines and now it is real. My father was lucky to escape from Mariupol on the second day of war with only a small bag – and leaving his apartment with all his belongings there. I still have childhood photos and poems (which I used to write as a teenager) left in his apartment.

We have a lot of family and friends who came to visit us. My husband is helping a lot and it became his "part time" job. I am so proud of him!

You have been playing chess professionally for decades. How different was it when you started compared to the present day?

For a comprehensive answer we would need another article! One of the main differences is that we have a totally different concept of opening preparation since the computer era began. You have to dig deeper and memorize more. It would be too funny to present photos of my old notebook here.

Speaking of our noble game, what is the best advice you have ever received?

"After the game is before the game."

What would be your advice to the present and coming generations of female players?

Enjoy the game! Don't take losses too much to heart. And as in Shakira's song – "Try everything."



Anna Zatonskih, Chess Olympiad Calvia 2004 Photo by Harald Fietz

The list of your achievements and titles in chess is quite long. Which ones are dearest to you?

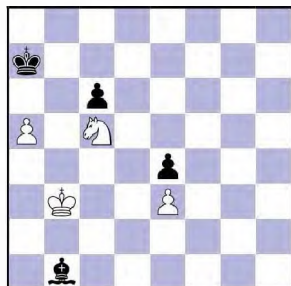
Playing team events were the most memorable moments of my chess carrier. The Chess Olympiad in 2004 – Silver Team Medal with the American National Team – and especially the Olympiad in 2008 when we won a bronze medal and I won the individual gold medal on my board.

Then, of course, winning four U.S. Women's Championships, and, finally, my recent success in the Cairns Cup 2023!



to find, even knowing that there is a draw somewhere. 44...♔a6! 45.♖xe5 c5+ 46.♗xc5 ♕a5= is an obvious draw... for a computer.

45.♖c5 ♖b1 46.a4 ♗b6 47.a5+ ♕a7 48.♗b3 Black is practically in zugzwang.



48...♗d3 49.♖xd3 exd3 50.e4 ♕a6 51.e5 Black resigned

In the final round, I had the black pieces against Irina Krush, who had played excellently in this tournament. Our games are always tense, and this 130-move marathon draw was no exception. Finally, it brought me immense joy to win this prestigious event with a +4=4-0 score, and with a full point margin!

Harika Dronavalli, Bella Khotenashvili, Elisabeth Paehtz, Nazi Paikidze, Nana Dzagnidze and Anna Zatonskih Photo St. Louis Chess Club

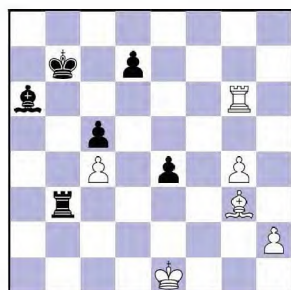


Ladies' Masterpiece Games

After she recently changed federations from Russia to Switzerland, former women's world champion, GM Alexandra Kosteniuk, finished in a clear second place. Alexandra has been among the world's elite female players for many years, and is still able to demonstrate her uncompromising style of play – aiming for a win in each and every position! The following game gives a perfect illustration of her fierce competitiveness.

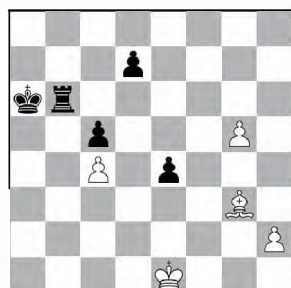
Alexandra Kosteniuk	2535
Harika Dronavalli	2501

Cairns Cup, St Louis 2023



43.♗xa6! Great move. Despite the fact that this should still be a draw, Black now needs to find a series of only moves to hold her position.

43...♗a6 44.g5 d5? 44...♗b6□ It is very difficult and almost impossible to see why Black would ask for the 45.h4 move first, and only then play ...d7-d5 like in the game.

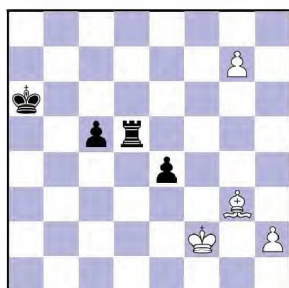


A) 45.♗e2 ♗b7 46.♗e3 ♗c8 47.♗xe4 ♗d8 48.♗d5 ♗e7, and Black's king is in time to defend the kingside.

B) After 45.h4, the bishop on g3 is not protected, which gives Black sufficient counterplay. 45...d5□ 46.cxd5 (46.h5 ♗b1+□ 47.♗e2 ♗b2+ 48.♗d1 d4□ 49.g6 e3 50.g7 d3 51.♗c1 d2+ 52.♗xb2 d1♗ 53.g8♗ ♗d2+=) 46...♗b1+ 47.♗f2 (Or 47.♗d2 ♗b2+ 48.♗c1 ♗g2 49.♗f4 ♗g4 50.♗e5 ♗b5=) 47...♗b2+ 48.♗f1 (48.♗e3 ♗b3+ and White cannot take the pawn on e4 since the bishop on g3 is hanging. 49.♗f4 c4 50.♗e1 c3 51.♗xe4 c2 52.♗d2 ♗h3 53.g6 ♗xh4+ 54.♗f5=) 48...♗b1+ 49.♗g2 ♗b2+ 50.♗h3 c4 51.g6 c3 52.g7 c2 53.♗f4 e3! 54.g8♗ (54.♗xe3?? ♗b3-+) 54...c1♗=.

45.cxd5 It is all over now.

45...♗e3+ The alternatives are not of any help for Black – 45...♗b1+ 46.♗d2 ♗b2+ 47.♗e3+-; or 45...c4 46.g6 c3 47.♗d1+-, 46.♗f2 ♗d3 47.g6 ♗xd5 48.g7



48...♗g5 If 48...♗d8, then 49.h4 ♗c8 50.♗e5 e3+ 51.♗e2+-.

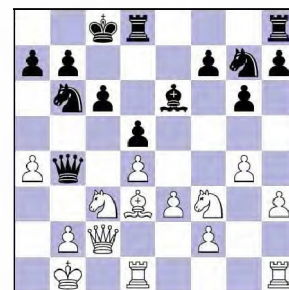
49.♗e5 ♗b5 50.♗e3 ♗c6 51.h4 ♗g4 52.♗f6 ♗g6 53.h5 ♗g4 54.h6 Black resigned

My long-time U.S. women's team colleague and eight-time U.S. Women's champion, GM Irina Krush, finished the tournament on a shared third and I'd like here to present her positional masterpiece. In a well-known position arising from the Queen's Gambit, Irina played the interesting novelty 16.♗a1. After Black made a few positional inaccuracies (17...f5 and 24...♗d3), White never gave Black a chance in this game.

Irina Krush	2436
Harika Dronavalli	2501

Cairns Cup, St Louis 2023

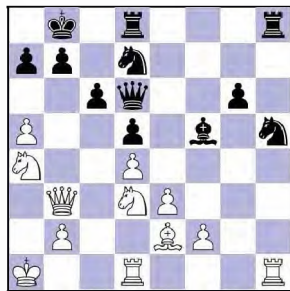
This important win brought Irina back to one point behind first place with two rounds to go.



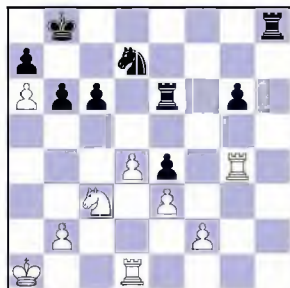
16.♗a1N ♗b8 17.♗e2 f5?! Black shouldn't give up the e5 square, despite the fact that the knight will be immediately chased away. Better was 17...h5 18.♗e5 ♗d7 19.♗d3 ♗b6 with a decent position for Black. 18.♗e5 ♗d7 19.♗d3 ♗d6 20.a5 fxg4



21.hxg4 h5 22.gxh5 ♖xh5 23.♖a4 23.a6 b6 24.♖hg1 was perhaps even stronger. 23...♙f5 24.♜b3

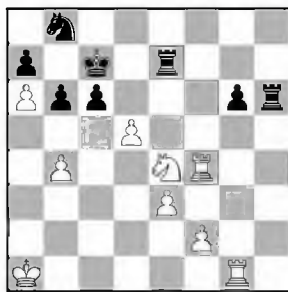


24...♙d3?! This already seems like a concession. It was time to bring the stray knight back into the game with 24...♙hf6. 25.♙xd3 ♖hf6 26.♖hg1 ♖e4?! This allows White to do more damage to Black's pawn structure. More resilient for Black was 26...♖h2, although, after 27.a6 b6 28.♜c2!±, White is better, it should not be a quick conversion to a win. 27.a6 b6 28.♙xe4 dxe4 29.♖c3 ♖de8 30.♖g4 ♜e6 31.♜xe6 ♖xe6

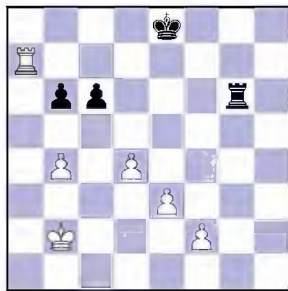


32.♖dg1! Excellent move. Irina is in no rush to collect any of the weak pawns before she engages all her pieces to their optimal positions. 32...♖h6 33.♖xe4 Correct timing. 33...♙c7 34.♖f4 ♖e7 35.b4 Another example of an "iron hand"! 35...♖b8 36.♙b2 This doesn't spoil

anything. However, 36.d5! was a cute breakthrough...



...based on geometry after 36...cxd5 37.♖f6, when Black is defenseless against ♖xd5+ or ♖g8 forks. 36...♖xa6 37.♖a1 g5 38.♖xg5 ♙b7 9.♖f7 Heading for transition to a rook ending. 39...♖g6 40.♖d8+ ♙c7 41.♖xa6 ♙xd8 42.♖f8+ ♖e8 43.♖xe8+ ♙xe8 44.♖xa7



[There would be no need to present this game all the way till its end, if it were not for another article in this issue – Alex Fishbein's Endgame column (see page 78). For an experienced player such as Irina Krush, 'building a bridge' is child's play! -Ed.]

44...♖g2 45.♙c3 ♙xf2 46.♖a6 ♖e2 47.♙d3 ♖b2 48.♖xb6 ♙d7 49.♖b7+ ♙c8 50.♙c3 ♖e2 51.♖e7 ♙d8 52.♖e5 ♙d7 53.d5 cxd5 54.♙xd5+ ♙c6 55.♖e5 ♖e1 56.b5+ ♙d6 57.♙d4 ♖d1+ 58.♙e4 ♖b1 59.♖d5+ ♙e6 60.♖h5 ♖b4+ 61.♙d3 ♙d7 62.e4 ♙d6 63.♙e3 ♖b1 64.♖d5+ ♙e6 65.♙d4 ♖d1+ 66.♙c5 ♖c1+ 67.♙b6 ♖c4 68.♖c5 ♖xe4 69.♙c7 ♖d4 70.b6 ♖d7+ 71.♙c8 ♖h7 72.♖c7 ♖h8+ 73.♙b7 ♙d6 74.♙a7 ♖h1 75.♖c2 ♖a1+ 76.♙b8 ♙d7 77.b7 ♙d8 78.♖d2+ ♙e7 79.♖d4 ♙e6 80.♙c7 ♖c1+ 81.♙b6 ♖b1+ 82.♙c6 ♙e7 83.♖d5

Black resigned

The concluding example I wanted to share here with ACM readers presents one of the most creative ideas played in the event. In a Georgian derby, GM Nana Dzagnidze was highly inspired for creating a masterpiece on the chess board. In the critical position, Nana played five consecutive brilliant moves, but unfortunately for her, failed to execute the sixth one which would have won the game in style. Instead, her compatriot GM Bella Khotenashvili seized a sudden opportunity and successfully repelled the attack on her king. What to say – it ain't over till it's over.

Nana Dzagnidze 2513
Bella Khotenashvili 2478

Cairns Cup, St Louis 2023



24.♙g2!! After getting a clear advantage out of the opening, Nana finds a wonderful tactical solution. 24...exd5 25.♜d4! ♖e8 The most challenging defense, as White has only one way to go and needs to find a couple more accurate moves! 26.♜f6! Getting the queen in before the black rook comes to e5. 26...♖e5 27.g4! Stopping any ...♖f5 or...♖h5 defense. 27...♙f8 28.♖h1 Nana keeps playing accurately. 28...♙e8



29.cxd5? Suddenly, White is losing. Correct was 29.♖h8+! ♙d7 30.♜xf7+ ♖e7 31.♜g8 (31.♜f8 leads to the same goal.) 31...♙c7 (Or 31...♙c5 32.♜d8+ ♙e6 33.♖h6+–) 32.♜d8+! ♙e6 33.f4+–. 29...♖e7 30.♜h8+? 30.e4 was the only move to prolong the fight, although Black should be clearly better. 30...♙d7 Now it's all over. White's attack is extinguished as her pieces lack proper coordination.

31.♜a8 ♙c7 32.♜c6+ ♙d8 33.♖c1 ♖d7 34.♖c3 ♜a5 35.♖d3 ♜c5 36.♜b7 ♖e7 37.e3 b5 38.♜b8+ ♙d7 39.♖d4 ♖e8 40.♜b7 ♜b6 41.♜xb6 axb6 42.e4 ♖a8 43.♖d2 ♙a6 44.♖d4 ♙c5 45.b4 ♙a4

White resigned

I would like to thank the organizers for yet another excellent tournament and all the participants for their interesting and uncompromising chess – 60% of the games ended in a decisive result.

EXPLORING THE REMARKABLE JOURNEY OF THE 31ST SEED

US Junior Storms Into the World Cup!

Californian chess youngster, Josiah Stearman, clinched a GM norm at the Continental Championship in the Dominican Republic and punched his ticket to the World Cup. Join him as he shares an intimate account of his journey and achievements.

By IM Josiah Stearman

Josiah Stearman, a 19-year-old International Master from Northern California, holds two GM norms. A University of California Berkeley alumnus with a degree in Applied Mathematics, he's currently pursuing a Master's in Math Education at the University of Missouri, Columbia on a full scholarship. As a co-founder of the non-profit "1000GM," Stearman organizes elite U.S. chess tournaments. After graduation in December 2023, he intends to become a full-time chess professional, aiming to rank among the world's top 100 and eventually establish his own chess academy.

Two months prior to the Continental Championship, I found myself in the Dominican Republic on a mission trip. Eager to return to this stunning locale, I had my sights set on claiming my second GM norm.

When I mentioned to my friends and family that I was going back there for a chess tournament, I half-jokingly talked about the possibility of World Cup spots being at stake. As the 31st seed, I didn't give myself more than a one percent chance of finishing in the top four. This tournament was the 16th edition of the All-American Championship, where elite players from the Americas come together for an intense eleven-round Swiss event.

Arriving the day before the event with my good friend and roommate IM Alex Ostrovskiy, we checked ourselves in and toured the resort we would be staying in for nearly two weeks. We were met with an "all you can eat" buffet, tennis courts, a basketball hoop on the sand, pools equipped with volleyball nets, and a humid atmosphere. These were all recipes for success, as I was able to develop a steady routine of food, sports, chess, and rest!

The beauty of a mostly one game a day event is the time and energy that can be put towards recuperating for the next game! While I don't necessarily mind the grind of two-rounds-per-day events in the U.S., the American Continental was a refreshing outlook on the quality of one game a day tournaments. Virtually every day consisted of an omelet for breakfast (if I woke up on time), opening preparation, sports, lunch buffet, more sports, the classical game at 4:30 PM, dinner buffet, even more sports, watching the NBA playoffs, and finally sleeping. From the start I was able to find a perfect balance, alongside great company, and obviously some well-played chess games didn't hurt either.

“In a nerve wracking finish, my opponent missed a complicated win with seconds on his clock, and I was able to finally secure the draw. I can't even describe the elation I felt at that moment, when I had just saved a crazy game that directly qualified me to the World Cup.





▲ Juan Dolio, Dominican Republic

16TH AMERICAN CONTINENTAL CHAMPIONSHIP
 Juan Dolio, Dominican Republic
 May 15-23, 2023 (11 rounds, 158 players)

1. Georg Meier (URU) **9**
 2-3. Carlos CABRERA (CUB),
 Fidel CORRALES **8½**
 4-10. Josiah STEARMAN, Kirk GHAZARIAN,
 Cristobal VILLAGRA (CHI), Gregory
 KAIKANOV, Gianmarco LEIVA (PER),
 Yago De Moura SANTIAGO (BRA),
 Jorge CORI (PER) **8**
 etc.

PUMPING UP THE AMBITIONS

Going into this game, I was on 3½/4 and in a commanding position to score my second GM norm. As Black against a Cuban GM, I was surely okay with a draw should it arise.

A35

Lelys Stanley Martinez Duany	2521
Josiah Stearman	2385

American Continental Championship,
 Juan Dolio 2023

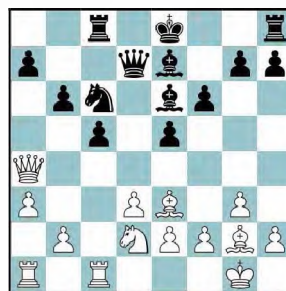
1. **d3** c5 A very direct reply to 1. **d3** that generally prevents d4 transpositions.
 2. **c4** **d6** 3. **d3** **d6** We have now transposed to a very common English setup.
 4. **g3** **d5**!? Seizing the opportunity to grab some space in the center.
 5. **cx**d5 **d**x5 6. **d**x5 **g**x5 7. **g2** e5
 8. **d3**



Interestingly enough, we have transformed into a reversed Maroczy Bind. Since Black is down a tempo from a normal Maroczy Bind, I needed to be careful so as to not allow White to undermine my center control.

- 8... **e6** 9. **0-0** **d7** 10. **e3** The target points for White will lie in the e5 and

c5 pawns. Black needs to prioritize development while addressing these points.
 10... **e8** 11. **a4** **f6** 12. **g**f1 **b6** I have successfully set up a strong defense of the e5 and c5 pawns, and will proceed to try and castle shortly.
 13. **d2** **e7** 14. **a3** White has made his intentions clear!

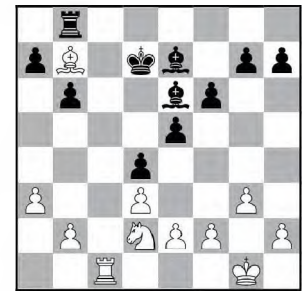


14... **d4**! A very common Maroczy idea. Black relinquishes the pressure in the center while offering an innocent trade of queens. Should Black opt for 14... **0-0** White would respond promptly with 15. **b4**! Now White has successfully pressured c5, as Black is unable to take on b4 due to the weak knight on c6.

15. **g**x7+ **d**x7 16. **g**x4 **ex**d4?! At this point I offered my opponent a draw. As my ambitions of shooting for a World Cup spot had not yet developed, I was

open to an amicable finish. I had evaluated this position as fairly equal and certainly wouldn't mind playing on. The engine agrees, but as it turns out my opponent has to be more careful than me!

16... **cx**d4! would have been a more accurate continuation. 17. **b7**!? is what I originally feared, but it turns out there is nothing to fear here for Black. 17... **g**xc1+ 18. **g**xc1 **b**b8 is in time to remove the bishop from b7.



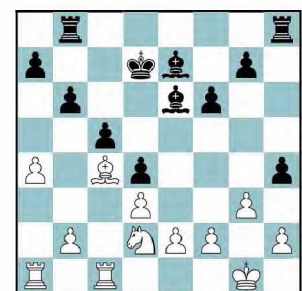
19. **a6**? (19. **g**c6+ **d**d8 and now that the c8 square has been cleared, Black is able to regain control over the position.) 19... **b5**! and the bishop finds itself entombed on a6! 17. **a4** After some thought, my opponent decided it was in his best interests to play on. I don't blame him, as he had the white pieces against a lower-rated opponent, which generally offers a strong opportunity for a full point.

17... **h5**! At this point I had developed my long term plan of a full on kingside attack. My opponent's play definitely lies on the queenside, so I decided to try and apply mating force.

18. **b7** **b**b8 19. **a6**!? White decides to transition the bishop to a unique a6 square. Not only does it prevent a rook of mine from landing on c8, but it also prepares more queenside play. We will soon see that the departure of the bishop from the h1-a8 diagonal proved deadly...

19... **h4** Staying true to my gameplan!

20. **g**c4



20... **g**f5 Opting to not trade the light-squared bishops. I didn't like the resulting position where I would be left with my poor dark-squared bishop stuck behind my armada of



pawns – all on the dark squares.

21.♟b5+ ♜c7 22.b4 We begin to see White's attempts at counterplay against the c5 pawn.

22...hxg3 Opening the h-file.

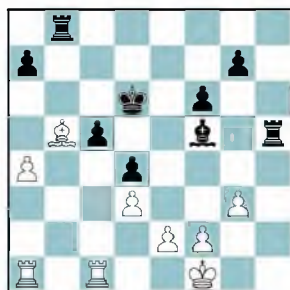
23.hxg3 ♜h5! Preparing to double my rooks on the h-file, as well as potentially aiding the defense on c5!

24.bxc5 ♟xc5 I toiled around the decision of whether or not to take back on c5 with the bishop or the b6 pawn. I ended up concluding that it was important to get my dark-squared bishop out of imprisonment, even if it means temporarily ruining my pawn structure. I also realized the likelihood of the white knight coming and trading on c5, which actually happened later in the game.

25.♟b3 ♟d6 Defending against both ♟xc5 and ♟xd4.

26.♟xc5? Too hasty of a trade! White is in big trouble now. I am threatening to double on the h-file with mate to come!

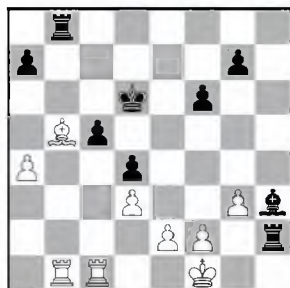
26...bxc5 27.♟f1? My opponent thought this move would save him...



27...♜h2!! Zugzwang!! I realized that White was actually not threatening ♟e1, which we will see in the ensuing variations. By making the most productive and intrusive move on the board, Black is starting to take over.

28.♟g1 Realizing his mistake my opponent tried to double back! **28.♟e1?** would fail to **28...a6!! 29.♟xa6 ♜h1+ 30.♟d2 ♜b2+ 31.♟c2 ♜xc2+ 32.♟xc2 ♜xa1-+.**

28.♜ab1 is a somewhat more productive move which similarly fails to **28...♜h3+!**



A) 29.♟g1 ♜g2+ 30.♟f1 (30.♟h1 ♜xf2-+)
30...a6!! 31.♟xa6 ♜xg3+ 32.♟e1 ♜g1+



▲ Captivating a crowd! Josiah Stearman in Saint Louis.

Photo by Lennart Ootes

33.♟d2 ♜xb1-+;

B) 29.♟e1 a6!! 30.♟xa6 ♜xb1 31.♜xb1 ♜h1+ 32.♟d2 ♜xb1-+.

28...♜bh8! ...and I swoop in!

29.♟a6 ♟g4 Threatening mate in two.

30.♟b7 White is in time to stop the mate, but loses material in the process.

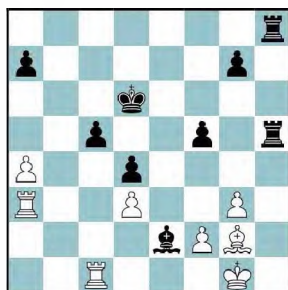
30...♟xe2 31.♜a3 Only move to defend the d3 pawn.

31...♜2h5 Regrouping my forces and making sure my rook on h8 is free to move around.

32.♟e4 Trying to free his rook on a3.

32...f5! No chance for counterplay!

33.♟g2



33...♜b8! Controlling the b-file and preventing any White's rook from entering the game.

34.a5 Desperate for some hope in the position, White tries to advance his a-pawn to give some space for the a3 rook.

34...g5 Developing my final plan to win the game. I need to displace my opponent's bishop in order to deliver checkmate.

35.f3 ♜b2 Activity!

36.a6 g4! The final blow. Getting a bishop to f3 will crash through for Black.

37.♜a5 ♟xf3 **White resigned**

With this huge win, I advanced to 4½/5 and effectively secured my belief in my GM-norm possibilities. I started to realize my ambitions now lied in a top-four finish and a World Cup spot!

SEIZING AN OPPORTUNITY

As the tournament carried along, it became increasingly more apparent that my previously adopted routine was working out. Game after game it was surreal that my dream of qualifying for the World Cup was coming to fruition.

Coming into round 10 I had just suffered my only loss of the event to the eventual tournament winner, GM Georg Meier from Uruguay. After nine rounds I had already secured my GM-norm, so my sights were set on a top-four finish. Since I had the best tiebreaks in the whole tournament, I knew that 1½ points from the last couple of games would land me safely in the top four. With the White pieces I knew this was my chance to strike!



A30

Josiah Stearman 2385

Sergio Barrientos 2479

American Continental Championship,
Juan Dolio 2023

1.c4!? Veering off of my normal 1.e4 adventures.

1...♘f6 2.♘c3 c5 3.♘f3 e6 4.g3 b6 I had seen my opponent opt for this line in a previous game. I found the ideas for White to be very natural and comfortable. While objectively equal, sometimes it is best to know the ideas than have an objective edge.

5.♙g2 ♙b7 6.0-0 ♙e7 7.d4 cxd4



8.♘xd4!? 8.♙xd4 is the typical response here. From experience I have found ♘xd4 to be very dangerous for Black.

8...♙xg2 9.♙xg2 0-0 10.e4 d6 11.b3 ♙c8 12.f4 This is the point! Since the knight is no longer on f3, White is able to immediately go for a kingside pawn advance.

12...♘bd7 13.♙f3 ♙e8?! 14.g4! As the e8 square is no longer available for the f6 knight to retreat, g3-g4 comes with force!

14...g6 15.g5 ♘h5 The knight has found a refuge on h5, but as we know “knights on the rim are dim”!



16.♘de2 A very important regrouping idea. Black was threatening to discoordinate my structure with the strong ...e6-e5. My knight on e2 also has ideas of hopping to g3 and forcing some kingside exposures.

16...♙f8 17.♙b2 Preparing to challenge the a1-h8 diagonal.

Support from Fellow Californian

Elevating Josiah Stearman's achievement, top-tier Grandmaster Sam Shankland was quick to express admiration for his fellow Bay Area native and Berkeley Chess School alumnus's success at the American Continental. Shankland's nostalgic note, "This little kid is all grown up," was complemented by a shared photo from 2014.



▲ Josiah Stearman and Sam Shankland

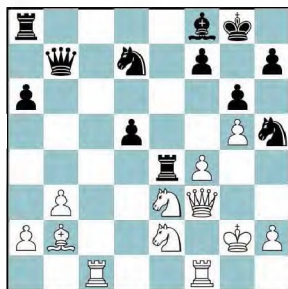
17...a6 Black absolutely needs to find counterplay on the queenside.

18.♘d1!? Another maneuvering knight move. This time I want to open up the a1-h8 diagonal while preparing my knight to jump to e3 and strengthen c4.

18...b5 19.♘e3 bxc4 20.♙ac1!? Instead of directly recapturing on c4, I decide to bring my rook into the game due to the pin on the black queen.

20...♙b7 21.♘xc4 d5 As a result of my delayed recapture, this central break comes with ample force. 22.exd5 exd5 23.♘e3 Originally, when I calculated this position from afar, I thought I was doing really well, and might even win the pawn on d5. On this move I was walking around the tournament hall and came to the epiphany my opponent had the strong...

23...♙e4! I completely overlooked this move in advance. Not only does Black defend the d5 pawn, he prepares for a decisive doubling on the e-file while also making his knight on h5 look good and useful!



24.♘g3!! This is perhaps my best move of the tournament! My good friend and long-time mentor, Grandmaster Sam Shankland, notably states that “if you have a move that you want to

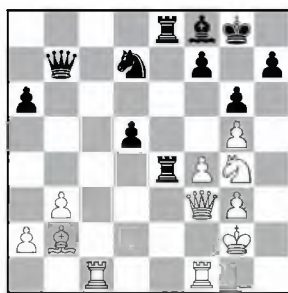
play, and your opponent appears to be stopping it, ask yourself what happens if you play it anyways!” Removing the defense of the f4 pawn seems to be an issue for White, but as we will see, it is a stroke of genius!

24...♙ae8?? My opponent throws away the game in one move. Up to this point the Colombian grandmaster had put up stiff resistance, but now makes a grave mistake at the most critical moment.

24...♘xf4+?! seems like it would be the most direct continuation. 25.♙h1! Now we have a classic “remove the defender” tactic! 25...♙xe3! (25...♙b4? 26.♘c2!+- and now the rook is promptly kicked away from the defense of the knight on f4.) 26.♙xe3 ♘e6± is only slightly worse for Black in a fighting position.

24...♙xf4!? would be met with 25.♙xd5 ♙xd5+ 26.♘xd5 ♙xf1 27.♙xf1 ♘xg3+ 28.hxg3± This is what I had expected, whereupon we have a two-result game for White. The engine does not believe in White's winning chances, but from a practical aspect I will take my chances any day here.

The engine gives 24...♘xg3 as the best move for Black. And only now 25.hxg3 ♙ae8! 26.♘g4



26...f5!!∞ I had missed this computer-like move in my calculation. If not for ...f7-f5 White maintains a much better position. The point lies in 27.gxf6 h5!!, when Black is back in the game with plenty of options for counterplay.

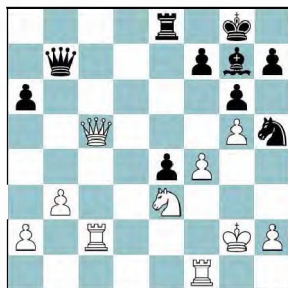
25.♖xe4 dxe4 26.♞d1! I assume this is what he had missed.

26...♖c5 My opponent likely assumed his knight would land on d3 with a strong bind on the position.

27.♞d4! No chance for a knight to land on d3 now!

27...♗g7 The only move to prevent a direct checkmate or loss of material.

28.♞xc5 ♗xb2 29.♞c2 ♗g7 Now it is simply a matter of conversion technique!



30.f5! Too often do players force trades in positions with material advantage. Sometimes the best course of action is to continue the fight and advance!

30...♗e5 31.♞d5 We certainly don't mind offering trades when they arise though! This one is backed by some cute tactics.

31...♞a7 31...♖f4+? 32.♞xf4! ♞xd5 33.♖xd5 and with some beautiful geometry my knight defends my rook.

32.♖g4 Continuing the onslaught.

32...♗g7 33.f6 The engine gasps as my advantage dips from +6.5 to +5! We're humans here, we want the most solid advantages!

33...♗f8 34.♞c6 After a series of calculated attacks and trade offers, I knew the e4 pawn would be mine.

34...♞b8 35.♞d7! Threatening to infiltrate with my rook on c7.

35...♖d8 36.♞c7 ♞a8 37.♞c6 ♞b8 38.♞xe4 ♞b5 The last trick! We must

Stearman's Daring Attack

In the 1st round of the World Cup, Stearman faced off against Russian grandmaster Mikhail Antipov, one of the four winners of the National Open in Las Vegas 2023. Despite our young hero's brave and original play, he ended up losing with a score of 1½ - ½.

A22

Josiah Stearman 2444
Mikhail Antipov 2606

World Cup, Baku 2023

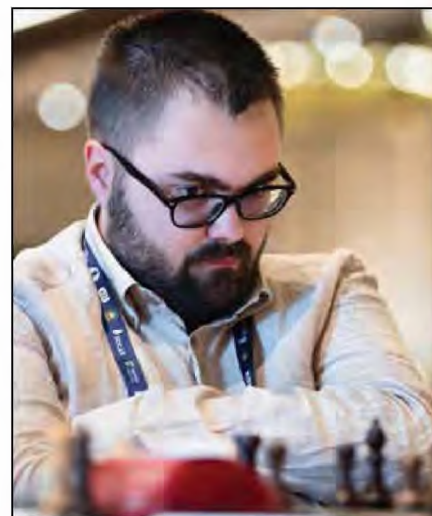
1.c4 e5 2.♖c3 ♖f6 3.g3 ♗b4 4.♗g2 h6
5.♞b3 a5 6.a3 ♗c5 7.♞b5



7...♗d4 8.♖f3 0-0 9.♖d4 ed4 10.♖e4 d6
11.♖f6+ ♞f6 12.d3 ♖d7 13.♞h5 ♖c5 14.♗f4
a4 15.0-0 ♗f5 16.♗ad1 ♞ae8 17.♗d2 ♞e5
18.f4 ♞e7 19.g4 ♗g6 20.♞h3 ♞e2 21.f5 ♗h7
22.♞g3 g5 23.fg6 ♞g6 24.♞h4 ♖d2 25.♗d2
♞g5 26.♞g5+ hg5 27.♞e1 ♗g7 28.♞e7 c6
29.♗f1 ♗g6 30.♞f2 ♖d3 31.♗d3 ♖d3 32.♞f5
♖b2 33.c5 d3 34.♞f2 ♖c4 35.cd6 d2 36.♞f1
♖d6 37.♗d7 ♖c4 38.♞f2 b5 39.♞e2 ♞a8
40.♞ee7 ♗g6 41.♗f2 b4 42.h4 ♞a7 43.h5+
♗h6 44.♞a7 d1♞ 45.♞f7 ♞d4+ 46.♗f1



▲ Josiah Stearman Photo by Lennart Ootes



▲ Mikhail Antipov Photo by Maria Emelianova

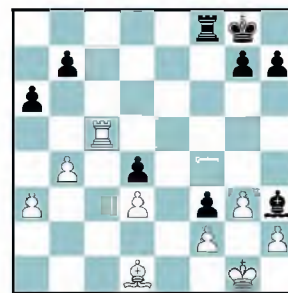
♖e3+ 47.♗e2 ♞g4+ 48.♗e3 ♞e6+ 49.♗f3
♞b3+ 50.♗g4 ♞c4+ 51.♗f5 ♞f4+ 52.♗e6
♞e4+ 53.♗f6 ba3 54.♞a8 ♞d4+ 55.♗f5 a2
56.♞f6+ ♞f6+ **White resigned**

B30

Mikhail Antipov 2606
Josiah Stearman 2444

World Cup, Baku 2023

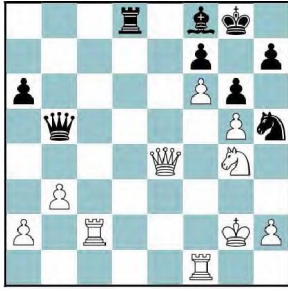
1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 ♖c6 3.♗b5 e6 4.0-0 ♖ge7
5.♞e1 ♖d4 6.♖d4 cd4 7.c3 a6 8.♗f1 ♖c6
9.d3 ♗c5 10.♖d2 e5 11.♖b3 d6 12.cd4 ♖d4
13.♗e3 ♞b6 14.♖c5 dc5 15.♗d4 ed4 16.♞c1
♗e6 17.♞a4+ ♗d7 18.♞a3 ♞c8 19.♞c2 0-0
20.♞ec1 ♞h6 21.b3 ♞d6 22.g3 f5 23.e5 ♞e5
24.♞c5 ♞d6 25.♞b4 ♗e6 26.a3 f4 27.♗e2
♞c5 28.♞c5 ♞c5 29.♞c5 f3 30.♗d1 ♗h3 31.b4



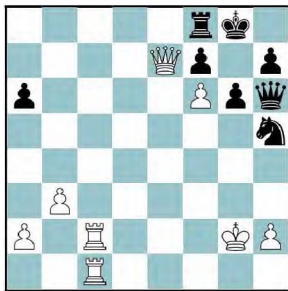
31...♞e8 32.♗b3+ ♗f8 33.♞c1 ♗e6 34.♗e6
♞e6 35.h4 b5 36.g4 ♖e2 37.♞c6 ♖d2 38.♞a6
♖d3 39.♗h2 ♗e7 40.♗g3 ♖d1 41.♗f3 ♞e1
42.♞a7+ ♗e6 43.♞a8 ♗d5 44.♗d8+ ♗c4
45.♞c8+ ♗b3 46.♗d8 ♗c3 47.♞c8+ ♗d2
48.♞c7 ♞e8 49.♗g7 ♖d8 50.♗h7 d3 51.♞c7
♗d1 52.♗g2 d2 53.♗f1 ♖d4 54.f3 ♞c4
55.♗d7 ♞c7 56.♞c7 **Draw**



be incredibly careful against resilient opponents in these situations.



39. ♖h6+! Not 39. h4?? ♜xf1+!! 40. ♔xf1 ♕g3+ when, all of a sudden, White is lost! 39... ♕xh6 40. gxh6 ♜g5+ 41. ♔h1 ♜xh6 It seems that White has given up the strong knight on g4 as well as a whole pawn! What could I have possibly been thinking?! 42. ♜e7! ♜f8 43. ♜fc1! ♕g3+ 44. ♕g2 ♕h5



45. ♜xf8+!! This was the key idea! White is now able to force the game into a trivially winning endgame.

45... ♜xf8 46. ♜c8 ♕xf6 47. ♜xf8+ ♔xf8 48. ♜c6 Black resigned as his knight will be no match for the connected passed pawns.

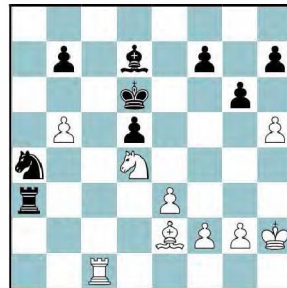
A wonderful bounce back from a tough loss in the previous round! I proceeded to draw a shaky last-round game and clinch a World Cup spot!

LAST ROUND DRAMA

There were many defining moments in the event, but definitely the one that stands out the most was my last-round battle with International Master Gianmarco Leiva. We were both having amazing events, and a draw would likely secure the both of us a World Cup spot. To add to the equation however, IM Leiva needed a win to make a GM norm! On top of that, I don't believe he realized a draw would be sufficient for a World Cup spot, as he might not have been aware of the players ahead of him who already secured qualification by other means. With the White pieces, I blitzed out a shaky Carlsbad structure which I had actually lost in a previous tournament. We entered a complex endgame, with clock times clearly in my favor – I had an hour to his five minutes.

Josiah Stearman	2385
Gianmarco Leiva	2392

Juan Dolio 2023



31. h6 ♕c5 32. b6 ♜a2 33. ♕b5 ♜f2 34. ♜c5 ♕c5 35. ♕d7 ♜f6 36. ♕g3 ♕b6 37. ♕g4 ♜f1 38. ♕f3 ♜h1 39. ♕h4 ♜e1 40. ♕f4 ♕c5 41. ♕e8 ♜f1+ 42. ♕e5 b5 43. ♕f3 b4 44. ♕f7 b3 45. ♕d5 b2 46. ♕e4 ♜h1 47. ♕f6 ♜h6 48. ♕e5 ♜h4 49. g4 ♕b4 50. ♕g5 ♜h3 51. ♕d3+ ♕c3 52. ♕b2 ♕b2 53. ♕g6 hg6 54. ♕g6

♕c3 55. g5 ♕d3 56. ♕f5 ♜f3+ 57. ♕e5 ♜e3+ 58. ♕f6 ♜f3+ 59. ♕e5 ♜e3+ 60. ♕f6 ♜f3+ 61. ♕e5 ♕c4 62. g6 ♜g3 63. ♕f6 ♕d5 64. g7 ♕d6 65. ♕f7 ♜g7+ 66. ♕g7 ♕e5 **Draw**

In a nerve wracking finish, my opponent missed a complicated win with seconds on his clock, and I was able to finally secure the draw. I can't even describe the elation I felt at that moment, when I had just saved a crazy game that directly qualified me to the World Cup. I exited the tournament hall, and quite literally jumped for joy all the way to my hotel room! What an end to the tournament of my life!

FROM GOOD TO BETTER

On my way back to the States, not to home but to my next event starting the day after, I received arguably even better news than my qualification for the World Cup. Immediately after I landed in Washington D.C. for the Cherry Blossom Classic, I got an email that I would be the Wildcard for the U.S. Junior Closed Championship. What a series of events! As this was my last year of eligibility and I had previously never qualified for the event, I was lost for words at the incredible opportunity.

It is likely you are reading this after both the U.S. Juniors and World Cup in late July to early August have concluded. I hope that my hard work, dedication, and passion to the game reap good results in these two very important events! Regardless of how I score in U.S. Juniors and World Cup, I am humbled by the experiences that the game of chess has given me. I sincerely look forward to whatever the future holds, and strive to continue to leave a positive mark on the U.S. Chess community! 🍀

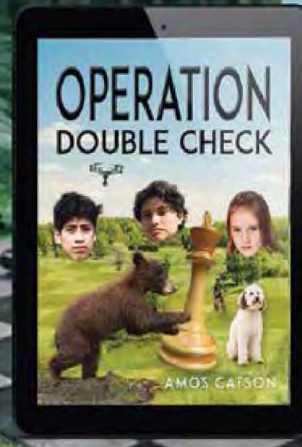
OPERATION DOUBLE CHECK

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

SCAN ME!



AVAILABLE ON
amazon.com





GM NORM FOR 17-YEAR-OLD CALIFORNIAN

Ghazarian Shines alongside Stearman in Dominicana Showdown

17-year-old IM Kirk Ghazarian from California showcased a remarkable performance at the American Continental. Achieving a GM norm, Ghazarian finished with an impressive score, marking his position as a rising chess talent. Kirk here presents a truly topsy-turvy encounter against the tournament's top-seed – Peruvian GM Jorge Cori.

E73

Kirk Ghazarian 2475

Jorge Cori 2650

American Continental Championship,
Juan Dolio 2023

Notes by Kirk Ghazarian

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♔c3 ♕g7 4.e4 d6 5.♙e2 0-0 6.h4!? I was excited to deploy my favorite line against the King's Indian. White typically gets a pawn all the way to h6 in the main line, which can be an asset both in the attack and in the endgame. Additionally, White maintains a stable space advantage. Black tries to counter White's advantages by generating active play, and White often loses his right to castle in these lines.

6...c5 7.d5 e6 8.h5 exd5 9.exd5 ♖e8 10.h6 ♙h8 11.♙g5 ♘a6 This is a rare move which took me out of my knowledge of theory here.

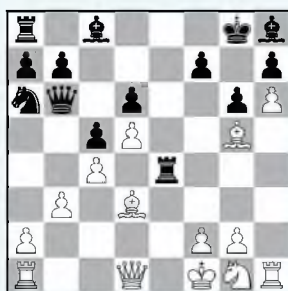


White has many playable options here, and my move is one of the best.

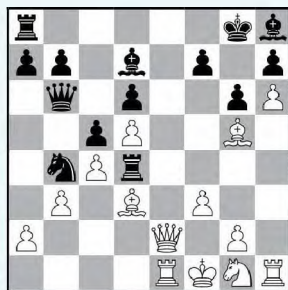
12.♔f1!? Another good option was 12.♖d2!? ♗b6 13.♙f3 ♙f5 14.♙xf6 ♙xf6 15.0-0 ♘b4 16.♙fc1±.

12.♙h4!? is good too. Then, after, for example, 12...♙f5 13.g4 ♙d7 14.♔f1 ♗b6, White now has an excellent position after 15.♖d3!, exploiting the fact that b2 can't be taken on account of 15...♖xb2? (15...♙e5 is more tenacious, but White is still better after 16.♙f3 ♘b4 17.♖d1 ♙e7 18.a3 ♘a6 19.♖d2±) 16.♖b1 ♗a3 17.♙xf6 ♙xf6 18.♙e4!± winning a piece. 12...♗b6 13.b3 ♙f5 During the game I wasn't worried about 13...♙e4, since in all of these lines Black cannot take my rook

because of his vulnerable dark squares. 14.♙xe4 ♙xe4 15.♙d3



A) Nakamura played the aggressive 15...♙g4?! last year against Oparin, and it seems natural enough to harass White's queen and develop with tempo. However, this move is losing, as surprising as it seems! 16.f3 ♙d4 17.♖e2! ♙d7 18.♙e1! ♘b4?! Perhaps this is what Nakamura miscalculated. Here, Oparin makes an effulgent piece sacrifice!



19.♙xg6!!

A1) 19...hxg6 20.h7+ ♔g7 21.♖e7!±; A2) 19...fxg6 20.♖e7! This is the crux of 19.♙xg6!!; White now has an inexorable attack. 20...♖c7 (20...♙f5 21.g4+±) 21.♙e6!± Threatening ♙xg6+ hxg6, h7 mate.

A3) 19...♙xd5 20.♙f5!! This stunning move wins the game. (In the game, White's winning task was more difficult after the imprecise 20.♙xh7+? ♔xh7 21.♖c2+ ♙f5 22.cxd5 ♙e5, and Oparin later failed to convert his winning advantage. G.Oparin2674-H.Nakamura2750, Berlin 2022 eventually ended in



▲ Kirk Ghazarian

Photo by Lennart Ootes

a draw.) 20...♙xf5 (20...♘c3 changes nothing after 21.♖e7+±) 21.♖e8+ ♙xe8 22.♙xe8 mate.

B) 15...♙e8 16.a3! Prophylaxis against ...♘b4. B1) 16...♙xa1? 17.♖xa1 ♙e5 (or 17...f6 18.♖xf6 ♖c7 19.♙xg6!, and White wins.) 18.♖b2 ♙g4 19.f4+±;

B2) 16...♙d7 17.♖b1 ♗a5 18.♖c1 b5 19.♙f3±.

14.♖c1 ♙e4 15.♙xe4 ♙xe4 16.♙h4! A good strategic decision. I force a rook trade which benefits White since my h1 rook was passive.

16...♙xh4 17.♙xh4 ♘b4



18.g4! Gaining space on the kingside and restricting Black's minor pieces.

18...♙d7 19.♖d2 ♗a5! Black forces White to play the weakening a2-a4, otherwise a2-a3 would have followed, further restricting Black's minor pieces, with catastrophic consequences.

20.a4 ♘c6! Black is offering liquidations, which, of course, suit him better, because he's the one whose pieces lack space.

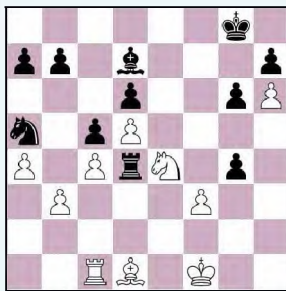
Here I spent a while deciding on what to do, and ultimately went for the prosaic 21.♖xa5. I checked 21.♖f4?, since it



nearly wins (♙f6 is a deadly threat), but spotted the strong rebuttal 21...♙e5! 22.♖e3 ♘d4, when White has an unpleasant position due to Black's active minor pieces.

The engine suggested 21.♙g5!? after the game, giving it a marginal edge over what I played. White wants to maintain the tension and only exchange queens on his terms. 21...♖xd2 22.♙xd2 ♘d4 (22...♙e5 23.f3± leaves White slightly better, too.) 23.♙d1 a5 Otherwise White would play b3-b4. 24.♘h3± The knight on d4 looks nice but actually does very little, particularly as Black lacks effective pawn breaks. White is slightly better, though it's unclear if he will actually be able to break through against staunch defense.

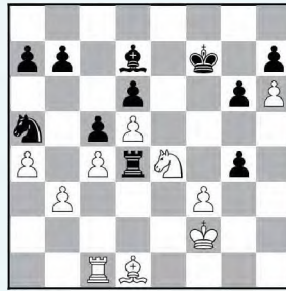
21.♖e1 is a clever move if White is okay with a draw since 21...♙b4! is necessary. (21...♖xe1+? 22.♖xe1 ♘d4 23.♙d1 White's rook is not cut off on c1, and Black suffers the fatal consequences of having a weak d6 pawn. 23...♖e8 24.♖xe8+ ♙xe8 25.♙e7 ♙e5 26.♙h3!+-, with f2-f4 to follow.) 22.♙h3!? (22.♖d2 repeats.) 22...♖e8 23.♖d2, with a double-edged position. 21...♙xa5 22.♙d1 ♖e8 23.♙g3 ♙e5 24.♙xe5 ♖xe5 25.♙f3?! Natural, but not the strongest. It was better to relocate the knight to g3 after 25.♖c3! ♖e4 26.f3 ♖e7 27.♙e2 f5 28.♙g3±. 25...♖e4 26.♙g5 ♖f4! It's important for Black to keep his rook active, particularly as White is practically forced to sacrifice the g4 pawn to seek chances of his own. 27.♙h3 ♖d4 28.f3 f5 29.♙g5 fxe4 30.♙e4



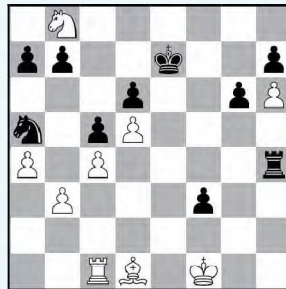
30...♙f7? This move loses the game, but in the heat of battle I didn't realize it. Correct was 30...gxf3! 31.♙f6+ ♙f7 32.♙xd7 ♙e7 33.♙b8 ♖h4 34.♙xf3 ♙xb3 35.♖e1+ ♙d8∞ with a complete mess.

31.♙g5+? White has an amazing way of capitalizing on Black's error that I failed to consider. 31.♙f2! Somehow, a pawn down, White can afford the luxury of making slow improving moves. The idea is to slowly but surely bring the c1 rook into the attack. A very deep

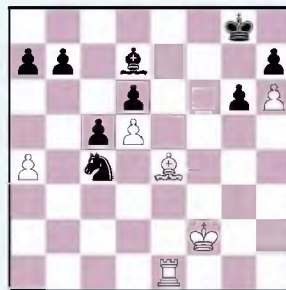
continuation that did not cross my mind during the game.



- A) 31...b6 32.♙g3 ♙b7 33.♙e2 ♙d8 34.♖e1! gxf3 35.♙xf3+-;
B) 31...♙f5 32.♙g5+ ♙g8 33.♙g3 ♖d3 34.♙c2! ♖e3!? (or 34...♖c3 35.♖e1!+-) 35.b4!! cxb4 36.♙xf5 gxf5 37.c5+-;
C) 31...gxf3 32.♙xf3 ♙xb3 33.♙g5+ ♙g8 34.♖e1+-.
- 31...♙g8 32.♙e4?! Again, the idea of bringing the c1 rook into play with 32.♙g2!?↑ was best.
32...gxf3! 33.♙xf3? Swinging the initiative Black's way. I didn't like 33.♙f6+! ♙f7 34.♙xd7 ♙e7 35.♙b8 ♖h4, because of my trapped b8 knight.



But in reality the position is highly unclear. 36.♙xf3 ♙xb3 37.♖e1+ ♙d8 To demonstrate the chaos, here's a sample line: 38.♙g2 ♙d2 39.♖e6 ♙xc4 40.a5 ♖xb6 41.a6 ♙c7 42.♙g3 ♙xb8 43.♖e8+ ♙c7 44.♖e7+ ♙b8 45.♖e8+= with perpetual check.
33...♙xb3 34.♖e1 ♖xe4!? 35.♙xe4 ♙d2+ 36.♙f2 ♙xc4



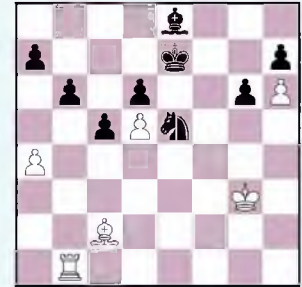
37.♙c2? I was in severe time pressure now, and things were looking bleak.

The engine suggests 37.a5! as the only

way to stay in the game for White, but quite a challenging move to consider, especially in time pressure. 37...♙xa5 38.♖a1 b6 39.♙g3 ♙f7 40.♖f1+=.

37...♙f7 38.♙g3 ♙e5 39.♖f1+ ♙e7 40.♖e1 This endgame is losing for White, but I insisted on making my opponent's conversion as difficult as possible.

40...♙f6 41.♖f1+ ♙e7 42.♖e1 ♙e8 43.♙f4 ♙f6 44.♖f1 b6 45.♙g3+ ♙e7 46.♖b1 ♙d7 47.♖e1 ♙e8 48.♖b1

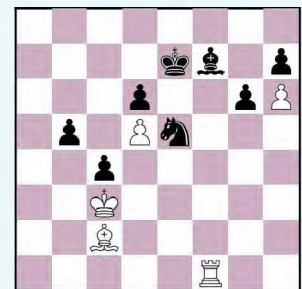


48...c4? A horrific strategic decision. Black ruined his fabulous pawn structure, and in return wasn't able to generate fast enough play with his passed pawns. Although I'm still slightly worse without chances to win, I subsequently defended well enough to not give him realistic opportunities.

After 48...♙f7! 49.♖e1+ ♙d8 50.♙f4 ♙d7 51.♖h1 ♙e7 52.♖h2 the position is slowly but surely losing for White, since Black can advance his queenside pawns in a safe manner. On the flip side, White is badly tied down to the defense of h6. 52...a6 53.♖e2+ ♙f6 54.♖h2 b5 55.axb5 axb5 56.♙e4 b4+-.

49.♙f4 ♙f6 50.♖f1 a6 51.♙e4+ ♙e7 52.♙d4 Thanks to the hole created by Black's mistake on move 48, White's king has obtained the best possible placement. Black's queenside pawns are unstable, and eventually he will be forced to allow the penetration of the white rook.

52...b5 53.axb5 axb5 54.♙c3 ♙f7



55.♖a1 ♙g4 56.♖a5 ♙h6 57.♖xb5 ♙g4 58.♖b7+ ♙f6 59.♙xc4 h5 60.♙d4 ♙e5 61.♖b6 ♙e7 62.♖b7+ ♙f6 63.♖b6 ♙f3+ 64.♙e3 ♙h4 65.♖xd6+ ♙e5

Draw



THE MAGNIFICENT THREE

REMARKABLE RECENT GAMES

By GM Sarunas Sulskis

Nº.1



GIRI GIVES A HEARTY WELCOME TO THE NEW WORLD CHAMPION – AND HIS KING!

My first selection comes from the super-tournament in Bucharest, Romania, held in May, only a week after the chess world welcomed a new World Champion: Ding Liren from China. His opponent, a well-known member of the world's elite, Anish Giri from the Netherlands, must have shaken the Champ's hand quite hard before the start of the game.

The game itself is a good testimony that Giri strongly anticipates a day when tables are turned, and Ding shakes a new Champion's hand. My analysis shows that a deep and beautiful knight sacrifice strategy had been on Giri's mind even before the game started. In addition to the Dutchman's unwavering resolve, he threw in a few elements, almost never seen in the Giuoco Piano – such as castling long, to name just one. Pressed hard against the wall, Ding released the Trojan horse, kindly gifted to him by Giri, and went on to launch a dangerous counterattack with his queen. Giri, however, remained in charge with yet another sacrifice, this time of the exchange: 25.♙xd4!. A stormy game throughout, until the very last cute move 36.♞c3+!

C54

Anish Giri 2768

Ding Liren 2789

GCT Superbet Romania, Bucharest 2023

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙c4 ♘f6 4.d3

♙c5 The Giuoco Piano is currently very trendy. Notably, on his next move Giri travels along a challenging path.

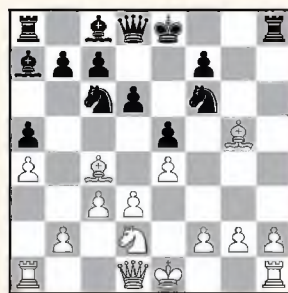
5.♙g5 In terms of popularity, this move significantly yields to both 5.0-0 and 5.c3. Nevertheless, in my view it surpasses both of them in its dynamic potential.

5...h6 6.♙h4 d6 7.c3 a5 8.♘bd2 ♙a7

9.a4 The well-known issue with the ♙g5-h4 maneuver in this opening is that the bishop can be driven to an offside position by ...g7-g5. Generally the best timing for Black to execute this is thought to be when he hasn't castled yet, but – White has. This is why Giri now delays castling by all sorts of useful moves.

9...0-0 It looks as though Ding has run

out of constructive moves. Had he played 9...g5 before castling, then 10.♙xg5 hxg5 11.♙xg5 would be unlikely, although not impossible, since some of the subsequent lines play nicely into White's hands:



A) Firstly, 11...♙xf2+? 12.♙xf2 ♘g4+ 13.♞xg4! ♙xg4 14.♙xd8 ♙xd8 is clearly better for White.

B) Similarly, 11...♙g4? 12.♙xf6 ♙xf2+ (12...♞xf6 13.♞xg4 ♞xf2+ 14.♙d1±) 13.♙xf2 ♞xf6+ 14.♘f3 has the same evaluation.

C) Lastly, 11...♙g8 12.h4 ♙xf2+ (12...♙g4

Sarunas Sulskis is a nine-time champion of Lithuania and a regular member of his country's national team. As a teenager, he studied at the Botvinnik-Kasparov Chess Academy and later graduated from the Kaunas College of Management and Law. He qualified three times for the knock-out World Championship, and his most notable recent result is a victory at the traditional 2022/23 Hastings Chess Congress. In addition to his achievements as a player, Sarunas is a FIDE trainer, arbiter, writer, and passionate chess promoter.

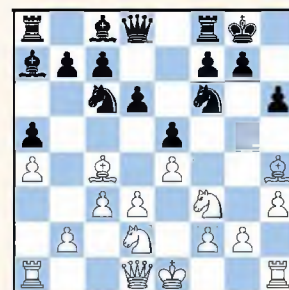
is met by 13.♞b3.) 13.♙xf2 ♙xg5 14.hxg5 ♘g4+ 15.♞xg4 ♙xg4 16.♙h8+ ♙e7 17.♙xd8 ♙xd8 is only slightly better for White.

Also, White can avoid all this with the simple retreat 10.♙g3.

10.h3 Meanwhile Giri remains faithful to his prepared deep strategy:

1. Keep his opponent under the nasty bishop pin.
2. Never castle short himself, so as to avoid placing his king under the X-ray of the enemy bishop on a7.
3. Once the opponent attempts to lift the pin by ...g7-g5, strike him boldly with a knight sac.

Beautiful strategy, but one inevitably needs guts to implement it against the World Champion!



10...g5?! Ding has decided to challenge



Photo by Lemart Ootes

Anish Giri



his rival. The issue at stake is: what is more risky – to expose one's king badly or to give material odds for quite some time? The following stage of the game will feature this hot dispute. Both 10...♙e6 and 10...♙e7 are much quieter alternatives, although Black would need to reckon with 11.g4 on both occasions.

11.♘g5! Here we go! The game is getting boiling hot.

11...hxg5 12.♙xg5 ♘g7 13.♙f3 ♙e6 14.♙f1! Now we can see why Giri so stubbornly refused to castle short. The f1 square has been reserved as a springboard to get his knight in place for a kingside attack by means of the dangerous ♙f1-g3-f5 or h4-h5 sorties.

14...♙h8 On 14...♙xc4 White can pursue his attack by the straightforward 15.♙g3! ♙e6 16.♙xf6+ ♙xf6 17.♙h5+ winning.

15.♙e3 15.♙g3 must have tempted Giri, but upon closer examination he must have realized the g4 square needs extra protection. As a matter of fact, 15...♙g6 16.h4 ♙g4 17.♙xf6 ♙d7! traps the white queen as 18.h5+ is met simply by 18...♙h7. **15...♙e7**



16.0-0-0! Here is one of my key reasons to select this game for my beauty column. You can see White castling long in only 1 out of 100 games in the Giuoco Piano! Yet, that is exactly where the white king belongs in accord with Giri's bold attacking strategy.

16...♙ag8 17.♙hf1! Again displaying great depth of thought. The white knight annoys Black beyond measure, and sooner or later Ding certainly intends to get rid of it by the simple ...♙a7xe3 capture. Yet, at the same moment, following a subsequent fxe3, the humbly stationed rook on f1 will jump into action!

17...♙b8 18.d4 With Ding forced to reroute his knight to support his defense, it's a perfect moment for an advance in the center.

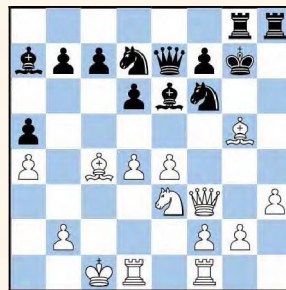
18...exd4 18...♙xc4? has been strictly taboo for half a dozen moves, due to the lethal 19.♙f5+, but 18...♙bd7 would leave his own bishop trapped after 19.d5.



▲ Ding Liren

Photo by Lennart Ootes

19.cxd4 ♙bd7



20.e5! Giri's sacrificial strategy needs more fuel and so without hesitation he goes for it! Meanwhile the greedy 20.d5? does indeed give White some return for his investment, but Ding was well prepared to meet it by a powerful knight jump in the center: 20...♙e5 21.♙xf6+ (21.♙g3 ♙xe4 22.♙xe7+ ♙xg3 23.dxe6 ♙xe3+ 24.fxe3 ♙xf1 25.♙xf1 ♙xc4 26.♙xf7+ ♙h6 clearly favors Black; as well as 21.dxe6 ♙xf3 22.♙f5+ ♙f8 23.♙xe7 ♙xg5) 21...♙xf6 22.♙xf6+ ♙xf6 23.dxe6 fxe6, when Black has more than enough compensation for the pawn deficit.

20...dxe5 21.d5! But now the black knight cannot gain access to the e5 square!

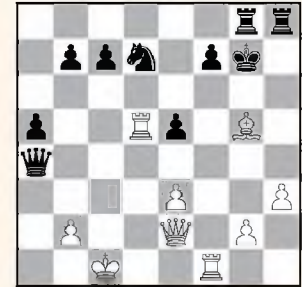
21...♙b4! Faced with the prospect of complete collapse, Ding charges his queen at the enemy king in desperate pursuit of counterplay.

On 21...e4 22.dxe6 (The patient 22.♙e2 is probably even stronger – 22...♙xe3+ 23.fxe3 ♙xd5 24.♙xd5!) 22...exf3 23.♙f5+ ♙f8 24.♙xe7 ♙xg5 25.exd7 ♙xe7 26.d8♙+! ♙xd8 27.♙fe1+ is indeed

beautiful, but something makes me doubt whether that was Giri's actual intention. There are certainly deviations in this line.

22.♙e2 Giri remains in command! The impatient 22.dxe6? ♙xe3+ 23.fxe3 ♙xc4+ 24.♙b1 ♙xe6+ is exactly what Ding has been banking on.

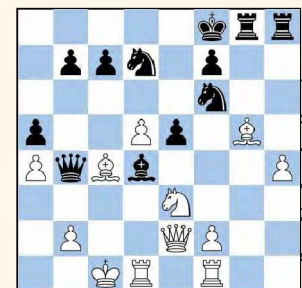
22...♙xh3 Ding must now relinquish his grab on material. Another way to make it was 22...♙xe3+ 23.fxe3 ♙xd5 24.♙xd5 ♙xd5 (24...♙c5+ 25.♙c4) 25.♙xd5 ♙xa4



A) 26.♙xd7 ♙xd7 27.♙f6+ ♙f8 looks terrifying, but is not immediately decisive.

B) Giri probably intended 26.♙f3 ♙c6+ 27.♙b1 ♙g6+ 28.♙a1 and White's attack continues.

23.gxh3 ♙f8 24.h4 ♙d4! Ding attempts a counterattack. Giri must now do his best to stay in control. 24...♙e4? is tempting, but would succumb to a pitfall carefully prepared by Giri in view of 25.♙c2+- with a double attack.



25.♙xd4! Yet another sacrifice, this time one of the exchange. The highly disturbing black queen and bishop brigade around the white king must be disbanded whatever the cost.

25...exd4 26.♙f5 With the e-file cleared, Giri continues his attack along the e-file, now that it has been cleared. The major threat now is the obstructive d5-d6, therefore Ding must react quickly.

26...♙xg5 A perfectly human decision, especially in connection with his next move. Ding wants to get rid of the white bishop the way Giri has rid himself of his own on d4. But he also had alternatives: 26...♙e5 27.♙b5 (27.♙xf6 ♙xc4+



28. ♖xc4 ♜xc4 29. ♖e1 ♖h5) 27...d3
28. ♖xe5 ♖c5+ 29. ♖b1 ♖c2+
30. ♖a1+-.

Or 26...♜b6 27.d6 (27. ♖xf6 ♖xc4+
28. ♖xc4 ♜xc4 29. ♖xh8 ♖xh8
30. ♖d1 leaves White with only
a small edge.; 27. ♖b5 ♜bxd5
28. ♖e5) 27...♖xc4+ 28. ♖xc4 ♜xc4
29. dxc7 ♜b6 30. ♖xf6 ♖h5



A) 31. ♜d6 ♖c5+ 32. ♖b1 ♖xc7 (perhaps
32...♜d5 is more resilient) 33. ♖e1±;
B) 31. ♖xd4 ♖xf5 (Instead, Black can
still struggle on with 31...♜c8.)
32. ♖xb6 ♖e7 33. ♖e1+ (33. ♖d1!)
33...♜d6 34. ♖d1+ ♖d5 (but not
34...♜c6 35. ♖d8).

27.hxg5 ♜e5 On 27...d3 28. ♖xd3
♜xd5 29. ♖e1 ♖g8 30. ♖e8+ ♜f8
31. ♜h6+ ♖xh6 32. gxh6 wins.

27...♜e4 was a similar attempt to
turn the tables on Giri. Perhaps the
Dutchman intended to meet it with the
blockading 28. ♖d3 (28. ♖b5 ♜dc5;
28.d6 ♖c5 29.dxc7 ♜b6)



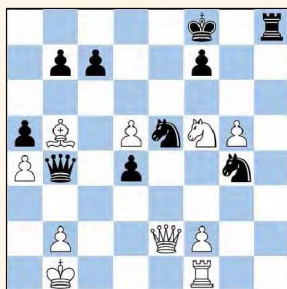
A) 28...♜dc5 29. ♖xe4 ♜b3+ 30. ♖c2
♖xa4 31. ♖d3 and White keeps the
opponent's discovered checks under
control.

B) 28...♜ec5 29. ♖e7+ ♖g8 30. ♖c2
B1) 30...♖c4 31. ♖g1 d3 (31...♖xd5
32. ♖e8+ ♖h7 33. ♜e7+ d3
34. ♖xh8+ ♖xh8 35. ♜xd5+-)
32. ♜h6+-+;
B2) 30...d3 31. ♖e8+ ♜f8 32. ♖e5
wins.

C) 28...♜xg5 and here 29.f4± pushes
the knight offside.

28. ♖b5 ♜fg4 29. ♖b1! Necessary
prophylaxis in the heat of battle, unless

White allows his king to come under
fire from the approaching black army.
29.f4? ♖h2+- is a non-starter.



29...♜g8? Even Ding cracks under
the pressure consistently maintained
by Giri thanks to his bold sacrificial
strategy.

I think he could still struggle on with
either 29...d3 30. ♖xd3 ♖f4 or even
29...c6 30.dxc6 bxc6, when 31. ♖d1
(31. ♖c1 is met by ♖h2.) 31...cxb5
32. ♖xd4 ♖h1+ 33. ♖a2 is not at all easy
to find.

30. ♜h6+! Once prompted, Giri shows
his tactical mettle by disbanding the
black knight brigade for good.

30...♜xh6 31. ♖xe5 Invading the
center...

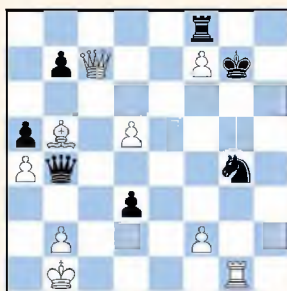
31...♜g4 32. ♖xc7 ...and opening the
road for his d-pawn to advance. The
strategical battle has already been won
by White. All he needs to do now is
carefully contain his opponent's last
attempts at counterplay.

32...♜g7 33. ♖g6! Giri gives Ding no
respite.

33...♖f8 33...♜xg6 exposes the knight
after 34. ♖g1 f5 35. f3 ♖h2 36. ♖xh2+-.

34.gxf7 The knight is exposed anyway.
34...d3 34...♖xf7 is followed by
35. ♖g3 d3 36.f4!.

35. ♖g1



35...♖xf7 Or 35...d2 36. ♖e5+ ♜xf7
37. ♖e6+ ♜g7 38. ♖xg4+-.

36. ♖c3+! A nice finishing touch to
Giri's masterpiece. **Black resigned**, as
36. ♖c3+ ♖xc3 allows the intermediate
37. ♖xg4+. A stormy game until the very
end!

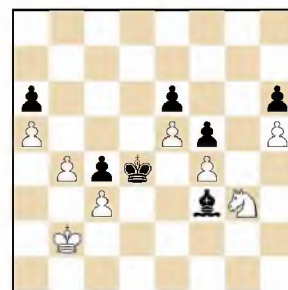
SMALL CHESS LECTURES

By GM Nikola Nestorovic

Although the following game was played at
a rapid time control, it is an example of rare
beauty in the endgame. My idea is to try to
show you the correct way of thinking at the
moment when a threat appears. The emphasis
will be on creating a plan to face the threat and
finding a solution in the best possible way.

Viswanathan Anand	2754
Magnus Carlsen	2853

Global Chess League, Dubai 2023

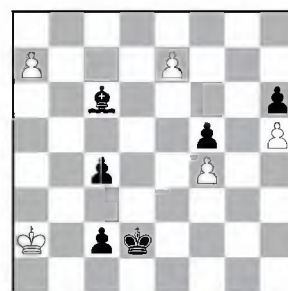


56...♜d3 The first critical moment. Carlsen
practically forced both Anand's pieces into a sort
of zugzwang. The question arises as to whether
there is any defense for White or is it the moment
to resign the game before losing material?

57.b5! Anand chooses one of two excellent
solutions and it becomes clear that White still
has real counterplay with the appearance of a
passed pawn on the a-file.

57. ♜f5! A variation on the theme that will
become the key motif for creating counterplay –
the creation of a second passed pawn on the e-file.

57...exf5 58.b5 axb5 59.e6 b4 60.e7 ♖c6
61.a6 (61.cxb4 ♜d2+-) 61...♜d2 (61...bxc3??
62. ♜c1+-) 62.a7 bxc3+ 63. ♜a2 c2



A) 64.a8♖?? is not the same! After 64...♖xa8
65.e8♖ c3!! A phenomenal motif that
should have brought glory to Carlsen.
66. ♖d7+ ♜e1 67. ♖e7+ ♖e4 68. ♖a3 ♜d2



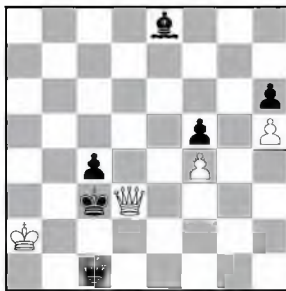
Nikola Nestorovic became a Grandmaster in 2016 and a FIDE Trainer in 2018. Still an active player, Nikola is mostly dedicated to chess



teaching. Together with his father, IM Dejan, he co-authored two chess books – *The Power of Defence* and *The Art of Counterattack in 64 Pictures and Secrets of Positional Sacrifice*.

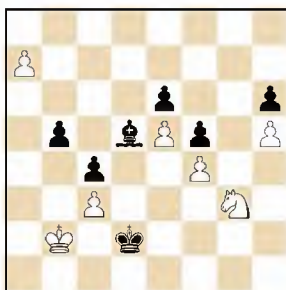
69.♖d6+ ♔d3-- The checks are over, the c-pawn becomes a queen and it becomes clear that Black is left with an extra piece.

B) 64.e8♖!! ♔xe8 65.a8♖ c1♖ (65...c3? Now this motif does not work. 66.♖g2+! The queen appears on the long diagonal and after several quality moves, White will even win.) 66.♖d5+ ♔c3 67.♖d3+!!



A phenomenal stalemate idea! Even 67...♔b4 doesn't bring anything due to 68.♖d6+ ♔b5 69.♖b6+ ♔xb6.

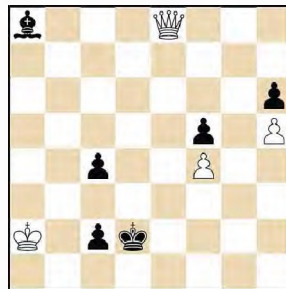
57...axb5 58.a6 ♔d2 59.a7 ♔d5!? An interesting attempt to prolong the game somehow. The threat of promoting the c-pawn with 59...b4!? could be met by the simple 60.♖f1+!, when 60...♔e2 (Not 60...♔d3?? 61.cxb4+-) 61.♖g3+, ends with a draw by perpetual check.



60.♖xf5? A bad defense, as now it's too late for activity! It was simply vital to give check on f1 when a draw is inevitable. 60.♖f1+! ♔d3 61.♖g3 b4 62.cxb4 ♔d2 63.♖f1+=.

60...exf5 The following sequence is forced. 61.e6 b4 62.e7 bxc3+ 63.♔a2! c2 64.a8♖! The best defense against the ...c4-c3 threat is to sacrifice the strong a-pawn. 64.e8♖? is wrong, as it runs into 64...c3+ 65.♔a3 c1♖+ winning.

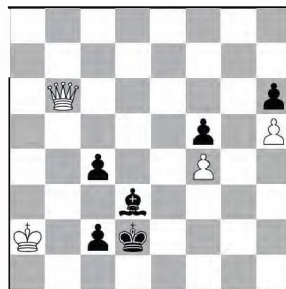
64...♔xa8 65.e8♖ We are reaching a new critical moment. Now Carlsen is suffering from Anand's threatened stalemate motif.



65...♔e4!? An interesting, but not the best solution. 65...c3!! The same motif appears again when Black wins in an incredible way. 66.♖d8+ ♔e2 67.♖e8+ ♔e4 68.♖b5+ ♔e1!-+.

65...c1♖ is a possible variant that Anand was counting on when he decided to sacrifice the knight on f5. 66.♖e3+!! Another wonderful stalemate position. 66...♔xe3=.

66.♖d8+ ♔d3 67.♖d4? An excellent idea, but a wrong execution to achieve "self-stalemating". 67.♖b6!! Anand had to find this square for his queen, as now everything becomes clearer.



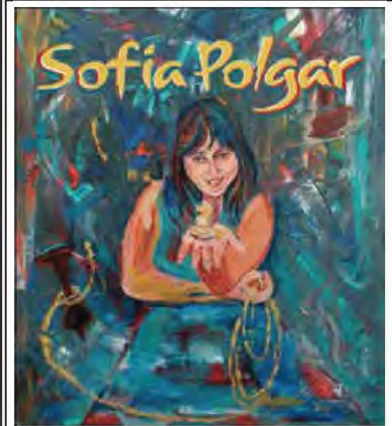
A) 67...c1♖ 68.♖f2+ ♔c3 (68...♔e2 69.♖xe2+!!) 69.♖d4+!! ♔c2 70.♖c3+! ♔d1 71.♖e1+=.

B) Or 67...c1♖+ 68.♔a3 c3 69.♖xh6! c2 70.♖c6. One tempo was all Anand needed to save this game. Now you can compare this variation to the game and note the major difference: 70...♔e2 71.h6 ♔xf4 72.h7=.

67...c1♖+!! It is obvious that Anand must have forgotten the possibility of the c-pawn turning into a knight. No wonder for a rapid game, with not enough time to have everything sorted out properly. It will turn out that White's checks disappear very quickly, and that Black becomes materially stronger by promoting his second c-pawn. Of course, not 67...c1♖?? 68.♖c3+!! after which both 68...♖xc3 and 68...♔xc3 lead to stalemate.

68.♔a3 c3 69.♖b6 ♔e2 70.♖xh6 c2

White resigned



Sofia Polgar Amazing Artist – Dangerous Tactician

by Sofia Polgar

In this unique book, Sofia not only presents many of her games, each with her own brand of fantastic fireworks, but also dozens of examples – in full color – of her brilliant creative artistry on canvas.

Sofia Polgar: Amazing Artist – Dangerous Tactician is part autobiography, part art gallery and part tactical textbook. Above all it is a very special look at the life and games of an impressive artist both on and off the board.

288 pages SRP \$34.95
Signed & Numbered
Hardcover Edition SRP \$79.95

Russell Enterprises, LLC
www.Russell-Enterprises.com

An extremely rich example in which it is possible to see top aces dealing with the topic I am writing about. So, whenever threats appeared, it is evident that they always reacted, although sometimes not in the best way. Even for players like Anand or Carlsen, some tasks are difficult and hardly solvable.

A piece of advice for lower-rated players: it is important to notice a threat first, and then react to it! According to playing strength, a player will need to find a solution. It is important not to pass by a threat as if it does not exist.



INTRODUCING THE 2023 OREGON STATE CHAMPION

Wondergirl Zoey!

For years, Zoey has been dreaming of becoming the first girl to win the Oregon Closed Championship. In 2023, her dream finally came true, less than a month before her 15th birthday!

■ By WIM Zoey Tang

Hi

everyone! I'm honored to be a newly-minted contributor to ACM. (The honor is mutual -Ed.) In this first article, I'd like to share my experience of winning the State Championship.

The Closed is an annual invitational tournament of the strongest players in Oregon. I had played in previous editions, but this year was the first where I had realistic chances of winning it. My previous experience made winning all the more desirable, and it increased the pressure. Yet I had also learned how to prepare for these types of round-robins (not just opening preparation against specific opponents, but also general tactics and endgame training).

Seven nerve-wracking rounds later, I had achieved my dream of many years. By winning the tournament, I became the first female Oregon champion ever, as well as the youngest.

Yet my path there was far from smooth.



Zoey Tang is a 15-year-old WIM and FM residing in Portland, Oregon. She earned her Woman International Master title in 2022 after winning the North American Youth Chess Championship G18. Zoey is among the world's top female players for her age. In 2022, she founded a non-profit organization called Puddletown Chess. You can visit their website and read the many chess articles she wrote there at www.puddletownchess.org. Besides chess, Zoey loves playing the piano and reading.



▲ Winner's trophy for Zoey Tang handed over by TD Greg Markowski

D13

Matt Zavortink	2308**
Zoey Tang	2228

Oregon Closed Championship, Portland 2023

(**All ratings in this article are USCF, not FIDE.)

The first game of the tournament. Luck of the draw had me playing all the tournament favorites in the first few rounds, so I wasn't expecting much. Take it one round at a time!

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 c6 A weird way to transpose to the Slav Defense which hopefully confuses White players.

3.♖c3 Trying to avoid the Slav with 3.d5 doesn't work well after 3...cxd5 4.cxd5 ♖a5+ 5.♖c3 b5 and the c3 knight will get kicked around.

3...d5 4.cxd5 cxd5 The Exchange Slav. I had mainly prepared for Matt's London System, so I was sadly already out of preparation.

5.♗f4 ♜c6 6.e3 ♗f5 7.♜f3 Both players follow the typical setups. Gambits and interesting sidelines sadly happen less often in games at the National Master level. Because Black has developed enough pieces, there is little worry about 7.♖b3, the typical fear of QGD players. Black can respond with 7...♞a5 8.♖a4+ ♞d7 9.♖c2 e6, and play continues normally.

7...a6 This move aims to prevent the annoying pin with ♗b5. In hindsight, allowing ♗b5 is not the end of the world at all, given the symmetrical pawn structure. 7...e6 8.♗b5 ♞d7 9.♖a4 ♖c8 10.0-0 a6 11.♗xc6 ♖xc6 12.♖fc1 ♗e7= would be



Crater Lake National Park Oregon

OREGON CLOSED CHAMPIONSHIP, Portland, February 17-20, 2023 (8 players, round-robin)

1. Zoey TANG	6
2. Matt ZAVORTINK	5½
3. Wilson GIBBINS	4½
4. Nick RAPTIS	3½
5. Ryan RICHARDSON	3
6-7. Carl HAESSLER	
Jason CIGAN	2
8. Austin TANG	1½

the classical main line, but I have little experience with it.

8. ♖e2 e6 9. ♗b3



9... ♗b4?! Natural, but not precise. I got confused with a different line. Matt told me after the game that 9... ♗h5 was Black's only move, getting rid of the dark-squared bishop to guard the b7 pawn indirectly.

10. ♗xb7?! ♗a5 11. ♗c7 ♗xf4 12. ♗xf4 ♗b8= Here Black has compensation in the form of the very weak b2 pawn and the bishop pair.

10. ♗e5 One of the main ideas for White in the Exchange Slav is trading knights on c6, when Black is forced to recapture with a pawn. White's plan will be to play ♗c1 and target the backward c-pawn.

10... ♗e7 11. ♗xc6 bxc6 12. 0-0 13. ♗a4 ♗d7 Another common idea in the Exchange Slav is relocating the knight to better support the c5 square and a potential pawn thrust. Play will revolve around c5.

14. ♗fc1 ♗fc8 15. a3 Removing a defender of c5.



15... ♗d2 This was my attempt to make the position tricky. After the natural 15... ♗d6 16. ♗xd6 ♗xd6 17. ♗c3, White prepares ♗ac1 and I didn't like how Black remains without chances to break the position.

16. ♗c5!? An interesting idea, sacrificing the exchange to gain a monster knight. I was expecting 16. ♗d1, upon which I was planning 16... ♗a5 and I could claim that I had forced his rook off the c-file.

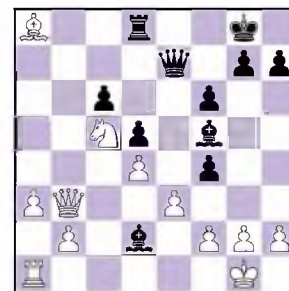
16... ♗xc5?! This move is not required. Technically I can take the rook at any time.

Better was 16... f6= as I needed to prepare the ...e5 break, and be more patient in general. If 17. ♗b6, trying to save the rook, Black can play 17... ♗xb6 18. ♗xb6 e5+. Even though they have not won material, the center pawns are very powerful and White's queen is misplaced.

17. ♗xc5 f6 Now this move is not as good as it was before. White's improved knight will give him many tempi in a row. I found that I had to defend rather than create my own initiative with ...e5.

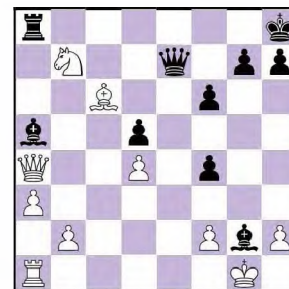
18. ♗xa6 ♗d8 19. ♗b7 e5? The computer hates this move. I was very excited about it during the game because I could give some material back to achieve an attack. After 19... ♗a5 20. ♗xc6 ♗xc5 21. dxc5 ♗xc5 22. ♗b5± Black will have to defend this difficult position.

20. ♗xa8 exf4



21. e4! I did not see this coming. White sacrifices a pawn to close the kingside lines. He will be able to target my trapped bishop without worrying about king safety. 21. ♗xc6?? allows 21... fxe3 22. ♗xd5+ ♗h8 23. fxe3 ♗xe3+ 24. ♗xe3 ♗xe3+ 25. ♗h1 ♗xd4= and Black can be satisfied with the position.

21... ♗xe4 22. ♗xc6 ♗h8 23. ♗d1 ♗a5 24. ♗b7 ♗a8 25. ♗a4 ♗xg2 During the game, I knew I was completely losing. I tried to create as much counterplay and chaos as possible, especially since I had a roughly 30-minute time advantage on the clock.



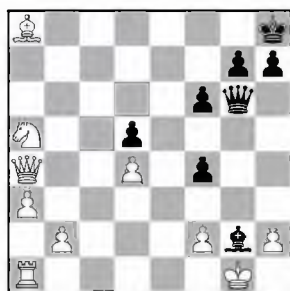
26. ♗xa5?? 26. ♗xg2?? ♗e4+ 27. ♗g1 ♗g6+ 28. ♗f1 ♗d3+ 29. ♗g2 ♗e4+ 30. f3 ♗e2+ with perpetual check.

26. ♗c5!+- is a key move, though not easy to find. White prevents ...♗e4,



opens a discovered attack on the rook, and continues to put pressure on the both of Black's weak bishops. I thought that this was the best chance I would get. Losing but confusing!

26...♖b8?? Save the rook! I considered **26...♗e4** as well, but rejected it because of **27.♙xa8 ♕h3??** **28.♙xd5!+-** when White has back-rank mate ideas. However, I missed **27...♗g6!**



Now Black will have a perpetual check after **28.♙xd5 ♕f3+ 29.♔f1 ♗d3+ 30.♔g1 ♗g6+**.

27.♗c2 ♕e4 28.♗d2 g5 Defending the pawn in the way I thought would create the most chaos.

29.♗e1 ♗f7 30.b4?? This move guards the pawn, but White's king is now in danger.

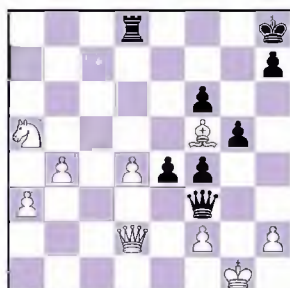
30...♗h5 The queen sneaks its way in.

31.♗xe4 Forced, or else Black has **...♗g4+** or **...♗f3**.

31...♙xe4 32.♙d7 32.♙xe4 was a more natural move, picking up the pawn, though it does look risky. Black would have to continue with **32...♗g4+** (In the case of **32...f3??**, White can still defend with **33.♙f5+-**) **33.♔f1 (33.♔h1?? f3+-)** **33...♗h3+ (33...f3?? 34.♗e3!+-)** **34.♙g2 ♗xa3=**.

32...♙d8 33.♙f5?? In hindsight, **33.♙e6** was stronger, planning to meet **33...♗e8** with **34.d5**. Black would have to continue attacking without the rook. For example **33...♗f3 34.d5 e3 35.fxe3 fxe3 36.♗e1!** maintaining the balance.

33...♗f3 33...♗e8!+-, supporting **...e4-e3**, was the most precise move order. Black involves another piece in the attack.



▲ Front row (left to right): Nick Raptis, Wilson Gibbons, Carl Haessler, Zoey Tang, Austin Tang, Ryan Richardson. Back row (left to right): Jason Cigan, Matt Zavortink.

34.♙c4?? 34.♗c1 was again difficult to find. White threatens **♗c7** and prepares to potentially defend **34...e3** with **35.fxe3 fxe3 36.♗f1!=**.

34...e3 Black is tactically winning now.

35.fxe3 fxe3 36.♙xc3 ♗e8 Now White is forced to lose a minor piece.

37.♙g4 ♗xe3+ 38.♗xe3 ♗xe3 39.a4 ♗e4 White's pawns are all falling.

40.♙f3 ♗xd4 41.b5 ♗xa4 42.b6 ♗b4 43.b7 ♔g7 44.♔f2 f5 45.♔e3 g4 46.♙c6 f4+ 47.♔d3 f3 48.♔e3 ♔f6 49.h3 h5 50.hxg4 hxg4 51.♔f2 ♗b2+ 52.♔g3 ♔g5

White resigned

After obtaining a slightly worse position out of the opening, Matt played a nice exchange sacrifice that left my pieces lacking space. In semi-desperation, I started ignoring material and throwing pieces at his king. In the end, his one slow move made in time pressure allowed me to turn the tables. I learned the importance of saving every move in tactical positions, and I was glad to have survived the tactical melee. All in all, this was a very exciting game with a lucky result for me. It was a great start of the tournament.

D17

Jason Cigan	2205
Zoey Tang	2228

Oregon Closed Championship, Portland 2023

Going into the fourth round, I was 3/3 against the top seeds of the tournament. Jason was actually my last opponent who

had previously won the Oregon Closed.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 c6 3.♙f3 d5 4.♙c3 I was rather hoping that Jason would play the Exchange Slav again so that I could practice implementing the new line I had learned: **4.cxd5 cxd5 5.♙c3 ♙c6 6.♙f4 ♙f5 7.e3 a6 8.♙e2 e6 9.♗b3 ♔h5**. Both Jason and I are tactical players, so I was looking forward to this type of position.

4...dxc4 5.a4 ♙f5 6.♙e5 This is the more tactical option; White attacks c4 immediately and puts the knight on an offensive square.

The main line is **6.e3**, upon which a dry position is reached after **6...e6 7.♗xc4 ♙b4 8.0-0 0-0**.

6...♙bd7 7.♙xc4 ♗c7 8.g3 e5 9.dxe5 ♙xe5 10.♙f4 This pin looks dangerous for Black, but the knight can be reinforced.



10...♗d8?! 10...♙fd7 is the only move, but I wanted to play something new to try my luck. I am fine with taking risks, trying tricky ideas that I can always make up later. Even though this approach backfired in both these games, I still



believe the benefits outweigh the risks. Pulling the opponent out of their comfort zone is often the best way to beat them. If 11.♗g2, then 11...g5 12.♖e3 gxf4 13.♖xf5 0-0-0 with an unbalanced position.

11.♖c1 ♗d6 12.♖xd6+ ♖xd6 13.♗g2 0-0 14.0-0 Facing White's bishop pair, Black is slightly worse here. I started to regret my decision because I didn't know what to do here.

14...♗e6?! Not really supporting ...♗h3 ideas, because the e5 knight is too weak. 14...♗fe8 15.♖d1 ♖c5 is better for White. 15.♖e3 ♖g6 16.♖xe6 After 16.♖xa7? ♖xf4 17.gxf4, with the e5 knight out of danger, now 17...♗h3 is possible.

16...♗xe6 17.♗e3 a5



18.♗g5? A bit slow. Black's doubled pawns won't matter much. After the best 18.♗b6 ♖a8 19.f4 ♖e7 20.e4 Black's pieces are poorly coordinated.

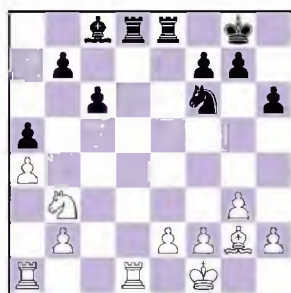
18...♖e5 19.♖e4 ♖ed7 Looks ugly, but it defends sufficiently.

20.♖fd1 h6 21.♗xf6 ♖xf6 22.♖c5 ♗c8?! 22...♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♖b8± is more accurate, more securely guarding the queenside.

23.♖f1? My opponent found the best 23.♖b3± only on the next move.

23...♗fe8? Correct was 23...b6 24.♖d3 c5, solidifying the queenside with an approximately equal position.

24.♖b3 Oops. Now the a5 pawn is lost by force.



24...♗g4 25.♖xd8 ♖xd8 26.♖xa5 ♖d2 Black is worse. Even though I'm forking his pawns, White will always win one pawn more than Black.

27.♖xb7 ♗xe2+ 28.♖g1 Although 28.♖e1?! ♖xb2 29.♗xc6? ♖g4 is evaluated as equal by the engine, it looks rather risky for White.

28...♖xb2 29.♗xc6 ♖g4



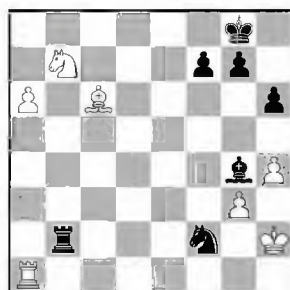
30.a5? A bit rushed. White didn't realize that his king was in danger. 30.♗h1 is an advanced defensive move which makes ...♖xf2 ineffective. I didn't see this. 30...♗d3 (After 30...♖xf2?? 31.♖xf2 ♗a6+ 32.♖e3 ♖xb7 33.♖xb7 ♖xb7 34.a5 ♖a7 35.a6+- White's king is faster than its counterpart.) 31.♖c5 ♖xf2 32.♖xd3 ♖xd3 33.a5± Black will have to hold this endgame after she sacrifices the knight for the pawn, which is forced, as unfortunately, the knight vs. the passed rook pawn is always the hardest.

30...♖xf2 31.a6 The most challenging line, forcing Black to find the best sequence. 31.♖xf2?! ♗b5+ 32.♖e3 ♗xc6= is a sad endgame for Black, but defensible.

31...♖h3+ 32.♖h1 ♖f2+ 33.♖g2 Avoiding perpetual check.

33...♗g4 34.♗b5?? A brave decision to fight for the win, but White's king is too weak. It is psychologically impossible for White to go into 34.a7 ♖h3+ 35.♖f1 (35.♖h1 ♖f2+ 36.♖g1 ♖h3+=) 35...♖f2+ 36.♖e1 ♖e2+ 37.♖f1=, since the initial position looked completely winning. (37.♖d1?? ♖f2+ 38.♖c1 ♖d3+ 39.♖d1 ♖xh2+ 40.♗f3 ♗xf3 mate.)

34.h4 was the move that I was worried about. It seems to avoid perpetual after 34...♖h3+ 35.♖h1 ♖f2+ 36.♖h2



36...♖h3+?? (Instead, 36...♖e4+ 37.♖g1 ♗f3! is enough to hold the position, as

bishop vs passed rook pawn is fine.) 37.♗g2!+-.

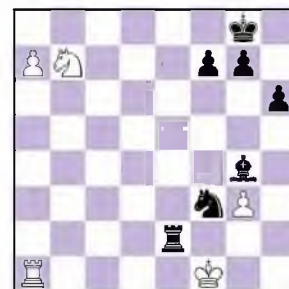


34...♖d3+! It took me quite a while to find this maneuver. Black has many tempting options that don't work. After 34...♖h3+?? 35.♖f1 ♖f2+?? 36.♖e1+- Black no longer has ...♖e2+, which was the point of ♗b5. 34...♖e4+?? 35.♖g1 ♖g5 Same idea as ...♖d3+, but here White has 36.♗c6!= defending.

34...♖d1+?? 35.♖g1 ♗f3 36.♗f1 White defends, and 36...♖xb7 is not possible because of 37.♖xd1+- and the passed pawn is simply too strong.

35.♖g1 ♖e5 White has no defense against ...♖f3+ followed by ...♗h3 mate.

36.♗e2 ♖xe2 37.a7 ♖f3+ 38.♖f1 ♖xh2+ 39.♖g1 ♖f3+ 40.♖f1



40...♖d2! 41.a8♖+ ♖h7 White resigned as ...♗h3 mate is unstoppable. After my failed opening experiment, I managed to equalize and obtain a defensible endgame. Unfortunately, I blundered a pawn away without compensation. Luckily, my remaining few pieces managed to work harmoniously to catch the king in a mating net. Another topsy-turvy game!

I also had many other interesting games, but only so much space to write them all in... The Oregon Closed exposed me to a wider spectrum of openings. While I learned much from them afterward, during the games I got worse positions. My mentality of "always create complications" served me well, generating counterplay and swindling a few games. I was lucky to win the tournament, and I am proud of my results.

**FOR TACTICS
(CALCULATION) EXERCISES:****IDENTIFY THE TACTICAL
MOTIFS**

Look for patterns such as pins, forks, double attacks, discovered attacks, and skewers in the position.

CALCULATE VARIATIONS

Based on the tactical motifs you have identified, calculate various lines and variations to determine the best move.

**CONSIDER THE
CONSEQUENCES**

Once you have calculated a few lines, evaluate the consequences of each move, and determine which line leads to the best outcome.

**FOR STRATEGY
(POSITIONAL) EXERCISES:****EVALUATE THE POSITION**

Determine the strengths and weaknesses of both your and your opponent's position, including pawn structure, piece placement, king safety, and control of key squares.

IDENTIFY A PLAN

Based on your evaluation, come up with a plan that takes advantage of your strengths and exploits your opponent's weaknesses. This can involve improving the position of your pieces, controlling key squares, or creating threats.

**CONSIDER
ALTERNATIVES**

Once you have a plan, consider alternative moves or variations that might also achieve your goals. Choose the move that best fits your overall plan.

Aagaard's MasterClass

by GM JACOB AAGAARD



Photo by David Liada.



GM Jacob Aagaard won the 2007 British Championship; but is mostly known as a trainer and writer. He co-founded Quality Chess and killerchesstraining.com. His books include the Grandmaster Preparation series, the Decision Making series with Boris Gelfand and latest *A Matter of Endgame Technique*. Jacob works day and night to help players of all levels improve their game and achieve their goals.

AAGAARD



SHANKLAND

California-based **GM Sam Shankland** is a leading American chess player. In 2018, Sam achieved several milestones, including winning the U.S. Championship, surpassing 2700 Elo, and claiming first place at the Capablanca Memorial and the American Continental Championship. He is author of two chess books from the series of "Small Steps to Giant Improvement".

PLAY IT ALONG WITH SAM

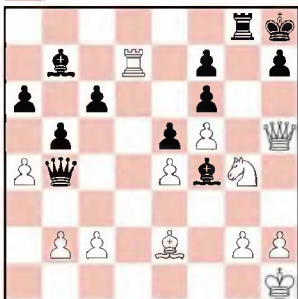
Get ready to take your chess skills to the next level with Jacob Aagaard's Masterclass! Each issue is packed with 12 challenging exercises – 6 tactics/calculation exercises and 6 positional/strategic exercises – carefully curated by GM Jacob Aagaard and tested by none other than GM Sam Shankland.

In early 2023, Sam and Jacob held a training camp to put these exercises to the test, using real game scenarios from the end of 2022 tournaments in Charlotte, New York, and Hollywood. You'll be facing off against some of the brightest young talents in U.S. chess, as well as established grandmasters and players.

But here's the best part: even Sam, a seasoned Grandmaster, did not solve all the exercises correctly. That means there's a real chance for you to compete with him and test your chess knowledge. Whether you're a seasoned player or a beginner looking to up your game, Jacob Aagaard's Masterclass is the perfect way to challenge yourself and become a stronger chess player.

TACTICS

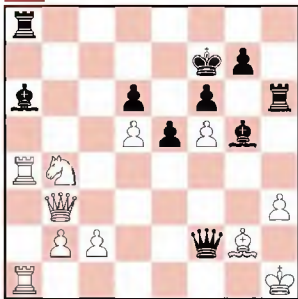
T1 ▲



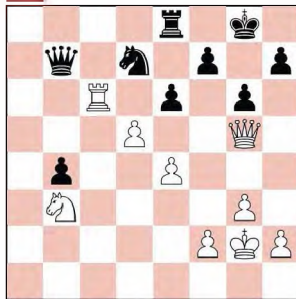
T2 ▲



T3 ▼



T4 ▲



T5 ▲



T6 ▲



STRATEGY

S1 ▼



S2 ▲



S3 ▲



S4 ▼



S5 ▲



S6 ▼





TACTICS

T1

Awonder Liang	2630
Alonso Zapata	2336

Charlotte 2022

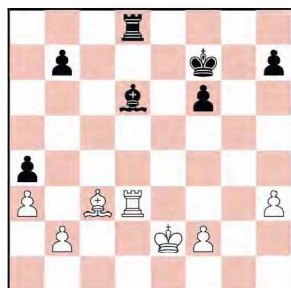


31.c3! "Not too hard" (Sam).
31...♖xe4 32.♖xf7 ♖b1+ 33.♙d1 1-0

T2

Nico Chasin	2429
Lazaro Bruzon	2615

Hollywood 2022

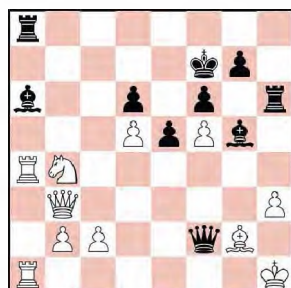


The players agreed a **draw**. You can easily understand why Bruzon offered this, as White wins a pawn with 33.♙d4! b5 34.♙d5!, exploiting the pin. Then White should win.

T3

Nicholas Vettese	2310
Josiah Stearman	2377

New York 2022



31...♙c4?? Josiah blundered like this, but so did Sam!
32.♙xa8! Disappointing!
32...♙xb3 33.♙a7+ ♖xa7 34.♙xa7+ ♙g8 35.cxb3 White won.

SOLUTION

"Now I feel foolish," Sam said after looking at the position anew for barely five seconds. One problem for Sam is turning on his concentration at will. This is common for most people, but it will seriously improve what you get out of your training if you learn to overcome this.

31...♙e3! is the key move. Sam hit upon it the moment he started to actually look... 32.♙xa6 32...♙xa6 ♖g3 is at least mate. The same can be said of 32...♙ah8!?, although it is unnecessarily complicated. 33.♖b7+ ♙g8 34.♖xa8+ ♙h7 and it is all over.
32...♙xh3+! Mate is always preferable. 32...♙xa6 33.♙xa6 ♖g3 also wins.
33.♙xh3 ♙f4 34.♙a7+ ♙xa7 35.♙xa7+ ♙g8 36.♙a8+ ♙h7

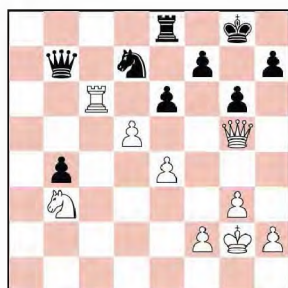


Mate can no longer be delayed with non-foolish moves.
37.♙g2 ♖e1+ 38.♙f1 ♖xf1 mate.

T4

Andy Woodward	2454
Zurab Javakhadze	2479

Hollywood 2022



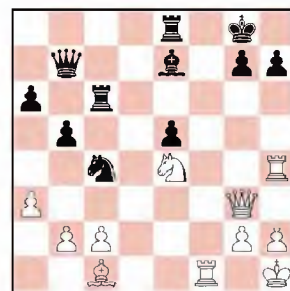
Andy Woodward is a member of Killer Chess Training and was by far the breakthrough U.S. player of 2022. Although he will not become the youngest GM of all time, he will make the title at an age when some greats of the past were still blundering pieces in most of their games... Here he excels again.

33.♖f4!! Sam also wanted to play this. 33...exd5?! The critical line, but not great resistance. 33...e5 "is horrible. If that has to be played, we are happy," Sam said. 34.♖c1, with a big permanent advantage, is the most natural response, but there are a lot of other strong options.
34.♖c7 ♖b5 35.♙d4 ♖a4 36.♙c6! The key move.
36...♙xe4 37.♖d6 ♙e6 38.♖xd7 1-0

T5

Eyal Grinberg	2491
Bartlomiej Maciejka	2514

Charlotte 2022



The game (and Sam) went: 27.♙g4?! ♙d8 28.b3? Stronger was 28.♖d3!, when Stockfish says White has a winning position, although the decisive moment has undoubtedly been delayed quite a bit.

However now after 28...♙d6 Black's position is within the realms of being defensible.

The key trick is 29.♙h6 ♙f5! 30.♙xf5 ♙xh6, when White has a slight structural advantage, but this is not enough to give him more than a minimal edge. **Draw**

SAM FINISHED THE TACTICS/CALCULATION EXERCISES WITH 3½/6 AFTER TWO LAZY BLUNDERS

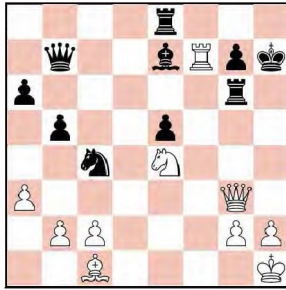




SOLUTION

27. ♖xh7! "Good grief!" Sam said after looking again.

27... ♜xh7 28. ♖f7 ♖g6



29. ♖f6+!! ♜xf6 30. ♖h3+ ♖h6 31. ♖f5+! Sam had missed this last move the first time around, thinking that taking on h6 was mandatory (it loses). He went too fast, there is nothing else to say. White now wins the queen and the game.

T6

Gergely Kantor	2561
Sandeep Sethuraman	2371

Hollywood 2022



This exercise can easily be used as a playing position (hint to trainers), as it is impossible to calculate all the details to completion.

In the game 16. ♖xd8+ ♖xd8 17. ♖b1 led to a **win** for **White** on move 46, but at this point Black had many decent options. I personally like the coordination from 17... ♖c8! with full equality.

SOLUTION

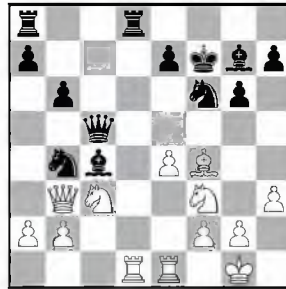
The winning line goes: 16. ♜xf7+!! "Taking on f7 is obvious, as everything else is ...".

16... ♜xf7 has to be played. If 16... ♜h8, then 17. ♖a4 for example, and White is a pawn up.

17. ♖b3+ ♜f8 17... ♜e8? is a much worse option, as the king is misplaced after

18. ♖e5.

17... ♜c4 is far more serious than a first glance suggests.



A) 18. ♖xc4+?, as suggested by Sam without thinking, is a careless blunder. Play continues: 18... ♖xc4 19. ♖e5+ ♜e8 20. ♖xc4 ♖d3, when Black either wins the exchange or White finds 21. ♜c7! ♖d7 22. ♖e5 ♖xb2 (22... ♖xe1!? 23. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 24. ♖xe1 ♖c8 25. ♜f4 ♖c5 26. ♜g5! leads to equality.) 23. ♖xd7 ♖xd7 24. ♖d5 ♖xd1, where Black is only slightly better in the endgame.

B) 18. ♖e5+!? ♖xe5 19. ♖xc4+ ♖e6 20. ♖xb4 is marginally inferior, as after 20... ♖xd1 21. ♖xd1 ♖c8 Black has some short-term counterplay, although White remains better.

C) 18. ♖xd8! is the most accurate. 18... ♖xd8 19. ♖e5+ ♖xe5 20. ♖xc4+ ♖e6 21. ♖xb4 and White is a pawn up with a winning position.

18. ♖e5 e6 Sam missed this one on his first attempt, so I forced him to delve deeper.

19. ♖xe6 19. ♖a4 ♖b5 20. ♖c3 ♖c5 is typical engine nonsense.

19... ♖e7



20. ♖b3!! This is the difficult move White has to find. 20. ♖xe7+? ♜xe7 21. a3 ♖d3 and Black ends a piece up.

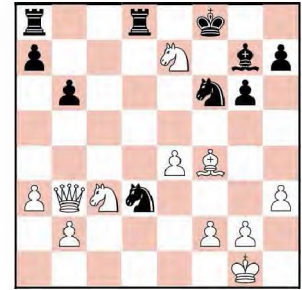
20... ♜d3 The best try.

20... ♖ac8 is met by 21. ♖d5 ♖bxd5 22. exd5 ♖c5 23. d6! ♜c4 24. ♖g3 with a winning attack.

Sam was concerned about 20... ♖h5, but White has plenty of ways to develop a strong attack. For example: 21. ♜g5 ♜f6

22. ♖d5 ♖xd5 23. ♜h6+ ♜g7 24. exd5, winning, on account of 24... ♜xh6 25. ♖xg6+!

21. a3 ♖c2 22. ♖xd3 ♖xe1 23. ♖c6 ♖xd3 24. ♖xe7



24... ♖xf4 After 24... ♖xe7 25. e5 ♖xf4 26. ♖b4+ ♜e8 27. exf6 ♖xh3+ 28. gxh3 ♜xf6 29. ♖b5 White is winning, although a lot of play remains.

25. ♖c6 ♖d7 26. e5 ♖d5 27. ♖xd5 ♖xd5 28. ♖f3+ ♜g8



29. ♖e7+! ♖xe7 30. ♖xa8+ ♜f7 31. ♖e4 and White has strong winning chances.





STRATEGY

S1

Yim Sung Ho	2209
Alexander Shabalov	2504

Hollywood 2022



Shabalov wanted to open the position too much. After 13...c5? 14.dxc6 Qxf3+ 15.gxf3 bxc6 16.Bd1 White had counterplay against the d6 pawn, giving him equality – although he lost on move 43.

SOLUTION

13...Qxf3+! 14.gxf3 f5 is much stronger. The weakness on f3 persists, but there is nothing equivalent on the d-file. Black is close to winning.

S2

David Brodsky	2509
Dean Ippolito	2368

Charlotte 2022



Now, by releasing the tension, White failed to make the most of the pin.

23.Qxe5? Bhe8 24.0-0-0 24.0-0 with a small edge was better.
24...Qxe5 25.Qd2 Qe4 and Black had good counterplay. The game was drawn by move 48.

SOLUTION

23.0-0 would have given White a winning position. The key point comes after

23...Qd6. 23...Bhe8 24.Qfe1 f6 25.Qd3, with threats of an invasion on f5 or g6, is horrible for Black.

24.Qd3 Qxg3 25.fxg3! White is strategically winning. The weak pawns on d5, f7 and h5 are all unmanageable liabilities.

S3

Kevin Wang	2389
Edward Song	2383

New York 2022



The game went 18.Qac1? when Black should have played 18...Qxf3! Instead 18...Qb6? gave White another chance. After 19.Qxc6 bxc6 White later won the game. Strongest here is 20.Qc2 with a winning position.

19.gxf3 19.Qxc6 is met by a small tactic 19...Qxf2, with the better game, based on 20.Qxd5 Qb6!.

19...Qd4 20.Qxc7 Qxe2+ 21.Qxe2 Qxc7 and Black is absolutely fine.

SOLUTION

White can remove all the tactics with 18.Qxc6!, when after 18...bxc6 19.Qac1 White is strategically close to winning. (18...Qxc6?! 19.Qd4 only makes things worse.)

S4

Denis Kadric	2560
Benjamin Gledura	2637

Hollywood 2022



Black played the lazy 29...Qxe5?! 30.Qxe5 fxe5 31.a5, when he was better and won the endgame. But the risk of not converting it was real.

SOLUTION

Exchanging queens when the white king is this exposed makes little sense. Let's attack!

29...f4! 30.exf6 The only test. If Black is allowed to play ...Qh3 it will all be over.

30...Qh3 31.f7+! This is the move to foresee.

But Black has 31...Qh7!! "Not too hard," Sam concluded.

S5

Aleksandr Ostrovsky	2404
Kevin Wang	2389

New York, 2022



Sam totally underestimated Black's counterplay, as probably did Ostrovsky.

23.Qxd4? cxd4! 23...Qxd4? 24.Qxh5 Qc2 25.Qe4 "is mate, right?" Yes. Also, 25.Qad1!? wins here.

24.Qxh5 Qc5 Black has good counterplay. The rook lands on d5 and the d-pawn is strong. The game was drawn.

SOLUTION

Once you understand that you should not give Black a passed pawn on the d-file, it is easier to find 23.Qd2! Another point is that the knight on d4 is strong, but the knight on f5 is simply an 'extra' as Black can only use it if the d4 knight vacates its square.

23...g6 The h-pawn is actually under attack, as White would meet ...Qc2 by Qe4-f6+ with a deadly attack.

24.Qe4! I presumed White's strongest was 24.Qc4, when he is also better, but the knight is more flexible on e4, whereas preventing ...c5-c4 is not that important.

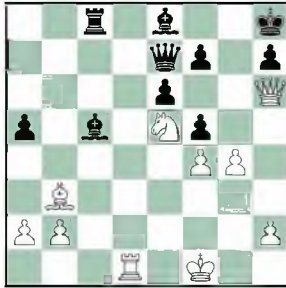


24...♖a5! 24...c4?! loses to 25.♗d6! ♗xd6 26.exd6 ♗f5 27.d7. White has a big advantage after either 25.♖d3!? or 25.♗f6+ ♖g7 26.♞e4 with an attack.

S6

Sila Caglar	2268
Alder Escobar Forero	2510

Charlotte 2022



Escobar did not find the way to claim an advantage.

39...a4? Sam wanted 39...♞d8?, but after 40.gxf5! ♗b5+ 41.♖g2 White is quite safe.

40.♗c4 led to an unclear position. Black now further degraded his position.

40...♗d6?! 40...♞d8! was best now, which is what Sam wanted on his second try.

SAM SCORED 4/6 ON
THE MIXED/STRATEGY EXERCISES AND...



After 41.♞xd8 ♖xd8 42.gxf5! exf5 43.b3 White's position is eerily holding together. 41.b3 axb3 42.axb3 fxc4?? Asking the knight to come to f6.

43.♗xg4 f5 44.♞xd6! ♞xc4 45.bxc4 Black resigned

SOLUTION

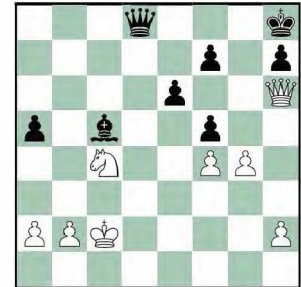
39...♗b5+! 40.♗c4 This is forced. 40.♖g2 ♞g8! Sam missed this move entirely, which is why he did not go for 39...♗b5+. Even looking at it, he did not easily see that White has no defense against ...f7-f6. 41.g5 f6 42.♗f3 a4 43.♗c2 ♗c6.

40...♗xc4+ Sam suggested 40...♖b7?, when White has an amusing draw: 41.♗xf7+! ♖g8 42.♖g5+! ♖f8 (Not 42...♖xf7?? 43.♖xf5+ and White wins.)

43.♖h6+ with perpetual check.

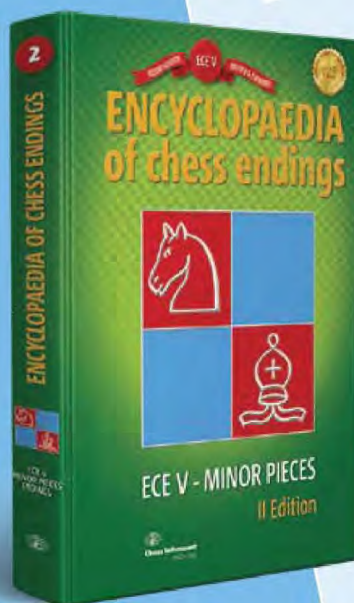
41.♗xc4 ♞d8! The second key idea. Black is seeking to exchange all the defenders around the white king.

42.♖e2 ♞xd1 43.♖xd1 ♖d8+ 44.♖c2



44...♖d4 45.b3 fxc4 Black is totally winning.

...7½/12 OVERALL.
CLEARLY HIS WORST SHOWING.



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHESS ENDINGS V

Bishop & Knight (Minor Pieces) Endings

- New, completely revised, and expanded edition
- 2020 examples of greatest historical and educational value
- Diligently checked with modern engines and endgame tools

Hardback; 592 pages; May 2023

acmchess.com/store





GM ILLIA NYZHNYK WINS IN THE CITY OF SIN

Where Las Vegas Luck rules!

As they say, “fortune favors the brave,” and quite often some luck is needed in order to win a game or even a tournament. Anyhow, it is only a small factor behind success in chess – if we compare it to some other games played in Las Vegas. No throwing dice here!



■ By GM Illia Nyzhnyk

Over the years, the National Open in Las Vegas has become one of my favorite events in which to play, and while I still remember it being a smallish 6-round event back in 2015, it has grown to house over 1000 players, turning it into one of the biggest open tournaments in the USA. This was made possible by the amazing dedication and perseverance of Alan and Janelle Losoff and their team, which made attendance at this event attractive for players of various strengths from all over the world. While I was lucky enough to win here a few times before, this time it was even more challenging as most of my games were a difficult over-four-hour grind, which quickly exhausted me.

Immediately before the following game was played in round 5, I was lucky enough to make a quick draw with the black pieces against GM Zaven Andriasian, which gave me just enough time to rest and prepare for an inevitable long fight against the young and talented GM Andrew Hong.

A33

Illia Nyzhnyk	2641
Andrew Hong	2517

National Open, Las Vegas 2023

1.c4 c5 2.♢f3 ♢f6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♢xd4 ♢c6 5.♢c3 e6 6.g3!? I have previously tried 6.♢f4, but this move does not pose a serious threat against someone who knows a few precise moves from now on. I have previously had a game which went 6...d5 7.cxd5 ♢xd5 8.♢xc6 bxc6 9.♢d2



▲ Illia Nyzhnyk and tournament organizer Janelle Losoff

Photo by Tim Hanks

♢b4 10.♢xd5?! ♢xd2+ 11.♣xd2 cxd5 12.e4? Here I began trying too hard, but was able to heroically survive a few moves later! 12...dxe4 13.♣b4 ♢d7 14.♣xe4 and a draw was agreed in I.Nyzhnyk 2670 - B.Gledura 2628, Clayton 2021.
6...♣b6 7.♢b3



7...♢b4!? I'm not going to lie – this move

made me feel rather uneasy. I knew about the existence of this line, but had never really spent any significant time studying it.

7...♢e5 would have been more up my street, where I was armed with cloud engine analysis. This line can get crazy, but White seems to have reasonable results: 8.e4 ♢b4 9.♣e2 d6 10.f4 ♢c6 11.♢e3 ♢xc3+ 12.bxc3 ♣c7 13.♢g2 0-0 14.0-0 e5 15.f5 b6 16.g4± and White later won in S.Sevian 2690 - B.Bok 2615, Internet rapid 2023.

8.♢g2 I believe there is nothing better. At this point all I can do is just develop my pieces.

8...d5!? I was expecting this concrete decision while thinking about my previous move. Despite my being very ‘clingy’ when it comes to holding on to material, I quickly realized that the dynamics of this position



Born in Ukraine in 1996, Illia Nyzhnyk became a Grandmaster in 2011 before moving to the U.S. As a member of Webster University's SPICE program since 2014, he contributed to numerous championship victories. Illia also won several individual titles, including the 2020 Spice Cup Open and four World Opens. After obtaining his MBA in December 2021, he is now wholly dedicated to advancing his chess skills.

dictated a slightly different manner of play. **9.cxd5 ♖xd5 10.0-0!** No time to waste! Exploiting the fact that Black has still not castled, I am implying that the pawn I am about to lose is not as important as the degree of initiative I will obtain as a result. **10...♗xc3 11.bxc3 ♕e7!?** My opponent believed me and wisely decided to ignore the poisonous offering. **11...♗xc3?! 12.♗e3**



- A) Avoiding the trade altogether by **12...♗a6??** would lose immediately after **13.♖c1 ♗f6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♗c5 ♗b6 16.♗d6+-**.
- B) **12...♗d8 13.♖c1 ♗f6 14.♗xc6 bxc6 15.♗xc6+ ♗d7 16.♗xa8 ♗xa8 17.♗c5±** was what I calculated, and while I have no immediate material gain, it is incredibly difficult for Black to address his king safety, as well as bring his rook into play.
- 12.♗e3 ♗a6**



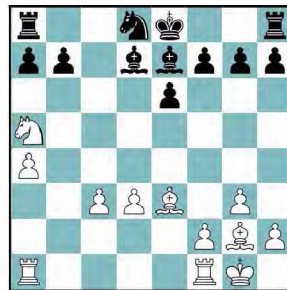
13.♗d3 Even to this day, I am still not

sure whether my decision to trade queens was correct. It is apparent that, even after castling, Black will face serious issues developing his queenside pieces, but I just could not see any concrete benefit for keeping pieces on the board.

13.a4!? might have been slightly better. For example, **13...0-0 14.a5 ♗d8 15.♗c2 ♗d7 16.♗fb1±** and surprisingly, Black cannot do much to further improve his position while maintaining the weak b7 pawn.

13...♗xd3 14.exd3 ♗d7 15.a4 ♗d8? I was extremely surprised to see this move, as it did not look sound at all. Black's idea is obvious – trading after **...♗c6**. However, Black falls one move short.

16.♗a5!



16...♗c8 Trying **16...♗c6** now would have excited me a lot, as I love the bishop pair! Upon **17.♗xc6 bxc6 18.a5 ♗d7 19.♗fb1+-**, Black has a bunch of passive pieces which have no prospects for any improvement.

17.♗xb7?! I spent a good portion of my time here trying to calculate the endgame that eventually arose in the game. Little did I know that there was no need to calculate it!

17.♗xa7! would have allowed me to avoid the unnecessary hustle, as I manage to avoid the opposite-colored bishops endgame: **17...♗xc3 18.♗fb1! ♗c8 19.♗e3 ♗xd3 20.♗xb7 ♗xb7 21.♗xb7+-** and the passed a-pawn cannot be stopped.

17...♗xb7 18.♗xb7 ♗xc3 19.♗xa7 ♗c7 20.♗fb1 ♗c8! Without this Black would have been doomed already.

21.♗xc8 ♗xa7



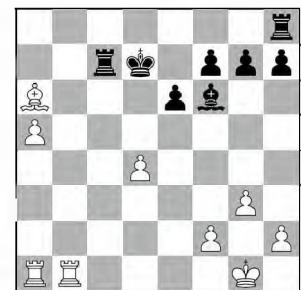
22.a5 I foresaw this position in my head while calculating all of the pawn captures. I strongly believed that if I could manage to “encapsulate” the black rook on a7 by playing a6, followed by ♗b7, I would easily win, because Black will be playing virtually a rook down. However, this plan was way harder to implement than I thought.



▲ Andrew Hong

Photo St. Louis Chess Club

22...♗c7 23.♗c1? **23.♗a6!** is the engine solution that I did not pay much attention to during the game, as it was not helping me achieve the desired ♗b7+♗a6 piece formation. **23...♗d7 24.d4 ♗f6**



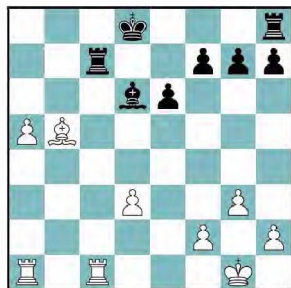
25.♗a4 and Black gets into a sort of a zugzwang, where the best move is actually to misplace his rook on a7. **25...♗a7 26.♗b7+-**.

23...♗d8 24.♗a6 ♗d6?! I was not quite sure how I would react to **24...♗f6**, as now after **25.♗ab1 ♗xc1+ 26.♗xc1 ♗e7 27.♗b7 ♗d8 28.a6 ♗d4±**, Black's bishop gets to control a7. I strongly believe that this position can no longer be won, as I do not have enough resources to realise the a6-a7 push. Despite that, I am sure that I would maintain some practical chances,



as both my opponent and I were in a time scramble.

25.♖b5? It was not too late to go back to the correct idea of restricting the black bishop with d3-d4: 25.♖c1! ♖e7 26.d4!+-.



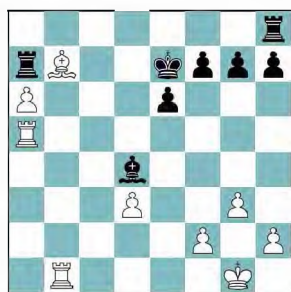
25...♗e7?? The reason I am giving this move a double question mark is because this was the point of no return for Black. As we established earlier, if Black's rook ever gets trapped on a7 it is likely going to be game over, and this move leads exactly to that.

25...♗e5! should have been played, allowing the black bishop to move onto the a7-g1 diagonal. 26.♖xc7 ♗xc7 27.♖c1+ ♗d6 28.a6 ♖b8 29.♗c6 ♗d4±.

26.a6! Finally the rook has no choice but to go to a7, otherwise I will promote my pawn.

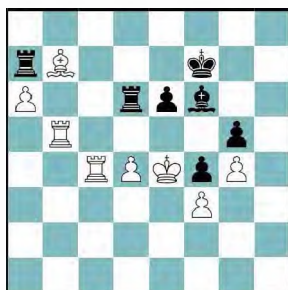
26...♖a7 26...♖a8 27.♖xc7+ ♗xc7 28.♗c6 ♖a7 29.♗b7+- would have been worse, as now Black can move only his bishop, with no counterplay whatsoever.

27.♗c6 ♗e5 28.♖a5 ♗b2 29.♖b1 ♗d4 30.♗b7



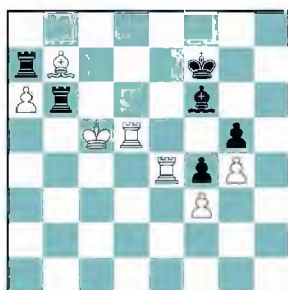
It took me quite a while to win this position, as Black is relatively solid despite the fact that he is playing a rook down. Fortunately for me, I can take things in my own sweet time without having to worry about much coming from Black's side.

30...♖d8 31.♖c1 ♖d7 32.♖b5 ♖d6 33.♗f1 ♗d7 34.♗e2 f5 35.♖c4 ♗f6 36.♗c8+ ♗e8 37.♗b7 ♗f7 38.♖a4 ♗d4 39.♖bb4 ♗b6 40.d4 g5 41.f3 h5 42.h3 ♗e8 43.g4 hxg4 44.hxg4 f4 45.♗d3 ♗d8 46.♗e4 ♗f6 47.♖b5 ♗f7 48.♖ab4 ♗d8 49.♖c4 ♗f6



50.d5 Eventually I was ready to make the final breakthrough, after which my king will make its way to the a7 rook.

50...♗g6 51.dxe6 ♖xe6+ 52.♗d5 ♖e5+ 53.♗c6 ♖e6+ 54.♗c5 ♗e7+ 55.♗d5 ♗f7 56.♖e4 ♖d6+ 57.♗c4 ♗f6 58.♖d5 ♖b6 59.♗c5



59...♖xb7 Black's final attempt to survive, but it is futile, as even the pawn endgame will be winning for me if I were to trade off all of the pieces.

60.axb7 ♖xb7 61.♗c6 ♖b3 62.♖d7+ ♗f8 63.♖a4 ♗e7 64.♖a8+ ♗f7 65.♖aa7 ♖xf3 An example of the pawn ending I was referring to may be seen in 65...♖e3 66.♖xe7+ ♖xe7 67.♖xe7+ ♗xe7 68.♗d5 ♗f6 69.♗d6+-.

66.♖xe7+ ♗f6 67.♖f7+ ♗g6 68.♖fd7 ♖c3+ 69.♗d5 ♖d3+ 70.♗c4

Black resigned

This was by far one of the longest and toughest games I played during this event, but fortunately it went my way.

As soon as I won my round 5 game, I was immediately welcomed with what I like to call an "automatic" pairing – myself as Black versus the tournament's top-seeded player, GM Hans Niemann. My strategy for this game was to stay safe, and take my chances if I ever got any.

D30

Hans Niemann	2695
Illia Nyzhnyk	2641

National Open, Las Vegas 2023

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♗f3 ♗f6 4.e3 e6 The Semi-Slav is a rather rare occurrence

in my opening repertoire, but knowing how predictable I am playing against this particular line, I believed that a change was definitely warranted.

4...♗f5 marked one of my latest losses against 4.e3 5.♗c3 e6 6.♗h4 ♗e4 7.f3 ♗g6 8.♗d2 ♗e7 9.♗xg6 hxg6 10.♖c2 ♗bd7 11.0-0-0 a6 12.♗b1 dxc4 13.♗xc4 c5 14.g4 cxd4?! 15.exd4 ♗b6 16.♗b3 ♖c8 17.♖d3 Here I realized that something went wrong, but it was already a bit too late, and I did not manage to survive against a superior opponent – White won in S.Vidit S. 2724 – I.Nyzhnyk 2687, Saint Louis 2022.

5.♗bd2 ♗bd7 6.b3!? This came as a surprise. I was ready for 6.♗d3, when I had prepared 6...♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 e5!



9.cxd5 cxd5 10.exd5 exd4 11.♗xd4 ♗b6, following the game which continued **12.♗f5 ♗bxd5 13.♗xd6 ♖xd6 14.♗c4 ♖c7 15.h3 ♖d8 16.♖f3 b6 17.♗g5 ♗b7** where Black was totally fine, with the game ending in a draw in H.Nakamura 2749 – J.K.Duda 2731 Saint Louis blitz 2019.

6...♗d6 7.♗b2 Here, I was still in the mindset that I have to break through with ...e5, no matter what, but it is hard to do that when White plays this move order.



7...♖e7 7...♗e4!? was tried by Spanish GM David Anton Guijarro, and knowing how my game went from this point on, I really like the idea which allows me to save a tempo by not playing ...♖e7. **8.♗d3 f5 9.0-0 ♖f6 10.a4 a5 11.♖a2 ♗b4∞** Black later won in L.Livaic 2569 – D.A.Guijarro 2685, Vrnjacka Banja 2023.

8.♗e5 ♗e4 If truth be told, immediately



after I played my knight to e4, I felt a cold shower pouring down my back.

9.a3 was played by Hans, which is safe, but effective in the long run. **9.♖xe4!?** was the move I did not calculate sufficiently, and which results in me losing a pawn. Luckily: **9...dxe4 10.♖g4 ♕b4+ 11.♖e2 0-0 12.♖xe4 f5 13.♖c2**



13...♖xe5 14.dxe5 ♖d8 15.♖d1 ♖xd1 16.♖xd1 a5, and although White is still objectively better, it is hard to think of any advantage that his extra pawn on e5 provides.

9...0-0 10.♖d3 ♖xd2 11.♖xd2 f6 12.♖xd7 ♖xd7 13.0-0



13...f5?! This was clearly me trying to be way too safe. I figured that since both of us have bishops here, closing down the position will render them useless. What I did not realize was that, unlike me, White has some attractive possibilities to threaten breakthroughs. Everything what followed is me desperately trying to make sure that my opponent does not “open things up”.

13...♖e8 14.e4 (or **14.♖c2 ♖h8 15.e4 ♖g6=**) would have been totally fine for Black.

14.♖c3! Hans is doing the right thing in the spirit of the Stonewall Dutch structure that we have here. Threatening to trade the dark-squared bishops, he forced me to play on the queenside – the side I’d much rather avoid, as it is where he will likely advance his pawns shortly.

14...b6 15.b4 This advance is now more powerful, as I have created not one, but two hooks – both the c6 and b6 pawns that can now be undermined.

15.♕b4?! can now be comfortably met



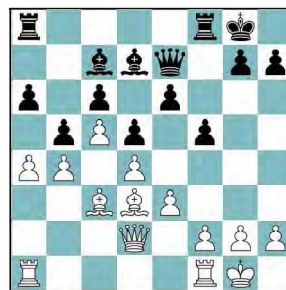
▲ Hans Niemann

Photo St. Louis Chess Club

with **15...c5 16.dxc5 bxc5 17.♖c3 ♖c6 18.cxd5 ♖xd5 19.♖c4 ♖xc4 20.bxc4 ♖fd8** with a relatively even game, though I will always be the underdog due to my bishop being blocked by the c5 pawn.

15...b5 This was my plan all along – keep things as closed as possible. To be completely honest, I must have underestimated White’s capabilities. Regardless, this position would have likely appeared with a different move order had I tried to avoid it.

16.c5 ♖c7 17.a4 a6



18.f4 During the game, I felt this was premature, but it is difficult to offer a better option for White, as I might otherwise get some possibilities for counterplay against the h2 pawn.

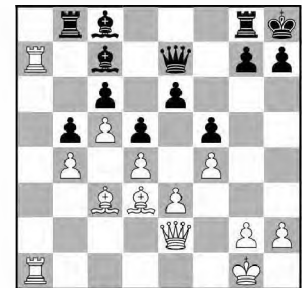
18...♖h8 In light of no better options, I decided to construct a “scary” formation on the g-file, but I was very well aware of the fact that any changes in the pawn structure will likely benefit White more than me, as these will open a new front for active operations.

19.♖a2 ♖g8 20.♖fa1 ♖ab8 I needed to make sure that the invasion on the a-file does not happen, so I came up with a sort of a fortress.

21.axb5 axb5 22.♖a7 ♖c8 Covering most squares on the a-file that could have been used by White.

23.h4? I was extremely excited to see Hans play this move, as it first looked like it would allow me to close things down on the kingside completely. While I was not wrong in my original judgement, it was not as simple as I originally anticipated.

By simply keeping options open with **23.♖e2!** my opponent could have asked a simple question “What’s next?”, and I would have likely ended up speechless...

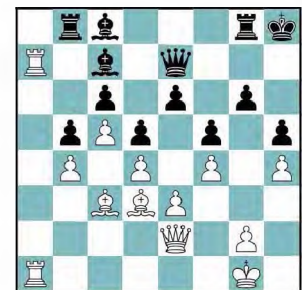


A) ...because playing 23...g5 would have likely been suicidal after 24.fxg5 ♖xg5 25.♖e1+, when White’s threats are too much to deal with.

B) Not playing ...g5 is basically waiting for White to prepare and break through with g2-g4 himself, which did not seem very appealing either. For example, 23...♕b7 24.♖e1±.

23...h5! Closing the kingside down completely. However, White still has one trick up his sleeve...

24.♖e2 g6

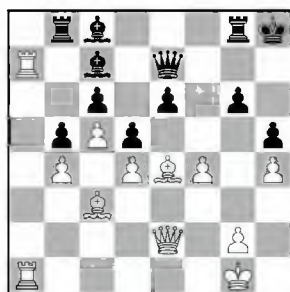


25.e4!? Once again, my original judgement of this move was deceptive. At first, I thought that I could just capture on e4 and win a pawn, but upon closer inspection I realized that any captures I make will only benefit White.

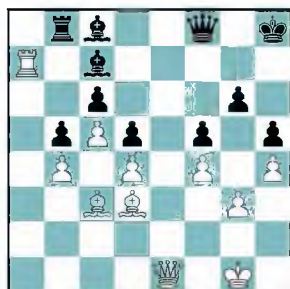
25...♖g7 Fortunately for me, I have this simple way of maintaining the formation. After this Hans tried to make progress for a few more moves, but eventually realized that my position is too solid, and the game ended in a draw. **25...dxe4??** is punished by **26.d5+ ♖h7 27.d6+.**



While 25...fxe4? runs into 26.♙xe4!.



- A) 26...dxe4?? 27.d5+--;
 B) 26...e5 27.dxe5 dxe4 28.e6+ ♖h7 29.♙xe4+-.
 C) 26...♙g7 27.♙d3 ♙f6 (27...♙xh4?? 28.♙xc7 ♙xc7 29.♙e5+-) 28.g3±.
 26.exd5 exd5 Now I felt like drying out after getting out of the water.
 27.♙f2 ♙f8 28.g3 ♙e7 29.♙e1 ♙xe1+ 30.♙xe1



- 30...♙d8 31.♙a2 ♖g7 32.♙e2 ♙e7 33.♖f2 ♙b7 34.♙a7 ♙d8 35.♙a1 ♙c7 36.♙f3 ♙c8 37.♙e1 ♙a8 **Draw**

It so happened that this was my last long game of the tournament. While my 7th round game was a quick draw, in round 8 I experienced what is known as “winner’s luck.”



B96

Fidel Corrales 2509

Illia Nyzhnyk 2641

National Open, Las Vegas 2023

Come round 8, and it was a long way to tie for 1st. Facing my past teammate and good friend, GM Fidel Corrales, I decided to go all out with the black pieces, choosing a sharp line of the Najdorf variation.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♙g5 e6 7.f4 h6 8.♙h4 ♙b6 9.a3 ♙e7 10.♙f2 ♙c7 11.♙f3 ♘bd7



Here Fidel made an unfortunate misstep.

12.g4? 12.0-0-0! should be played first, ensuring White’s king safety. Then, after 12...b5 13.g4 ♙b7 14.h4 ♘c5 15.♙d3 ♘xd3+ 16.♙xd3 d5 17.e5 ♘e4 18.♙hd1 ♙c8 19.♙e1 ♙c5 20.♘ce2, White ended up winning this double-edged position in A.Fier 2604 - R.Quintiliano Pinto 2509, Internet blitz 2023.

12...g5! One of the most natural reactions to White’s g4-h4-g5 maneuver. This move forces White’s f4 pawn away, ensuring access to the e5 outpost for my knight. Luckily for me, this move is also backed up by a nice tactical opportunity that only exists due to the white king’s unsafe placement.

13.h4?! 13.0-0-0 gxf4 14.♖b1 ♘e5 15.♙xf4 ♘exg4 16.♖b3! was still playable

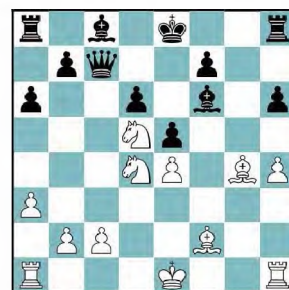
for White, although Black is even slightly better here.

13...gxf4 14.♙e2 ♘e5 15.♙xf4



15...♘exg4! Freeing the e5 square for my pawn. Black is clearly better.

16.♙xg4 e5 17.♙xf6!? ♙xf6 18.♘d5

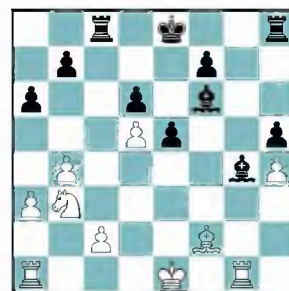


18...♙a5+! This is precisely why the white king should be hidden away on c1 at this moment.

If only I had to play 18...♙d8?, then White would be doing okay after 19.♘f5 ♙g8 20.♙b6, regaining most of his material and maintaining control over key central squares. 20...♙xg4 This is all forced. 21.♙xd8 ♙xd8 22.♘xd6+ ♖f8 23.♘e3 ♙xh4 24.♘e2∞.

19.b4 ♙xd5! No need to hang on to the queen – this trade allows me to come out on top with an extra pawn, as well as a far superior position.

20.exd5 ♙xg4 21.♙g1 h5 22.♘b3 ♙c8



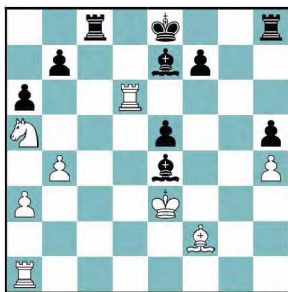
My position is completely winning due to White’s multiple weaknesses, pawn deficit, and my strong bishop pair.

23.♘d2 ♙f3 24.c4 ♙xc4 25.♘a5 ♙c8 The rest was simple.

26.♙g3 ♙xd5 27.♙d3 ♙e4 28.♙xd6 ♙e7 29.♘e3

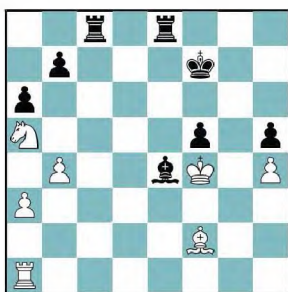
NATIONAL OPEN, Las Vegas, NV
 June 14–18, 2023, (9 rounds, 150 players)

- 1–4. Illia NYZHNYK (UKR), Vasif DURARBAYLI (AZE), Yaser QUESADA (CUB), Mikhail Antipov (FID) **7**
 5–14. Hans NIEMANN, Zaven ANDRIASIAN (ARM), Semen KHANIN (FID), Emilio CORDOVA (PER), Viktor MATVIISHEN (UKR), Andrew HONG, Fidel CORRALES JIMENEZ, Daniel H FERNANDEZ (ENG), Justin WANG, Ezra CHAMBERS **6½**
 15–21. Brandon JACOBSON, Jianchao ZHOU (CHN), Arman MIKAELIAN (ARM), Sam SCHMAKEL, Kostya KAVUTSKIY, Denes BOROS (HUN), Richard BITOON (PHI) **6**, etc.



29...f5! 29...fxd6 30.♔xe4 b5 was also possible, but the text offers White virtually no counterplay.

30.♖b6 ♔d8 31.♗e6+ ♕f7 32.♗xe5 ♕f6 33.♕f4 ♔xe5+ 34.♕xe5 ♗he8+ 35.♕f4



35...♖c3 36.♔e3 b6 White resigned

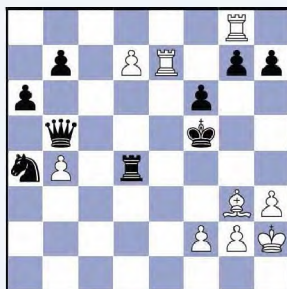
However, I was not the only winner who experienced this amazing phenomenon, and thus I would like to demonstrate to you, fellow readers, a few snippets from some of the tournament winners' games, in which luck played a major role on the ensuing result.

Often times, an intermediate move that looks useful is actually actively harming your position, just like it happened in the following game of Mikhail Antipov, one of the co-winners of the event.

Mikhail Antipov 2583

Robert Shlyakhtenko 2427

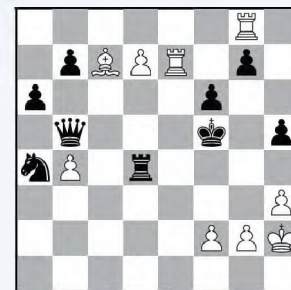
National Open, Las Vegas 2023



37.♔c7? Honestly, it is hard to blame Mikhail for this move – having a chance to checkmate someone with a pawn is always exciting, and the idea is obvious – to clear a path for White's g4 pawn. However, the counter to this threat is rather simple, and White only suffers from having his bishop on c7. 37.d8♗ was natural and good enough for a winning advantage.

37...g6?? A much needed stroke of luck for White, as Black does not react properly. Black's king is no longer able to survive White's decisive attack:

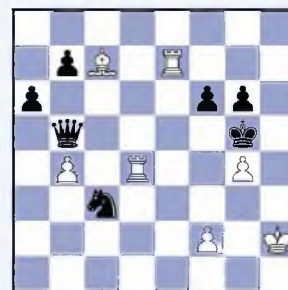
37...h5! was needed, preventing g2-g4 once and for all.



A) Then, 38.d8♗ ♗xd8 39.♗xd8 g5 40.f3 ♗c4 should be tenable for Black. It is hard to say who plays for a win here.

B) Or 38.f3 h4 39.d8♗ ♗xd8 40.♗xd8 ♖c3 41.♗xg7 ♗xb4 42.♗g4 ♗c5 43.♗f4+ ♕g6 44.♗g4+ ♕f5=.

38.d8♗ 38.g4+! ♕g5 39.♗xh7+-. 38...♗xd8 39.♗xd8 h5 40.♗d4 ♖c3 41.g4+ hxg4 42.hxg4+ ♕g5



43.♔f4+ ♕xg4 44.♔d2+ ♕f5 45.♗f4+ ♕g5 46.♗c4+ Next comes ♗c5+, winning the queen and finishing the game.

Black resigned.

INTRODUCING AMERICAN CATUR: THE ART OF STRATEGIC WARFARE

Experience NEW type of chess like never before with American Catur! Prepare for mind-blowing strategies and intense competition that will take your skills to new heights. Prepare to have your chess experience transformed as this revolutionary game-changing evolution elevates the game play to exhilarating new heights, immersing you in a world of electrifying moves, strategic bombs, and unparalleled challenges, all determined by the roll of a dice. **FREE TRIAL PERIOD ON-LINE INVITE A FRIEND TO PLAY.**

Discover groundbreaking innovations that break free from conventional rules. Embrace creativity and out-of-the-box thinking as you witness the birth of new strategies and unexpected moves. Whether you're a novice or a seasoned master, American Catur will captivate and challenge you.

Don't miss this extraordinary opportunity to be part of the revolution in strategic mastery. Rise to the occasion, push your boundaries, and explore a new dimension of tactical brilliance with American Catur. Are you ready to elevate your skills to unprecedented heights? Join us now and let the battles commence! Wishing you the best of luck on this exciting journey!





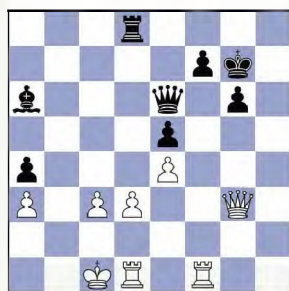
In round 8, a good friend of mine, GM Vasif Durarbayli, was trailing the leaders by half a point and was in a must-win situation.



Sam Schmakel 2416

Vasif Durarbayli 2627

National Open Las Vegas 2023



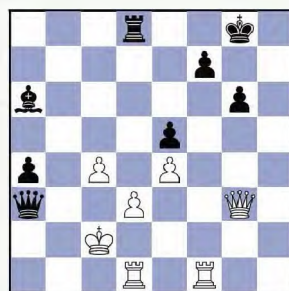
The following position was reached, where it is hard to tell who is fighting for a win. While Vasif had a correct idea about having to defend his kingside, his chosen 35...♔g8?? did not help very much. As a

matter of fact, it made things worse, as now the black king can no longer escape a checkmating net in some of the lines.

36.c4? The first error in a series of mistakes made by Vasif's opponent. Once again, it is hard to criticize White, as Sam was playing on increment at this point.

36.♖h4! was the right way to go, when White can ignore everything except for the h-file. 36...♗d6 37.♗f3 ♗xa3+ 38.♕d2 ♗b2+ 39.♕e3 ♗b6+ 40.♕e2 ♗b2+ 41.♗d2+- . There are no more checks and now the black king is doomed.

36...♗d6 37.♕c2 ♗xa3



38.♗xe5?? It was not too late to play

38.♗f2 ♗b3+ 39.♕c1 which allows White to use his queen as a shield against checks. Although the engine claims that White is out of the woods here, practically this position is likely much easier to play with Black: 39...♗d7 40.♗c2 ♗b4∞.

38...♕xc4! An Important tactic that finally breaches the white king's position. The rest is simple.

39.♗c3 ♗a2+ 40.♕c1 ♗b8 41.♗c2 ♗a3+ 42.♕d2 ♗b2



43.dxc4 ♗b4+ 44.♕c1 ♗xc2+ 45.♕xc2 ♗xc4+ 46.♕d2 ♗d4+ 47.♕e2 ♗xe4+ 48.♕d2 g5 49.♗f2 ♕g7 White resigned

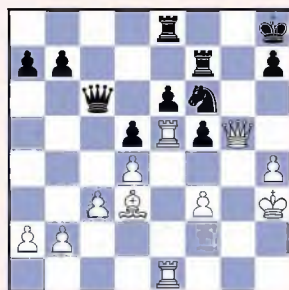
Probably one of the luckiest "guesses" I have ever seen was made by GM Yasser Quesada. Yasser has taken a total of three half-point byes, including a bye in the last round. This is the game he played in round 8, when he was basically in a must-win situation, as he was not going to play the last round.



Yasser Quesada 2609

Viktor Matviishen 2538

National Open, Las Vegas 2023



At this point, Yasser decided to further advance his h-pawn gaining more space from Black, and played **36.h5?**, to which his opponent replied with **36...♗d7?** This response is a passive acceptance of the fact that Black's position is in generic trouble.

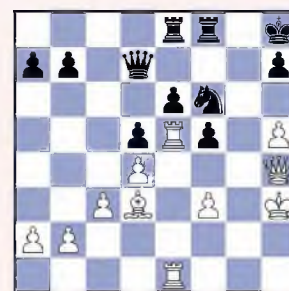
36...♗g8! All of a sudden, Black was availed this amazing opportunity to exploit the white king's unsafe position as well as the overextended h5 pawn, to go for counterplay.



A) 37.♗h6?? is met by 37...♗c7-+, and funnily enough, White is in zugzwang, unable to move.

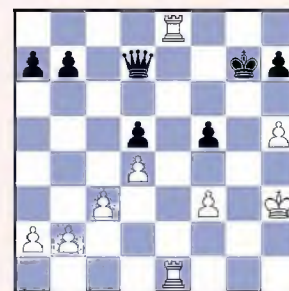
B) 37.♗h4! ♗c7!? 38.h6 (Not 38.♗xe6?? ♕xh5!-+ when White will get checkmated.) 38...♗ff8!? 39.♗xe6 ♕e4!! 40.fxe4 ♗g4 41.♗f2 dxe4∞ and Black would have successfully managed to muddy the water to an extent where White has to be the one saving himself.

37.♗h4 ♗ff8? 37...♗ef8 would have given Black a slight chance for survival. 38.h6 a6 Making good use of the fact that White has a hard time capturing on e6, as there are always ...♕e4 ideas. 39.a4±.



38.♕xf5!! exf5 39.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 40.♗xe8+ ♗f8 41.♗xf8+ ♕g7 42.♗fe8

Two rooks were rather too strong to parry.



42...♗b5 43.♗8e7+ ♕f8 44.♗1e2 ♗d3 45.♕g3 b5 46.♕f4 h6 47.♗e8+ ♕f7 48.♗2e7+ ♕f6 49.♗e6+ ♕f7 50.♗8e7+ ♕f8 51.♕e5 ♗e3+ 52.♕d6 ♗xf3 53.♕d7 f4 54.♗xh6 ♗h3+ 55.♕d8 ♕g8 56.♗g6+ ♕h8 57.♗f6 ♕g8 58.h6 ♗h4 59.h7+ Black resigned



My First GM-Scalp? Well...Almost!

■ By WIM Zoey Tang



Photo: St. Louis Chess Club

▼ Zoey Tang

After Oregon State Championship (Pages 40-43) Zoey's competitive summer season started in late May, first with Chicago Open where she scored 5/9, losing only to GM Zhou Jianchao. Then, in June she played in the National Open in Las Vegas, where she scored a solid 50%. -Ed.

The opening revamp I did after the Oregon Closed helped the next game I'm presenting here. I got a better, not just acceptable position out of the opening (despite not having time to do a thorough preparation). My grandmaster opponent's powerful calculation worked against him, leading him to play an unsound sacrifice. Unfortunately, I was too tempted by the material, missing the chance for an even more winning position. The resulting chances slipped through my fingers, though it was definitely still an up-and-down game. Sadly I missed my chances for my first OTB win against a GM...

B06

Zoey Tang	2270
Arman Mikaelyan	2604

National Open, Las Vegas 2023

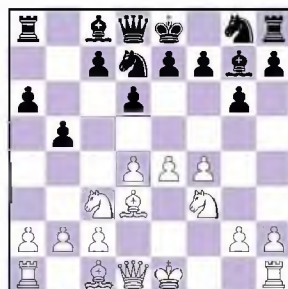
I started with 2/2 against slightly lower-rated players, so I was looking forward to playing the first grandmaster of my tournament.

1.d4 g6 Grandmasters are notoriously difficult to prepare against, given that their opening repertoire is so wide. Add the 15-minute walk from the hotel room to the playing hall, on top of the famously late-posted "American pairings," and I didn't have much time to prepare. However, in

this case, although I had not anticipated the Modern Defense, I didn't mind playing against it. The Modern gives up central space and White usually gets a nice position from the start.

2.e4 g7 3.♘c3 This move blocks the c-pawn, but it allows White to safely push the f-pawn without fear of overextending. **3...a6 4.f4 b5 5.♙f3 d6** White doesn't have to worry about moves like 5...b4?. Early on Black is moving too many pawns and not developing enough pieces. After something like **6.♙a4 ♗b7 7.♙c5±**, White is already much better.

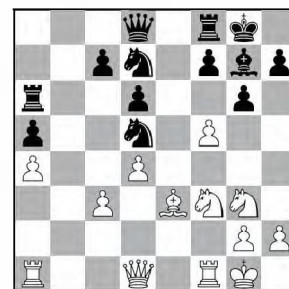
6.♙d3 ♘d7



7.a4 7.e5 is the main line, as I discovered after the game. It aims to deprive Black's knight from developing naturally to the f6 square. **7...c5 8.♙e4 ♗b8 9.0-0 b4 10.♙a4±. 7...b4 8.♙e2 e6** A bit strange. I thought

my opponent would be more forthcoming in the center, pushing for an early ...c7-c5. **9.c3 bxc3 10.bxc3 ♙e7 11.0-0 0-0 12.♙e3** Both sides complete their normal development. White is visually better because of his central control and more actively-placed pieces. Black hopes to undermine the center with a well-timed ...c5, ...e5, or possibly even ...f5 break.

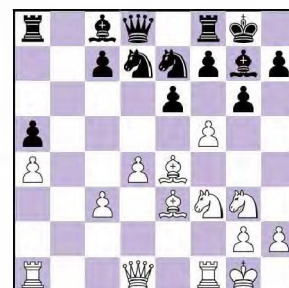
12...a5 13.♙g3 d5 After my last move, I was expecting **13...♙a6 14.♙xa6 ♗xa6 15.f5 exf5 16.exf5 ♙d5**



17.♙g5 ♗a8 18.♗c1± I wasn't expecting much to come out of the kingside attack because of Black's many defenders, but I knew it was the correct direction.

14.f5! Trying to crash through on the kingside while Black's pieces are still on their original squares on the queenside.

14...dxe4 15.♙xe4





15...exf5?? A case of seeing ghosts. My opponent told me after the game that he had rejected 15...d5? on account of 16.g5 d7f6 17.fxg6 hxg6 18.c4 dxc3? 19.♖e1 dxc4 20.dxe4+-.

The natural 15...♖b8?! allows White to seize the initiative with 16.fxe6 fxe6 17.g5 d6 18.dxe5±.

Black's best was 15...♖a6, guarding the e6 pawn laterally. 16.fxg6 hxg6 17.♖d2 ♖b6 18.g5±.

16.♖xa8 ♖a6 17.♖e1? Played after a long (almost 20-minute) think. I spent the majority of my time considering 17.g5! ♖xf1 18.dxf1 f6 19.♖b3+ ♖h8



20.♖c1! ♖xa8 21.♖a3 ♖e8 22.♖e1+- Unfortunately, I wasn't sure of the final evaluation. Also, I thought it would be embarrassing if the correct decision turned out to be taking the material and running after all...

17...♖xa8 18.♖c1 Preparing to trade Black's fianchettoed bishop, which is the best defender and a member of the bishop pair.

18...d5 19.♖h6 ♖d8 20.♖xg7 ♖xg7 21.dxe5?! Continuing in the same vein of trading everything in sight. However, White's f3 knight had far more potential than its silly counterpart on d7.

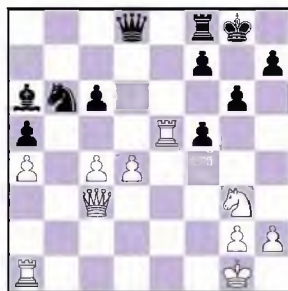
21.c4 d6 22.♖a3 Bringing in the last piece with a nice rook lift.



The natural-looking 22...d6? can be punished by 23.dxf5+! gxf5 24.dxe5 ♖xd4+ 25.♖h1+-, when White will soon follow with ♖g3+ or ♖h3.

21...dxe5 22.♖xe5 c6 23.c4 d6

24.♖c3 ♖g8? The more obvious 24...♖xc4 was better, although the a1-h8 diagonal does look a bit scary for Black. 25.♖b1 (25.d5?! Trying to create some threats doesn't work due to 25...♖f6! 26.dxc6 d5 27.♖e1 d4±, when White's pieces are too full of weaknesses.) 25...♖a2 26.♖a1 ♖c4=.



25.♖xa5?! 25.♖c5! A subtle waiting move. White guards c4 and passes the turn. For example, if Black plays 25...♖e8?!, then White has the option of playing 26.♖xa5 only now, with the idea that after 26...♖xc4?! 27.♖e5!+- creates tension against Black's newly-developed rook. The chances of me finding this during the actual game were very low, to say the least.

25...♖xc4 26.♖e5 ♖d5 27.a5 dxc4 28.♖e2 f4 29.d1f1 f3! An attacking move that looks silly at first glance, but utilizes tactics to create a powerful threat.

30.gxf3 ♖xf3 31.♖f2 Not 31.♖xf3?? ♖xd4+, forking the rook on a1 and winning.

31...♖d5 32.a6 ♖e7 33.a7 The pawn advance is just a distraction. Obviously, White will not be able to promote in the middlegame.

33...♖a8 34.♖b3 Knight discoveries lead nowhere for Black.



34...♖g7 Not technically bad, but it loses the flow of the position. 34...♖xa7?? loses to 35.♖b8+ ♖g7 36.♖xa7+-.

best is 35.♖c2 d6 36.♖a3 dxc8 37.♖c5 ♖xa7 38.♖xa7 ♖xa7 (Not 38...dxa7?? 39.♖xd5+-) 39.♖xa7 dxa7 40.dxe3 with an equal ending.

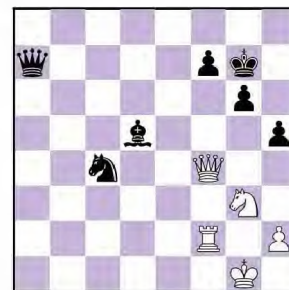
35.♖b8 Now White is the one with the initiative.

35...c5 36.dxc5 ♖xc5 37.♖f4 h5 37...♖xa7 38.♖f6+ ♖h6 (But not 38...♖g8?? 39.♖xa7 ♖xa7 40.♖d8+ ♖g7 41.♖xd5+- The queen is a magician!) 39.♖h4+ ♖g7 40.♖f6+ would end in a perpetual.

38.dg3 At this point, I had already seen the drawing sequence.

38...♖xa7 Black had no way to prolong the game, though. An attempt like 38...♖e6?? allows White a great attack after 39.♖f6+ ♖h6 40.dxe4+-.

39.♖xa7 ♖xa7 Even though White is up an exchange, Black has two pawns in return and White's king is weak. The pinned rook and pawns only on the kingside don't help much, either. I thought that an immediate draw would be fine, and the engine agrees.



40.dhx5+ gxxh5 41.♖g5+ ♖f8

42.♖d8+ 42.♖xd5?? loses tactically after 42...♖a1+ 43.♖f1 ♖xf1+ 44.♖xf1 dxe3+. This resource is always available for Black, should White ever decide to take the bishop.

42...♖g7 43.♖g5+ ♖f8 44.♖d8+ ♖g7 45.♖g5+ Draw

I will continue to travel nationally this summer, playing in big tournaments such as the Denker and the U.S. Junior Girls' Championship. I hope to achieve good results there and apply the lessons I learned this time. Hopefully I'll get to write about another good tournament soon!



FIROUZJA REMAINS AFLOAT BY AN INVISIBLE KNIGHT PROMOTION

My next selection refers to another of the champion's games, played in the recent past. Carlsen now has a no less worthy contender in Alireza Firouzja, making this a game of a past champion against, quite possibly, a future one. True champions are distinguished by their ability to set trends and subsequently shape the modern game of chess.

In their game below you can see both contenders setting a modern trend as early as moves 3 and 4 – Carlsen's 3.♔d3!? is met in style by Firouzja's 4...g5!. So, with barely five moves made on the board, we are already in for a wild game. And they don't let us down!

B40

Magnus Carlsen	2853
Alireza Firouzja	2785

Norway Chess, Stavanger 2023

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.♔d3 A trademark of Carlsen. It's a great pity one can no longer refer to him as 'World Champion'. His drive to wage battles in uncharted battlefields, away from computer-generated highways, has truly set him apart from his many leading rivals.

3...♙c6 4.0-0



4...g5! But Firouzja replies in style! Two corresponding unorthodox decisions at such an early stage will make this a game to remember.

5.♙b5 The alternative is 5.c3.

5...♙g7 Please don't ask me why Firouzja stops midway. Had I been playing this game myself, I would be too curious to see Carlsen retreating 5...g4 6.♙e1 (6.♙xc6 seems unlikely, as 6...gxf3 7.♙b5 fxf2 makes me feel that Black is already better.) 6...♙d4 7.♙d3 h5 8.c3 ♙c6.

6.♙xc6 bxc6 7.d3 Having shed his nuisance bishop in return for fracturing Black's structure, Carlsen's setup now makes perfect sense. Meanwhile, Firouzja has gained possession of the bishop pair and with his next move he pushes the white knight away.

7...g4 8.♙fd2 h5 9.♙b3 d6 10.f4 A helpful move to keep Firouzja's kingside offensive in check. He now needs to decide whether to take *en passant* or skip it for good.

10...♙e7 It would be unwise to encourage White to unleash his firepower on his own king by 10...gxf3?! – and moreover quite worrying to be threatened with a mate in one after 11.♙xf3.



11.♙d2! Now a former World Champion,

On move 11 Carlsen generously offers Firouzja material, but the latter is suspicious and accepts only a tiny fraction of it. By move 26 Carlsen has regained his pawn and furthermore both his bishop and knight now occupy dominant positions in the center, leaving him clearly poised for a confident win. Meanwhile Firouzja makes a fierce attempt to track down the white king from both flanks. The Frenchman's ferocity finally leads to a bold, though resourceful, bishop sac 31...♙xf4!. Both players can sense only too well how desperate Black is. In a wild maze of variations, obscured by a relentlessly ticking clock, it transpires that Firouzja's attack would have collapsed quickly, if not for an unbelievable recurring knight promotion, which never actually happened in the game but nevertheless effectively kept Carlsen at bay. The final verdict? A fair fighting draw worth a thousand wins!



▲ Magnus Carlsen

Photo by Lennat Ootes

Carlsen knows no fear! With the text, he offers Firouzja the exchange and a pawn, but Firouzja accepts only part of the package – this time with my full approval.

11...♙xb2 On 11...a5, both 12.a4 and my preference 12.♙c3! would have left Firouzja in the hands of a monster, grinding him down positionally – and free of charge!

12.♙a5 ♙d7 13.♙1d2 ♙g7 Spurning the exchange. Despite the loss of time, Firouzja prevents ♙a5-c3 for time being.

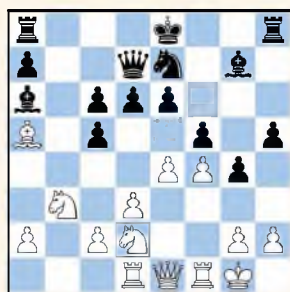
One must have an engine instead of a heart to hand over the long diagonal to the enemy by 13...♙xa1 14.♙xa1 ♙g6 (14...♙g8 15.♙f6) whereupon White can proceed with 15.e5 d5 16.♙xc5 with awesome compensation.

14.♙e1 Carlsen allows his opponent to resist the temptation to be greedy.

14...♙a6 No way!

15.♙d1 White has excellent compensation for the deficit of just one pawn.. Black must cope with White's various positional threats, such as e4-e5, f4-f5 and ♙d2-c4, followed by ♙a5-c3.

15...f5 Understandably, Firouzja wants more control in the center. But the next move from Carlsen hits his weakened queenside pawns hard.



16.e5! 17.dxc4 18.dxc4 Black is under pressure now.

18...d5 19.dxc5 ♖c8 19...♗e7!? 20.dxa6 ♕f7.

20.dxb3 Despite the turbulence, Firouzja has succeeded in keeping his pawn chain intact. With his last move Carlsen opens the way for his biggest trump – posting his bishop on d6.

20...0-0 21.♙b4 ♖e8 22.♙d6 ♗a6 Meanwhile Firouzja is actively seeking counterplay on both wings. 23.♗c3 ♖ad8 Now ...♗xd6 is threatened. Firouzja is clearly provoking c4-c5 to deny access for the enemy knight to occupy this important outpost.

24.c5 ♙h6 25.g3 Hemming in the black bishop, but on the other hand inviting ...h5-h4 with a subsequent rook attack down the h-file.

25...♗d7 26.d4 ♖f7 27.♙b1 h4

28.♗d3 White's bishop is cutting the black camp in half and leaving his knight preying on three black pawns, out of which c6 is especially vulnerable. Black's position is on the verge of collapse. With his next move, however, Firouzja continues his active defensive strategy, no matter what.

28...♗a4! 29.a3?! By this stage Carlsen must have assessed his position as winning and now wants to comfortably wrap up the game, without even leaving the meagre a2 pawn to be taken by his opponent. Though Carlsen's move doesn't squander White's large advantage, it takes away the good a3 square from his rook.

On 29.♗b3 I don't see how Black could avert a quick collapse after the c6 pawn falls. His counterplay via the h-file comes too late – 29...hxc3 30.hxc3 ♖h7 31.♖a3 ♗b4 32.dxc6 ♗b7 33.d4 ♙xf4 34.gxf4 (34.c6 ♗g7) 34...♖h3 35.♗b5 ♗h7 36.♗xe8+-.

29...a5 Defending against Carlsen's ♖b1-b4, but isolating the black queen even more. Carlsen probably thought

this desperate defense would grant him decisive entry via b6, but on closer examination he changes his mind.

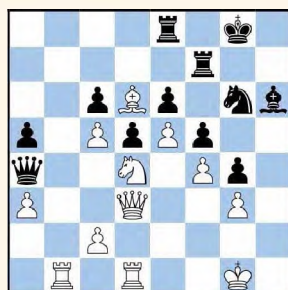
30.♖fd1 On 30.♖b6 Black no longer has any chance of keeping his position intact and must urgently commence active play, however costly, on the white king. 30...hxc3 31.hxc3 ♖h7 32.♖xc6 ♙xf4! 33.gxf4 ♖h3=.



▲ Alireza Firouzja

Photo by Lennart Ootes

30...hxc3 31.hxc3



31...♙xf4! Ultimately this blast shouldn't have helped Black, but there is no better timing for it with Carlsen's rook deflected from f1.

32.gxf4 ♙xf4 33.♗b3 Carlsen rejects 33.♗a6 as unnecessarily risky. I think it should be winning too, but I agree that some lines are terrifying and require very precise calculation, so White had better not go there now.

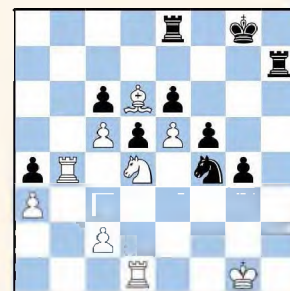
33...♗xb3 34.♖xb3 a4! In a desperate situation Firouzja continues to fight with all available resources.

35.♖b4 A well known problem of the

so-called 'winning the won game' is the confusing number of winning ways.

Had Carlsen known what a furious chase of his king was in store for him, maybe he would have played the more defensive-minded 35.♖e3, and if then, for example, 35...♖h7 36.♖f1 ♙h3+ 37.♕g2 f4 38.♖xh3 gxh3+ 39.♕h2±.

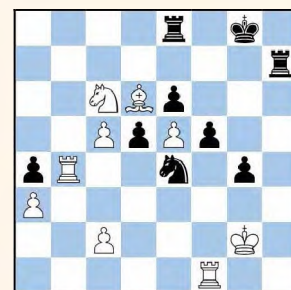
35...♖h7



36.♖f1 36.dxc6 allows 36...♙e2+ 37.♕f1 ♖h2 38.♖b8 ♖xb8 39.♙xb8 g3 winning.

36...♙h3+ 37.♕g2 ♙g5! Not 37...f4? due to 38.dxc6. Firouzja demonstrates an excellent feel for the key squares on the board. The knight is now transferred to the heart of the board on e4. So what, you may ask... How does it contribute to Black's counterattack there? Well, let's see one move ahead.

38.dxc6 ♙e4 With his queenside rapidly disintegrating, Firouzja now places all his hopes on a counterattack by ...♖h7-h3-g3...



39.♖xe4? Under pressure of the first time control, Carlsen naturally heads for simplification. However, Black's pawn mass around the white king only increases in number.

On 39.d4 Black carries out his key idea of invasion by 39...♖h3! 40.♙e2 ♖e3 41.♙f4, and now has ample choice of sensible rook moves along the third rank: 41...♖g3+, 41...♖c3 or even 41...♖xa3.

The power of Firouzja's wonderful knight maneuver ...♙h3-g5-e4 gets good exposure in the following line: 39.♖h1 f4 40.♖xh7 f3+ 41.♕g1 ♙xh7 42.d4 (42.♖b8 ♖xb8 43.♙xb8 g3 44.c6 f2+-)



42...♔g6 43.c6 ♖h8.

At last, in my faulty human analysis, I discovered the totally counter-intuitive 39.♕e7+!? which, I believe, could be winning for White, especially if Black grabs everything on offer.

For example, 39...♞xe7

A) 40.♞b8+ ♔f7 41.♞xe7 looks strong, but so does Black's trademark counterplay by 41...♞h3 42.♞h1 ♖g3+ 43.♔f1 ♞f3+ 44.♔e1 ♞xa3.

B) 40.♞xe7 ♞xe7 (Again, if Black has the guts to be merciful to the enemy bishop and play the ingenious 40...♞h3! instead, then probably he can continue his fierce resistance a rook down.) 41.c6 and this single pawn supported by the rook on b4, which Carlsen decided he would no longer need, makes itself felt after 41...♕c5 (41...♞c7 42.♞b8+ ♔f7 43.♞b7+-) 42.♞fb1 ♔f7 (42...♕c7 43.♞b8+ ♔f7 44.♞b7; 42...♕a6 43.♞b7 ♕c7 meets a thematic end - 44.♞xc7! ♞xc7 45.♞b8+ ♔f7 46.♞b7 ♞e7 47.c7+-) 43.♞b7 f4 44.c7 and White wins.

39...dxe4 A third black pawn now joins the brigade fighting the white king. However, optically, White's position still looks winning. It seems like Carlsen also fell for this illusion.

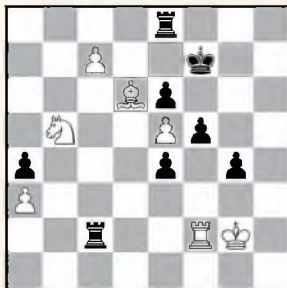
40.♕d4 Of course now 40.♕e7+? is out of the equation after 40...♞hx7.

40...♞h3! A powerful invasion. Once Firouzja places his rook behind White's pride and joy, the c6 pawn, the outcome of this awesome game is anyone's guess.

41.c6 Since 41.♞h1 can be met not only by 41...♞c3 but by 41...♞xa3 too.

41...♔f7! Displaying remarkable self-control in the heat of battle, Firouzja gives support to the e6 pawn and at the same time reinforces his attack by an upcoming ...♞eh8.

42.c7 ♞eh8 42...♞c3 43.♕b5 ♞xc2+ 44.♞f2



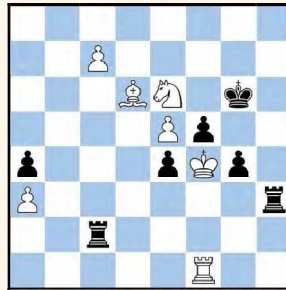
A) 44...♞xf2+? 45.♔xf2 f4 46.♕c5 e3+ 47.♔e2 winning.

B) Better is 44...♞c6 45.♕a7 ♞c3=.

43.♕c6 43.♕xf5? is a futile attempt,

e.g. 43...exf5 44.♞xf5+ ♔e6 45.♞f8 ♞xf8 46.♞xf8 ♞c3+.

43...♞h2+ 44.♔g3 ♞xc2 45.♕d8+ ♔g6 46.♕xe6 ♞h3+ 47.♔f4

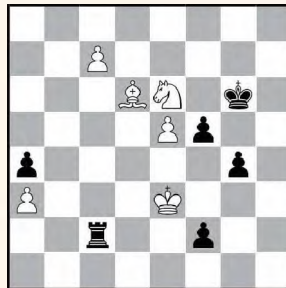


47...♞f3+! 48.♞xf3 exf3 Unbelievable! The former d7 pawn inches even closer towards the glorious goal of bringing home the win to Firouzja!

49.♔g3 Carlsen's pawn is a step nearer to the promotion square, but Firouzja's lone queen, (or "knights," as you will soon see) attacking the enemy king, now leaves the odds firmly on Black's side!

All attempts at interference backfire on White, and some of these have astonishing beauty. Consider the following: 49.♕c5 f2 50.♕f8+ ♔h5 or 49.♕c5 f2, and Black will mate the opposing king shortly.

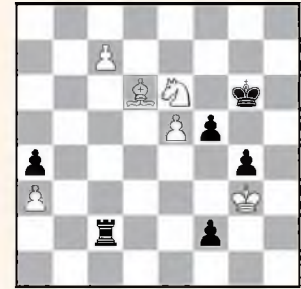
49.♔e3 f2



A) Yet the absolute cherry on the cake is 50.c8♞ f1♕+! 51.♔f4 (51.♕d3 ♞xc8) 51...♞f2 mate!! - I am left speechless!

B) 50.♕f4+ ♔h7 51.c8♞ f1♕+! Only this wonderful promotion and nothing else keeps Firouzja on top.

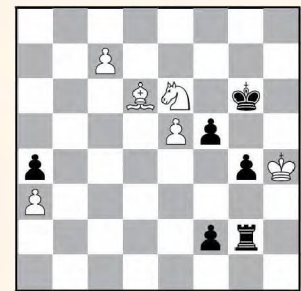
49...♞g2+ Somehow I became aware of the comp's 'wisdom' of Black winning after 49...f2, despite my best efforts to ignore it. Having undertaken some analysis of the resulting lines I can attest to them being utterly inhumane, beyond the comprehension of even the likes of Carlsen or Firouzja. So no worries, I won't criticise Firouzja for the alleged 'mistake' on his last fairly human move. To save such a game a piece down against Carlsen is in itself an achievement.



A) 50.♕f4+ ♔h7 51.♔g2 g3 52.♕e2 (Or 52.♕d3 f4 53.♕c5 f3+ 54.♔f1 g2 mate.) 52...f4.

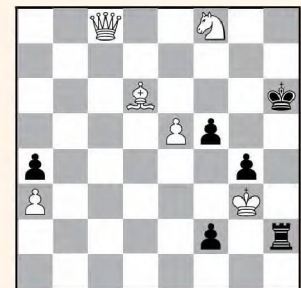
B) 50.♔g2 g3 51.♕f4+ ♔h7 52.♕e2 Things look pretty bad for Black but that is only a human perception due to 52...f4! 53.♔f1 ♞d2 54.♕c3 f3 55.c8♞ g2 mate. Deplorable engine stuff, my apologies...

50.♔h4 ♞h2+ Here 50...f2? is also worth a look.



A) Again, the obvious 51.c8♞? meets mind-blowing punishment: 51...♞h2+ 52.♔g3 f1♕+ 53.♔f4 ♞f2 mate!

B) 51.♕f8+? is wrong for a similar amazing reason - 51...♔h6 52.c8♞ ♞h2+ 53.♔g3



53...f1♕+!! 54.♔f4 ♞f2 mate. Has this Iranian-French youngster used chess problem solving for training purposes in his childhood?

C) Finally, White spoils the fun for Black by 51.♕f4+ ♔h6 52.♞f8+! Now, at last, White wrests the g5 square from Black and wins easily after 52...♔h7 53.c8♞ ♞h2+ 54.♔g5.

51.♔g3 ♞g2+ 52.♔h4 Drawn by repetition.



A Peek Inside Private Archive

SILMAN'S HIDDEN GEMS

The West Coast has given us Jeremy Silman: a best-selling author and formidable IM. Now, we're venturing into uncharted waters, presenting games from Silman's private collection, showcasing his thorough opening groundwork and individualistic approach to the game.

■ By Andy Ansel



Jeremy Silman is best known for his writing and his books include *Pal Benko's Life and Games*, *How to Reassess Your Chess* (his all-time classic with four completely different editions) and *Silman's Complete Endgame Course*. He also authored many openings monographs including pioneering works on the Accelerated Dragon

of the Sicilian and Caro Kann.

A terrific commentator, Silman lectured at several US Championships and was a mainstay at the American Open where he served as the chief lecturer for close to two decades. His work for The Great Chess Courses series, *How to Play Chess: Lessons from an International Master*, has sold over 100,000 copies.

I have known Jeremy since the mid-1970's from the Berkeley chess scene. A struggling chess professional in his twenties, he would sometimes make the rent by hawking foreign language chess books, some of which I still have in my library. Jeremy would often go over my games and give me free advice. It was

very kind for such a strong player to pay attention to a lowly class B player.

Jeremy grew up in San Diego and started playing in the late 1960s. A late bloomer, it was only when he moved to San Francisco in 1974 that his chess career took off, earning the USCF master title that year at the late age of 20 and crossing the 2400 and 2500 barriers a few years later. He later settled in Los Angeles where he achieved his peak rating of 2593 on the May 1990 USCF rating list.

While pretty much a life-long Californian, Jeremy did spend the first half of 1978 playing non-stop in England where he successfully butted heads with future Grandmasters Jonathan Speelman, John Nunn and Danny King. He also lived for short stints in Chicago and Seattle, winning the Washington state championship in the latter.



Andy Ansel can be considered a product of the Fischer boom, having learned to play chess in 1972. He was active in the Bay Area chess scene while in High School, after which he moved to New York, where he achieved a peak rating of around 2100. He has now retired from active chess play but spends his time collecting books and maintaining a database based on games drawn from his library. He currently resides in North Fork, Long Island, with his wife and two dogs. His grown-up daughters live in NYC and London.

FROM A RATHER UNIQUE GAMES DATABASE, *AMERICAN CHESS MAGAZINE* REVEALS EXCLUSIVELY SOME HIDDEN GEMS GATHERED TOGETHER OVER DECADES BY RENOWNED BIBLIOPHILE ANDY ANSEL.

The three games selected for this column highlight Silman's deep opening preparation (obviously well before the computer era) and his acute understanding of a position's strength or weakness such as valuing pieces and pawn structure. Also different in this column is that Pete is only annotating one game. The other two come directly from Jeremy's file and show what he was thinking during the game.

Jeremy's opponent in the first game is the late Maryland master Denis Strenzwilk. Denis was a 2300-rated player who once drew with Yakov Estrin, World Correspondence Champion, in a local event and beat many top local Washington DC area players. He was known for strong endgame play as well as detailed opening preparation. The following game shows Silman's novel approach to handling the Accelerated Dragon.

B70

Denis Strenzwilk

Jeremy Silman

National Open 1990

Notes by Pete Tamburro

A wonderful lesson game! The Accelerated Dragon is a great thematic defense for both young people making their way up the ranks and older people who don't want to have to remember umpteen different lines in the Najdorf.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 g6 5.♘c3 ♙g7 6.♘b3 Old School! The ♘c4 paired with ♙e3 approach and the Maroczy Bind are both covered in my book *Openings for Amateurs – Next Steps*.

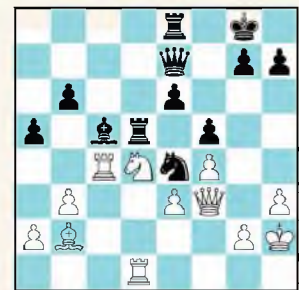
6...♘f6 If you're into damaging pawn structures right away you could play 6...♙xc3+ 7.bxc3 ♘f6 8.♙d3 d5 9.exd5 ♙xd5 10.0-0 0-0 11.c4 ♙d6 12.h3 ♙f5, but it's not as convincing as Silman's approach which uses a more traditional Dragon setup.

**D37**

**Miguel Najdorf
Jeremy Silman**

Lone Pine 1976

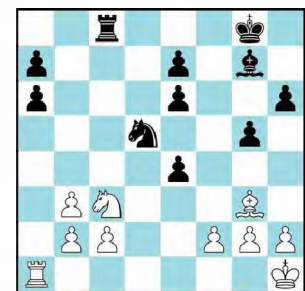
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3
♙e7 5.e3 0-0 6.♙d3 b6 7.b3 ♙b7
8.0-0 ♘bd7 9.♙b2 ♘e4 10.♙e2 a6
11.♙ad1 ♙b4 12.♘b1 ♙d6 13.♘e5 f5
14.f3 ♘g5 15.♘d2 c5 16.♘xd7 ♙xd7
17.dxc5 ♙xc5 18.f4 ♘f7 19.♘f3 ♙e7
20.♘d4 ♘d6 21.cxd5 ♙xd5 22.♙c1
a5 23.♘c2 ♘e4 24.♙fd1 ♙fd8
25.♙c4 ♘f6 26.♘d4 ♙ac8 27.h3
♙xc4 28.♙xc4 ♙d5 29.♙h2 ♙e8
30.♙f3 ♘e4



31.♘xf5 ♙d7 32.♘g7 ♙xd1 33.♘xe8
♙xe8 34.♙xd1 ♙g6 35.♙f3 ♘d2
36.♙a8+ ♙f8 37.♙c8 ♘f1+ 38.♙g1
Black resigned

22...bxa6 Black has tripled pawns and doubled isolated rook-pawns, yet he has the advantage.

23.♙a1 ♘d5

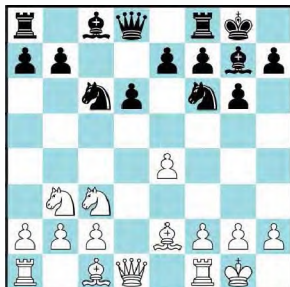


The vectors come to fruition – without the queens and one less rook. This is real Dragon play. White does get to gobble some pawns, but Black does, too, and the game is equal, but there are some things that can go wrong...

24.♙xa6 ♘f7 25.♙xa7 ♙xc3! The great endgame author is not wedded to saving his bishop over his knight if giving up the bishop is better. Objectivity!

26.bxc3 ♙xc3 27.h4 ♙xc2 28.hxg5 hxg5 29.♙g1 e3 The engine likes these

7.♙e2 d6 8.0-0 0-0



9.♙h1 Also possible is **9.♙e3 ♙e6 10.f4 ♙c8!! 11.h3 ♙d8** (Skold - Lundin, Stockholm vs. Budapest Match, 1947) where Black has no fear of **12.g4** because of **12...d5**, the thematic Dragon move which discourages White's **f4-f5**. Now **13.f5** is met by **13...dxe4 14.♙e1 gxf5** and Black is winning. Note the importance of **10...♙c8**. It allowed the rook to get to d8 to aim at the white queen and it supported the defense to **f4-f5**.

9...♙e6 10.♙g5 h6 Silman could have preceded the **...d5** thrust with **10...a5 11.a4 h6 12.♙e3 d5**.

11.♙h4 g5! Eliminating threats to the knight that supports the **...d5** break. It's aggressive and safe since White is castled kingside.

12.♙g3 d5! And there we are! Black has equalized.

13.♘c5 If **13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♙xd5 15.♙xd5 ♙xd5 16.♙ad1 ♙fd8! 17.c3 ♘e5 18.f4 gxf4 19.♙xf4 ♘g6** and Black's a little better due to a nicely directed bishop pair – and the e7 pawn is passed!
13...dxe4 A somewhat unorthodox move

for modern tastes, but Silman has a plan for his tripled pawns!

14.♘xe6 fxe6 15.♙c4 ♙c8 16.♙b3 ♘a5 17.♙e2 ♘xb3 18.axb3



All the “vectors” in the Dragon are coming into play: action along the long diagonal, the c-file and the coming **...♘d5** – all later supported by the rooks – are enormous headaches for White.

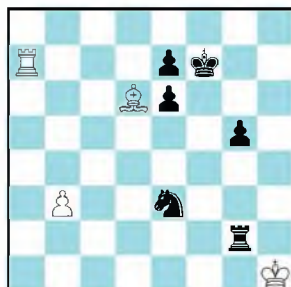
18...♙c6 19.♙a4 ♙fc8? The engine likes two other moves better: **19...e3 20.♙xe3 b5 21.♙a5 a6=**.

Or **19...♙ac8 20.♙xa7 ♘d5 21.♙xe4 ♘xc3 22.♙xc6 ♙xc6 23.bxc3 ♙xc3 24.♙xb7 ♘f7 25.♙c7 ♙xc7 26.♙xc7 ♙c8 27.♙b6 ♙xc2 28.♙b1 ♙c3 29.h4 gxf4 30.b4 ♙e8=**.
20.♙c4 ♙a6?! Black has sufficient counterplay after **20...♙b6 21.♘xe4 ♙xc4 22.bxc4 a5 23.c3 a4 24.h3 ♙c6 25.♘d2 a3**.

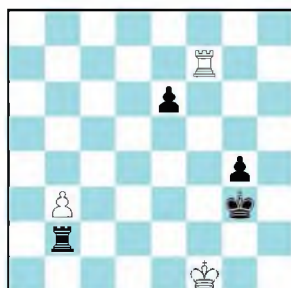
21.♙xc8+ ♙xc8 22.♙xa6? A better chance at keeping the balance was **22.♘b5 ♙b6 23.♘a3 ♙c5**, but Black is still better placed. The white knight is offside and defensive. White's bishop attacks air and Black's major pieces are on better squares.



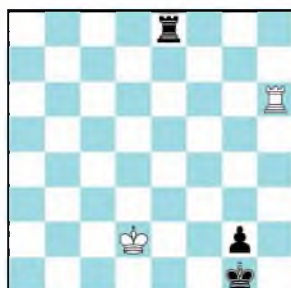
two moves a little better – both 29...♔f6 and 29...♖c1+, but the game move is much more artistic and just as effective. 30.fxe3 ♖xe3 31.♗d6 ♖xg2+ This whole planned out concept is terrific! Silman has set up an endgame win. 32.♔h1



32...♖e2 33.♗xe7 ♔g6 34.♗c5 g4 White is in a world of hurt. His passed b-pawn is not a threat as Black can get behind it with his rook. The black king will not only become more powerful as it advances, but it will be shielded from check from the black pawns. If the rook, knight, g-pawn and king all are allowed to descend on the trapped white king, it will be over quickly, so... 35.♗xe3 ♖xe3 36.♖b7 ♖e2! 37.♔g1 ♔f5 38.♖f7+ ♔e4 39.♖g7 ♔f3 40.♖f7+ ♔g3 41.♔f1 ♖b2



42.♖e7 ♖xb3 43.♖xe6 ♖b1+ 44.♔e2 ♔g2 Black controls the queening square with his king. It's over. Can you say, "Lucena?" 45.♔d2 g3 46.♖g6 ♖b8 47.♔e3 ♖f8 48.♖g7 ♔h2 49.♔e2 g2 50.♖h7+ ♔g1 51.♖h6 ♖e8+ 52.♔d2



52...♖e5 Any aspiring player should know this introduction to building a bridge.



SILMAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD

THE SANTA MONICA PIER, LOCATED IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, IS AN ICONIC LANDMARK THAT HAS BEEN DRAWING VISITORS SINCE 1909. THE PIER IS ALSO HOME TO THE PACIFIC PARK AMUSEMENT PARK, BOASTING A SOLAR-POWERED FERRIS WHEEL THAT OFFERS PANORAMIC VIEWS OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND THE CITY. SANTA MONICA PIER IS A MUST-VISIT DESTINATION FOR BOTH LOCALS AND TOURISTS ALIKE.

53.♖h8 ♔f2 54.♖f8+ ♔g3 55.♖g8+ ♔f3 White resigned

It's surprising Strenzwilk made Silman play this out. Didn't he read Silman's 1988 book, *Essential Chess Endings* (Chess Digest)? For those readers not familiar with the Lucena Position, here's how you build what is known as a bridge: 56.♖f8+ ♔g4 57.♖g8+ ♖g5.

Anyhow, the game was chock full of excellent concepts for those playing the Dragon and for those who wish to see a master of endgames at work.

The brevity against Sanchez shows the power of Silman's opening knowledge and preparation. Gabriel was a strong 2300+ player from the Bay Area who played in many local events as well as major National tournaments. This game is not representative of his true strength but also shows the power of Silman's novelty.

A70

Jeremy Silman

Gabriel Sanchez

San Jose 1981

Notes by Jeremy Silman

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖f3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.♖c3 g6 7.♗f4 a6 8.e4 b5 9.♗e2 My opponent, a strong master, had never seen this before.

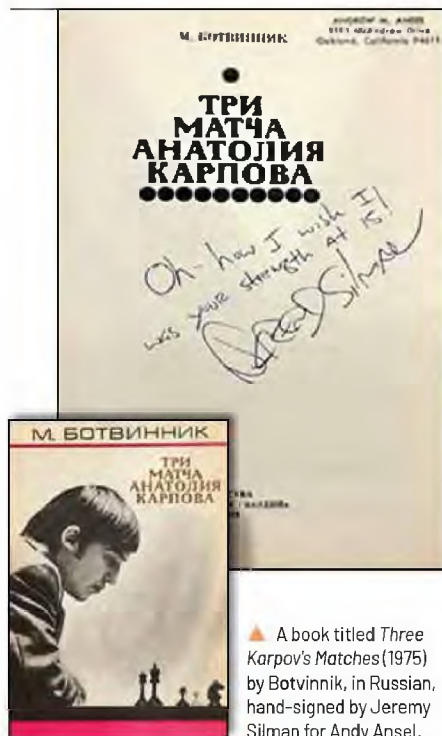
[Considering the year when this

Deadly against the Benoni

In his prime Silman was a formidable tournament player, winning or tying for first in the US Open, National Open, American Open and the Northern and Southern California Championships. He was also quite a theoretician. One of his key ideas was accepting doubled a-pawns in a number of variations in the Accelerated Dragon and he also discovered 9. ♗e2 in the Modern Benoni, as shown in the Sanchez game below. In fact, he was deadly against the Benoni, scoring 90% against it with strong wins over many titled players.

game was played, Silman's comment is absolutely understandable. At first glance, this queen move looks out of the ordinary as it deprives White's light-squared bishop from its "usual" development on e2 or d3. Then again, the direct threat of e4-e5 is just scary for Black, to say the least.

And, with contemporary "tools" in hand, it gets even more understandable that unconventional ideas invite extraordinary answers! Engines suggest that Black should opt either for 9...♗e7, when White can castle long (!), or for the similarly extraordinary 9...♖a7!?



▲ A book titled *Three Karpov's Matches* (1975) by Botvinnik, in Russian, hand-signed by Jeremy Silman for Andy Ansel.

that leads to very sharp play after 10.e5 ♖e7 11.♗e3. Well, one thing is for sure – Silman did his homework long before coming to this game, and it was a huge advantage particularly in a pre-computer era! -Dusan Kronic]



After a long think, he reacts with an immediate mistake.

9...♗g4?? Believe it or not, the game is now over!

10.e5! Winning on the spot.

10...♗xf3 Or **10...♗h5** 11.exd6+ ♔d7 12.♗e5+ ♔c8 13.♗xg4+.

11.gxf3 ♗h5



12.exd6+ ♔d7 **13.♗h3+ f5** **14.♗e6**
Mate.

The last game is against U.S./Canadian GM Peter Biyiasas, who was also a mainstay in the Bay Area chess scene – besides being known for having Fischer stay with him. This game shows Jeremy going toe to toe in a tough fight with a GM and coming out on top.

A29

Peter Biyiasas

Jeremy Silman

Berkeley 1983

Notes by Jeremy Silman

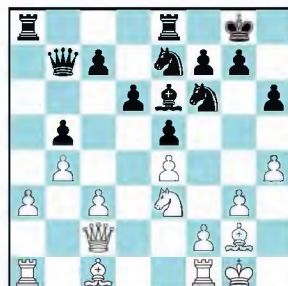
1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.g3 ♗b4 4.♗g2
0-0 5.♗f3 ♗c6 6.0-0 ♖e8 7.♗e1
♗xc3 8.dxc3 d6 9.♗c2 h6 10.e4



10...a6! An excellent move. Some might ask why Black intends to rid White of his doubled pawns. The answer lies in the quest for an active plan. Since White's doubled pawns gain space and are not weak, Black has no qualm about trading them off. The point of ...a7-a6 is clear: Black has no chances on the kingside and White holds more space in the center. This leaves the queenside as the one area of contention, so Black rushes to open lines there to enable his rooks to take part in the coming battle.

11.♗e3 b5 12.cxb5 axb5 13.b4 ♗e6
14.♗e2 ♗b8 Black already has the preferable position since White's two bishops are inactive and his a-pawn is a target.

15.h4 ♗b7! 16.a3 ♗e7 17.♗c2



17...♗g4! White's best piece is his e3 knight, so Black goes out of his way to

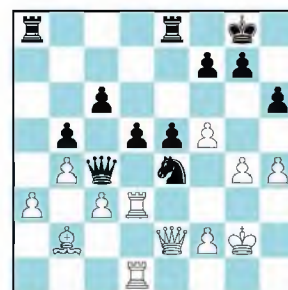
exchange it.

18.♗f5? Strategically losing. Now Black creates a crushing knight versus a poor bishop scenario.

18...♗xf5 19.exf5 ♗d5 20.♗xd5 ♗xd5 21.♗e2 ♗f6 22.♗b2 ♗e4
23.♗fd1 Better was **23.♗fe1 ♗d2**
24.♗ad1, though Black retains a marked advantage after **24...♗f3+ 25.♗h1 ♗b3**
26.♗xf3 ♗xb2 27.f6 ♗xa3.

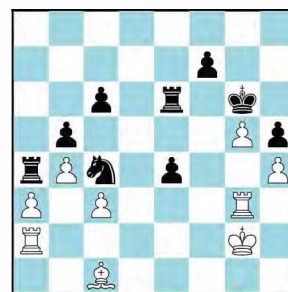
23...♗c6 24.♗d3 d5 25.♗ad1 ♗c4
26.♗g2 c6 Finding himself in a nightmarish situation with a bad bishop and weak pawns on a3 and c3, White decides to try for some desperately needed kingside play.

27.g4



27...♗f6! Forcing the exchange of queens and ending White's attack before it even begins!

28.g5 ♗e4+ 29.♗xe4 ♗xe4 30.♗c1
h5 31.♗e1 ♗d6 Heading for c4 where it will target the a3 pawn for destruction.
32.f6 ♗c4 33.fxg7 ♗xg7 34.♗f3 ♗e6
35.♗e2 e4 36.♗g3 ♗a4 37.f3 ♗g6
38.fxe4 dxe4 39.♗a2



39...♗d6 40.♗e2 ♗d1 41.♗e3 ♗xa3
42.♗d4 ♗d2 43.♗xd2 ♗xd2 44.♗f2
♗f3 45.♗e3 ♗f5 46.♗g2 ♗a1 47.♗f6
♗e1+ 48.♗f2 ♗f4 Threatening **49...e3** mate.

49.♗d4 e3+ 50.♗xe3+ ♗xe3 51.g6
fxg6 52.♗xg6 ♗xc3 53.♗h6 ♗c2+
54.♗f1 ♗xh4 55.♗xh5 ♗f5

White resigned ■



OPENINGS HAVE BECOME LESS PREDICTABLE – AND MORE FUN

New Chess Era!

Never before has versatility proved to be more necessary than today when it comes to opening choices. What changes have we experienced due to the computer chess revolution? May we use the word ‘offbeat’ for any chess opening today?

■ By Dylan Loeb McClain

We are living in what might be called the Eclectic Age of chess openings – an era of opening versatility and creativity when no opening seems to be significantly more popular than others and no top player, with a couple of exceptions, is known for playing particular systems.

That is a significant departure from how chess was played during most of the modern era, a period from about 1850. For most of the time since then, many openings have gone in and out of fashion, often, but not always, based on their use by world champions.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Benoni Defense had a heyday because Mikhail Tal (and David Bronstein before him) were adherents.

In the late 1960s and the 1970s, the Poisoned Pawn Variation of the Sicilian Defense was a mainstay because Bobby Fischer employed it, notably in his 1972 match with Boris Spassky. Fischer’s use of the Sozin system against the Sicilian Defense (now known as the Fischer-Sozin system) similarly popularized that opening.



The Scotch enjoyed a resurgence after Garry Kasparov trotted it out twice in his 1990 battle with Anatoly Karpov. And since Vladimir Kramnik used the Berlin Defense



“The epoch when players prepared opening surprises that could decisively tip the balance or stuck with opening systems that suited a particular style, is basically over.”

to stymie Kasparov in their 2000 match, the opening has become an essential part of the repertoires of everyone from world championship candidates to weekend club players.

But where top-level players once might be fairly consistent in the openings that they used, now almost anything goes. The reason for this change is a direct, but not necessarily obvious consequence of the rise of computers and databases.

On the one hand, since all players have access to these technological resources, it is much easier for them to learn new systems. They also want to avoid being blindsided by an opponent’s preparation before a game. Indeed, preparing for games and matches has become a far more important, and time-consuming process than before the age of computers. As Magnus Carlsen noted when he decided not to defend the

world championship in 2023, the time to prepare for such a match, which takes months, has become a grind and, at least for him, no fun. After all, who wants to try to remember and try to spring a novelty on move 19 of a closed Ruy Lopez? Is such a thing still even possible?

But there is also an upside to the computer chess revolution: It is spurring players to try ideas and play openings that are offbeat and not always sound, which is entertaining for fans, if not for the players themselves.

That seems to have been a factor in the preparation for the world championship match in Kazakhstan earlier this year between Ding Liren and Ian Nepomniachtchi. How else to explain Ding Liren playing 4.h3 in the Queen’s Gambit Declined in Game 2 instead of 4.dxc3 (the most popular) or 4.g3?



Dylan Loeb McClain is a journalist and a FIDE master. He worked at *The New York Times* from 1994 to 2012 and wrote the chess column for the paper from 2006 to 2014. He now lives in a Paris suburb and works for *Les Echos*, a daily French business newspaper. He also continues to write articles for *The New York Times* from time to time.



The move appears only a few times in databases that have millions of games, and it steered the contest into almost uncharted territory. Even Nepomniachtchi seemed to enjoy the moment, as he smiled when Ding played the move.

Choosing such an offbeat opening when the stakes are so high is brave. It is more natural to do so when less is on the line and the games are faster, which gives the opponent less time to find the best moves. Witness Carlsen's use of the Polish Defense in a game against Radoslaw Wojtaszek during the Superbet rapid tournament in May.



Versatility has become a necessity and a virtue.

Of course, there can be consequences. Ding and Carlsen lost their games, though the cause was not necessarily their openings. In 2005, Hikaru Nakamura tried 2.♟h5?! in three games (twice after 1.e4 e5 and once after 1.e4 c5) and came away with a 50 percent score. In those games, too, his experiment was not responsible for the results, at least not directly. But in his loss against Krishnan Sasikiran, a strong Indian grandmaster, Black easily seized the initiative after 1.e4 e5 2.♟h5 ♞c6 3.♞c4 g6 4.♟f3 ♟f6 5.♞e2 ♟g7 6.♞bc3 d6 7.d3 ♟g4.



The fact that Nakamura never played 2.♟h5 in another serious tournament game says as much as needs to be said about what he thought about the idea.

Good opening principles (control the center, develop minor pieces first, develop as quickly as possible) have been honed over hundreds of years of practice for good reason, so flouting those principles does come with a cost. For someone trying something offbeat when playing White, the result can be, or usually is, the loss of the opening advantage; for a player who is Black, it can make the uphill fight for equality that much harder.

Is there a right time and a wrong time to try what Jon Edwards, the reigning world correspondence champion, has called suboptimal openings? Judging by Ding's use of them in the world championship, the answer would seem to be – NO. But, in a May lecture at the Marshall Chess Club, Edwards pointed out that, in the correspondence chess world, such openings are basically fatal. As he said, there is no point in playing them, unless, as he wryly noted, a player enjoys losing.

In over-the-board games, however, offbeat and less-than-best openings clearly serve a purpose if the opponent is not prepared for them. One of the openings that Edwards singled out as being suboptimal, and therefore not a good idea to play in correspondence chess, is the French Defense. Ding surely knew that when he played it in Game 7.



Probably surprised by Ding's opening choice, Nepomniachtchi chooses the safest, but least dynamic of White's three main replies. Either 3.♞c3 or 3.e5 would have presented more of a challenge. Within a few moves, Ding had equalized. Though he subsequently lost, the reason was not the opening. Indeed, he had a slight advantage before late blunders turned the tide in Nepomniachtchi's favor.

The bottom line is that the epoch when players prepared opening surprises



BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS!

THE BLOG OF GRANDMASTER ALEX COLOVIC

Ranked among the "Best Chess Blogs on the Planet" since 2016, Grandmaster Alex Colovic, President of Association of Chess Professionals (ACP) from 2019-2023, writes in style about all aspects of chess. From openings to endgames, psychology and practical advice, he provides deep insight into the secrets of our beloved game. Visit, read and broaden your horizons

www.alexcolovic.com

Alex writes on Substack, subscribe at substack.com/@gmalexcolovic. He also shares his views on current news in video format at www.youtube.com/@gmalexcolovic.

GM Colovic is the author of *The Sinquefeld Chess Generation*, a book that analyzes and explores in great depth the styles and preferences of America's top young talent.

that could decisively tip the balance or stuck with opening systems that suited a particular style, is basically over. We are in an era when players are simply looking more and more to get out of the opening without being tripped up, and with what Carlsen has described as a playable position, one where there are several ideas to choose from.

For players and fans, the good news is that there is no going back.

RECORD-BREAKING PARTICIPATION IN THE 2ND ANNUAL SHERIDAN WYOMING OPEN

A Chess Home in the Old West

A key to a successful tournament is to make players feel welcomed and at home. The passionate organizers of the Wyoming Open have expanded the reach of chess into the community, particularly schools and children, thus enriching this memorable experience for all.

By Brian Kuehl

Treasurer of the Sheridan Chess Association



T

he Sheridan Chess Association held the largest tournament in Wyoming history on May 5-7 this year with 102 registered players competing in the 2nd Annual Sheridan Wyoming FIDE Open with a \$7,575 purse and FIDE-rated games.

The contest featured top chess talent including GMs Fidel Corrales and Alex Fishbein, IM Justin Sarkar, NMs Sullivan McConnell, Griffin McConnell, and Richard Shtivelband, Wyoming State Chess Champions Dan Joelson and Tim Schoessler, and Wyoming State Women's Chess Champion Elizabeth Scott.

The tournament started with a six-round blitz match on Friday afternoon which was won by GM Corrales with a perfect 6-0 score followed by the NM McConnell brothers who tied for second place, both scoring 4½/6.

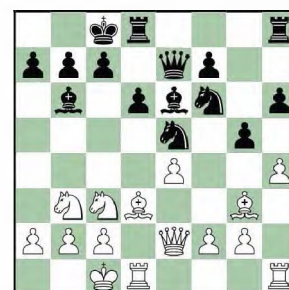
That evening, the tournament kicked off the Open FIDE-rated division for five-rounds of play over three days. The Open Division featured epic battles and inspired chess, including our pick for best game – the fourth-round match between Corrales and Fishbein. This game is featured here and annotated by Alex Fishbein.

C45

Fidel Corrales	2489
Alexander Fishbein	2366

Sheridan Wyoming Open 2023
Notes by GM Alex Fishbein

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♘xd4 ♙c5 5.♘b3 ♙b6 6.♘c3 ♘f6 7.♙g5 h6 8.♙h4 d6 Castling is also possible, but Black wants to wait and see which way White will castle.
9.♙d3 ♙e6 10.♙e2 g5 11.♙g3 ♙e7 12.0-0 0-0 13.h4 ♘e5 I was pleased with the outcome of the opening. The g3 bishop is biting on a little granite on e5 and d6, and an opening of the h-file might only be to my advantage.



14.♙b1 ♘xd3!? Initiating a sequence of moves aimed to exploit the silly-looking bishop on g3. But perhaps my plan is too direct.

15.cxd3 ♙xb3 16.axb3 ♙e6 17.♙c1 ♙b8 18.♙a2 A touch too passive. After 18.b4 White has more chances of eventually making use of the space advantage.



18...♙g4! 19.♙c2 19.♙xg4 ♘xg4 20.♙c2 ♘e5 with a future ...♘c6 offers Black some good squares, and the white king is not ideally placed at a2.

19...♘h5 20.♘d5 c6 21.♘xb6 ♘xg3 22.fxg3 axb6 23.♙cf1 23.♙f2 ♙c7!?

**Open/FIDE Division (28 players):**

1. GM Fidel Corrales 5
- 2-4. GM Alex Fishbein, NM Sullivan McConnell, Gary Warmerdam 4
- 5-6. NM Griffin McConnell, Tarquin Bennion 3½
- 7-9. Dan Joelson, Daniel Marmer, Evan McCormick 3

On Saturday and Sunday, the tournament hosted five rounds in the U2000, U1600, and U1200 Divisions. Top standings included:

Under 2000 Division (18 players):

- 1-3. Christopher Motley, Caleb Kircher, Calvin Jackson 4
4. Daniel Mattson 3½
- 5-8. William Wolf, Shubh Misra, Ben Curtis, Owen Curtis 3

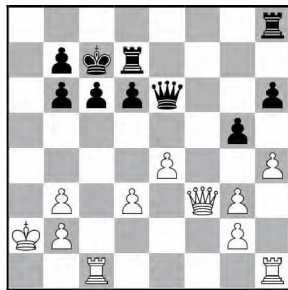
Under 1600 Division (24 players):

1. Timothy Christensen 4½
- 2-3. Anthony Minichiello, Timothy Stephens 4
- 4-5. Jacob Cooper, Brent Downey ..3½

Under 1200 Division (28 players):

1. Aiden Malloy-Nelson 5
2. Maxwell DeYoung 4½
- 3-4. Jason Monroe, Alex Klein 4
- 5-7. Jack Gottlieb, Paul Lehman, Carter Worcester 3½

(23...c5 is also equal) 24.♟xf7+ ♞d7 25.♟f3 ♟e6 illustrates the weakness of the white king and pawn structure.



In spite of being a pawn down, Black is fine, for example: 26.d4 ♞a8+ 27.♟b1 ♞e8 28.♞ce1 ♞de7 29.♞hf1 ♟g6.

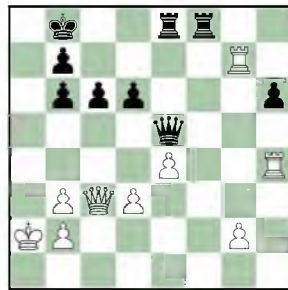


23...♟xg3 24.♞xf7 ♞hf8 25.♞e7?!



▲ Fidel Corrales

gxh4! 26.♟c3 ♞de8? Here was my best chance to play for an advantage: 26...♟xg2! and White needs to defend a worse endgame with 27.♟g7 (27.♟d4? ♟g5! was the resource I had missed.) 27...♟xg7 28.♞xg7 ♞f4 29.♞h7 b5. 27.♞g7 ♟e5 28.♞xh4



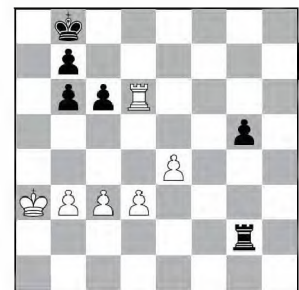
28...♟xc3?! It was my turn to seek the cleanest equality, which was 28...♞f2 29.♟xe5 (29.♟a3? ♟b5!) 29...♞xe5 30.♞xh6 (30.b4 ♞b5) 30...♞a5+ 31.♟b1 ♞c5=.

29.bxc3 ♞f2?! I knew that I could draw in a number of ways, but, with illusions of some sort of attack against the white king, I was playing for a win! Had I known that within two months, Fidel would win the World Open outright and qualify for the World Cup, I might have been more guarded. Then again, maybe not... In any event, from here Fidel brilliantly takes advantage of my optimism and my king is the one that gets checkmated. 29...♞g8 30.♞d7 ♞xg2+

31.♟a3 ♞c2 32.♞xh6 ♞xc3 33.♞hh7 ♞xd3 34.♞xb7+ ♟a8 is a draw.

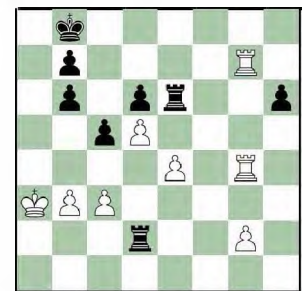
30.♟a3 ♞e6 31.♞hg4! Trying to penetrate to my second rank with both rooks.

31...♞d2 Now I recalled the famous Russian advice: "Before looking for a win, see if you have a clear draw." But I still couldn't readjust. I considered 31...♞e5! 32.♞d7 ♞g5 33.♞xg5 hxg5 34.♞xd6 ♞xg2, which should be enough to draw, but I was worried about this position.



Black holds after 35.e5 ♞g1 36.d4 g4 37.♟b4 g3 38.♞g6 g2 39.c4 ♟c8 40.d5 ♞e1.

32.d4! c5! 33.d5



33...♞f6?? This is the only really big mistake, but in practice my position is difficult. I had to fight for the a-file with 33...♞e8! 34.♞d7 ♟a7! 35.♞gg7 ♞a8! 36.♞xb7+ ♟a6 37.c4 ♞xg2!, and here a draw is well within reach.

34.♞g8+ ♟a7 35.e5! Double attack: ♞a4 mate comes next. I got what I deserved on the a-file!

Black resigned

Kudos to Fidel Corrales for this victory, which was the deciding game of the tournament.

GM Corrales again notched a perfect score with a 5-0 win to take home the top prize. Top standings for the Open Division included:

At the tournament, Wyoming's three top performing youth were awarded hand-carved wooden chess sets donated by 21-time Wyoming State Chess Champion, Dan Joelson.



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BLUNDERS

Two Types of Thinking

Apart from knowledge and skills, which other factors cause blunders? What are cold and hot blunders? How to cope with this in the most effective way?

By Dr. J. Corey Butler

Professor of Psychology at
Southwest Minnesota State University

Many years ago, when I first started playing chess, I was told that the difference between grandmasters and ordinary players was that grandmasters don't blunder.

Nowadays we know that GMs do blunder, though very rarely. Playing strength and blunders correlate inversely, but no human ever reaches the point where they stop blundering altogether. But *why* do we blunder, particularly in familiar positions where we should know better? That the most frustrating kind of blunder, hanging a piece or falling into a trap, even though we've seen the tactic before, maybe hundreds of times.

In cognitive psychology and neuroscience, the ability to stay focused, monitor what we are doing, and control our behavioral output falls under the umbrella term of executive function. This corresponds to a set of skills measured on a variety of laboratory assessments, as well as the underlying neural circuits which involve the prefrontal cortex of the brain. We even have specific neurons that act as error detectors and alert the rest of the brain when a mistake has been made. This feedback loop allows us to correct our behavior, and of course, it can also trigger emotional reactions. "Noooo, not another blunder!"

In 1956 George Miller published a paper that, at least in the minds of psychologists, firmly established the limit of human cognition. He argued that we can hold approximately seven items of information in our heads, and although we might debate this limit and its conditions, the point that we have only a limited capacity to process information is now accepted as dogma. When the limit is exceeded, mistakes become likely. This was most humorously demonstrated with the "Invisible Gorilla" experiment, which found that people actively paying attention to a laboratory game of basketball will tend to

WORDS FROM THE WINNER

I felt extremely welcomed during my visit to Sheridan, Wyoming. When I arrived, I saw advertisements for the tournament all around town, which was very exciting. The organizers were extremely hospitable and took great care of every player. You could feel the love and the passion for chess in the organizers' attention to detail and care throughout the entire event.

I am excited to go back to Sheridan next year, and I'm very glad that I am able to participate in the love that Wyoming residents have for the game.

This is certainly a tournament that every chess player should participate in.

GM Fidel Corrales

But the tournament itself is only half the story. When players arrived in Sheridan, they were greeted by billboards and store signs across town welcoming chess players to Wyoming.

GM Corrales spent the Thursday prior to the tournament meeting with children in the Sheridan public schools helping to inspire them to play chess. The Sheridan Chess Association gave GM Corrales a real workout, shuttling him between six area elementary and junior-high schools where he spoke with well over 1,000 kids, playing blindfolded games, and answering questions about his own childhood learning to play chess in Cuba.

Thursday evening, IM Sarkar gave a 15-game community simultaneous exhibition where he scored 14½/15. Parents and other community members turned out to watch, thereby reinforcing the enthusiasm for chess in this small western town.

Friday evening, the Sheridan Chess Association hosted a welcome reception where they announced the formation of a new 1200-volume public chess library that is rivaled in size nationally only by the likes of public collections in New York, Cleveland, and Los Angeles.

The new Wyoming State Chess Library includes possibly the largest public collection of chess DVDs in the country. The full collection was purchased by the Sheridan Chess Association from NM Joel Johnson and donated to the Sheridan County Fulmer Public Library where materials are available nationwide through inter-library loan: <https://www.sheridanwyolib.org/>

Chess is here to stay in Wyoming with great business and community support and a growing base of chess enthusiasts all across the state.

The Sheridan Chess Association has scheduled the 3rd Annual Sheridan Wyoming FIDE Open for May 3-5, 2024. Mark your calendars – this tournament is rapidly becoming an essential stop on the Grand Prix circuit. Find the Sheridan Chess Association online at www.SheridanChess.com

Local prodigy, 7-year old Zachariah Davis, in a simul given by IM Justin Sarkar.





miss extraneous, unexpected information, even a person walking across the floor wearing a gorilla suit.* There. Now I don't feel quite so bad about dropping that pawn in my most recent tournament game. Thirty-two pieces on sixty-four squares is considerably greater than seven.

Because the world bombards us with much more information than we can possibly take in and process, we use shortcuts and heuristics to help us make sense of things. In his book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman suggests that we actually have two different modes of thought to help us cope with this problem. System 1 is fast and efficient. It looks at the big picture and is more prone to making mistakes. System 2 is slow, methodical, and requires more effort. It calculates the details and is less likely to make mistakes. I think most chess players will immediately and intuitively grasp this distinction in their games. When we are playing blitz, when we are tired, or when we are just feeling lazy, we are less likely to deploy System 2 and consequently more likely to blunder.

The good news is that the rapid pattern recognition and intuitive thinking of System 1 works surprisingly well most of the time. The human brain evolved to be practical and "good enough." When you are being stalked by a tiger, fast recognition and response is going to beat long thoughtful analysis every time. As people become skilled at chess, or anything else for that matter, they get better at chunking information together into meaningful patterns, which allows us to exceed our capacity limits to some extent. Grandmasters know so many chess positions that they can make practical decisions about moves quickly and efficiently. This allows them to



Dr. Corey Butler is a social psychologist and chess player. He is Professor of Psychology at Southwest Minnesota State University and lives in Saint Paul, Minnesota. He has published research on the psychology of competitive orientation, physical appearance stereotypes, political attitudes and personality, and interpersonal rejection sensitivity.



There is actually an inverted U shape curve between stress and performance. We perform best at a medium, optimal level of stress.

play simultaneous exhibitions at a very high level, while operating almost entirely by System 1. Weaker players fare poorly under these conditions and make many blunders.

Another contributing factor for blunders is stress. When we are under time pressure, or when we are playing an important game, such as a tournament game, we may feel stress and anxiety. This is the famous flight or flight response, an increase in the physiological activity

of our bodies and brains that prepares us for action. Very useful when running away from tigers, but not so much when we need to think carefully and use System 2 at the chess board. There is some old research in psychology showing that as stress increases, the scope of attention decreases. We become distracted by distress, less likely to notice important information, and more likely to blunder. There is actually an inverted U shape curve between stress and performance. We perform best at a medium, optimal level of stress. When we are completely relaxed we miss things and we blunder. When we are overly stressed we cannot focus and we blunder.

Blunders are rooted in the very nature of our brains, given our limited capacity system and our usual practice of using System 1 thinking. To make matters worse, blunders become more likely with stress, as our attention and ability to utilize System 2 thinking erodes. This can lead to a downward spiral of blunders causing distress, which then lead to further blunders and further distress, something currently known as "tilt." What can be done? Let's first discuss how to handle the initial, *cold* blunder, which is a purely cognitive error, and then turn our attention to *hot* blunders, which are fueled by emotion and stress.

Cold blunders come out of nowhere, from simple inattention and System 1 thinking. The best way to avoid them is to use more System 2 thinking. The old advice still holds true. "When you see a good move, sit on your hands and look for a better one." Grandmasters used to advise their students to write their moves down before they make them, then look one last time, and only then make the move. Apparently this is now a violation of FIDE and USCF rules, something I only

just discovered while writing this column! It's a shame, because this is an excellent technique to make our thinking more deliberative.

Even if we cannot write down our moves in advance anymore, we can make a habit of stopping ourselves mentally before moving and doing a blunder check. We can ask ourselves a set of questions like what are my opponent's threats, is my king safe, are there loose pieces on the board, are there checks or captures? When we do this, we are forcing ourselves to think deeper and more systematically, using System 2.

Another way to avoid cold blunders is to improve the efficiency of System 1. Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts here. It's just a matter of improving our chess skills by sustained, deliberative practice. Keep an eye on this column for a future issue discussing tips from psychology for maximizing the benefits of our practice.

What about hot blunders and the downward spiral of ever increasing emotion leading to ever more mistakes? Here we need to pay attention to the inverted U curve. When we feel ourselves getting stressed, we should pause, take some deep breaths, or maybe even take a short break. Then we can return to the game with fresh eyes and a calmer demeanor. There's no time to pause during an online blitz game, but stopping for a while after the game might be recommended. Remember that anything that lowers the heart rate tends to reduce the stress response. Reassuring self-talk, or "cognitive restructuring," might help too, but that is probably yet another topic for a future column..

* Chess master Christopher F. Chabris co-authored with Daniel Simons *The Invisible Gorilla: How Our Intuitions Deceive Us* (2011). Available on Amazon.com



SIX QUEENS ON THE BOARD!

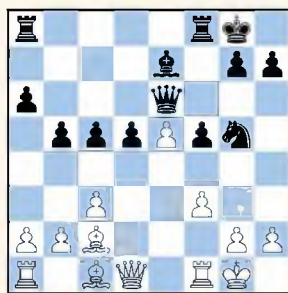
No, please, take my joke with a grain of salt. In the actual game I'm referring to, there were 'only' four queens on the board. And yet in addition there were two queens at the board – quite literally, former World Chess Queen Alexandra Kosteniuk and possibly another Chess Queen from Georgia, Bella Khotenashvili. Spurred on by excellent financial and hospitality conditions, offered to them by the Saint Louis Chess Club and its President Rex Sinquefeld, both ladies waged a fierce battle which became a spectators' delight.

C83

Alexandra Kosteniuk	2535
Bella Khotenashvili	2478

Cairns Cup, Saint Louis 2023

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗xe4 6.d4 b5 7.♗b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♗e6 9.♗bd2 ♗e7 10.c3 0-0 11.♗c2 f5 12.♗b3 ♗d7 13.♗fd4 ♗xd4 14.♗xd4 c5 15.♗xe6 ♗xe6 16.f3 ♗g5 The players tread along the well-known Open Ruy Lopez path.



17.♗f4 Quite a rare move in comparison to a hundred conventional 17.a4 games. The pawn on e5 doesn't need protection, but perhaps White wants to stop ...f5-f4. Quite often White opts for ♗c1xg5 followed by the f3-f4 setup with a protected passed pawn. Yet he or she rarely goes for it straightaway. So far nobody has played 17.♗h1 probably due to 17...f4.

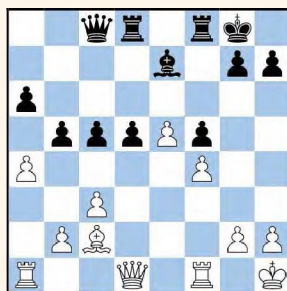
17...♗ad8 18.♗h1 ♗c8?! Khotenashvili wants her knight to take up an ideal blockading position on e6, mocking the white bishop on f4. This, however, will never come to pass. 18...♗h8, played in an earlier game S.Shankland 2712 - S.Sevian 2684, Saint Louis 2022, looks better.

Then 19.♗d2 h6 20.h4 ♗h7 21.♗g3 d4 22.cxd4 ♗xd4 23.♗e1 h5 24.♗f2 ♗d5 and Black is hardly worse in this position.

19.♗xg5! Now that the black queen has left her blockading position on e6 for the inferior c8 square, the time is right for White to go for this conventional trade.

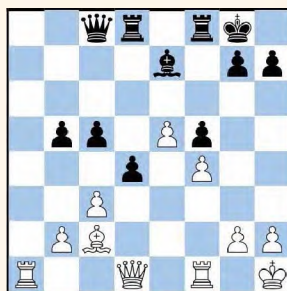
19...♗xg5 20.f4 ♗e7 21.a4! A throw-in

on the queenside too, as is customary for this line. The opening of the a-file, followed by a subsequent invasion by the white rook, is extremely annoying for Black. With her next move Khotenashvili tries to deflect her opponent from opening this file – but again to no avail.



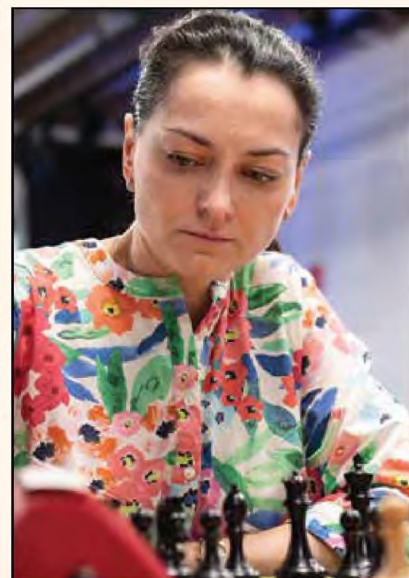
21...d4?! I would never allow Kosteniuk to open the side file on me, when it can be kept closed. Although, no doubt she was ready to meet 21...b4 with 22.cxb4 cxb4? 23.♗b3±. However, 22...c4!∞ is the move!

22.axb5 axb5 Perhaps Bella had intended to intimidate Alexandra with 22...d3!?. No doubt it's a smart move, but objectively Black will struggle to prove her compensation after the quiet 23.♗a4, since both 23.♗xd3? or 23.♗b3+?! run into 23...c4.



23.♗a7! Here you are! In vain, the Georgian player hoped to ward off this invasion with her next move.

23...dxc3 The alternatives are much worse. 23...♗e6 24.cxd4 ♗xd4 25.♗b3!+- . Or 23...♗d7 24.♗xd7 ♗xd7 25.cxd4 ♗xd4 26.♗xd4 cxd4 and while Black can struggle



▲ Alexandra Kosteniuk Photo St. Louis Chess Club

After a successful rook invasion on the a-file Alexandra was clearly on top. Her intention to force her Georgian opponent into passivity was evident. Bella, however, showed no inclination to be subdued and, at the cost of a pawn, invaded deep into the white camp by 27...♗d2. Kosteniuk immediately rushed her passed b-pawn forward to punish the rebellion, but then, apparently under pressure, slowed down quite a bit by 30.♗d7?! when Khotenashvili sensed her chance and continued her counteroffensive with the dangerous invasion 30...♗f2. This triggered such wild lines and sidelines that neither man nor woman could play to perfection. Once Kosteniuk found a way to combine her offensive and defensive tasks by transferring one of her queens to b6, the outcome of this fascinating battle was sealed.

▼ Bella Khotenashvili Photo St. Louis Chess Club



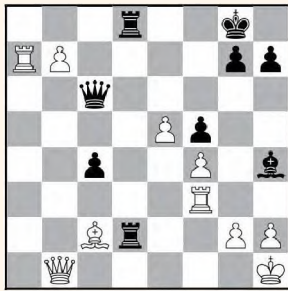


for a draw in this ending, it's much easier to play it for White after 27.♖b3+ or 27.♙d3. **24.♖b1!** On 24.♖f3 ♔d7 is possible, but with the text move Kosteniuk makes this bishop defence impossible.

24...♙h4 The bishop looks pretty miserable on the edge, but 24...♔d7? runs into 25.♙xf5+-. Also 24...♙f7 25.bxc3 leaves little doubt about White's advantage. **25.bxc3 b4 26.cxb4 c4!** Khotenashvili now spices things up to the benefit of all.

The tepid 26...cxb4 would have actually been met by Kosteniuk's spectacular response 27.♖xb4! ♖xc2 28.♖b7+- and if I haven't missed some concealed resource, Black can resign with a clear conscience. **27.b5 ♔d2** Khotenashvili now counters her opponent's invasion and obliges her to tread carefully too.

28.♔d1 The invading black forces cannot be left unattended. 28.b6? allows 28...♖c6 29.♙f3 (29.♙g1 ♙f2) 29...♙f8 30.b7

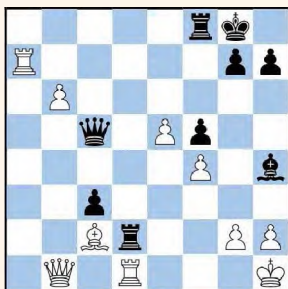


A) Though 30...♙xg2 looks powerful, unfortunately it is hardly the best because of the cold-blooded 31.♙xg2 (31.b8 ♖ ♖xf3) 31...♔d2+ 32.♙g1 ♖xf3 33.b8 ♖+;

B) 30...♖g6 when 31.♙g3 triggers a range of wild sidelines, e.g. 31...♙xg3 32.b8 ♖ ♖h5 33.h3 ♖e2.

28...c3 A tempting pawn advance, yet it exposes her king to a range of diagonal checks. I dare to consider 28...♙fd8 as a worthy alternative, especially since 29.♙xd2 ♙xd2 30.♙xf5 (30.♖a2 ♖c5) is well met by 30...♖xf5! 31.♙a8+ ♔d8+-.

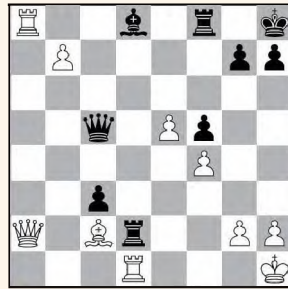
29.b6 ♖c5 This is stronger than the straightforward 29...♖c6 30.♙xd2 cxd2 31.♙c7 and White remains in control.



30.♔d7?! Kosteniuk is taken over by the tension and slows down her pace. Now things get really hot. I think she could have pressed on with 30.♖a2+ ♖h8 31.♙a8 although some lines here are not for the faint-hearted:

A) 31...♙e7 32.b7 ♖f2 (32...♙xd1+ 33.♙xd1 ♖e3 34.♖a7) 33.♙g1 ♙xc2 34.b8 ♖+-;

B) 31...♔d8 32.b7



B1) 32...♙xd1+ 33.♙xd1 ♖e3 34.♖e2 c2 (34...♖xe2 35.♙xe2 c2 36.♙c8+-) 35.♖xe3 cxd1 ♖+ 36.♖g1+-;

B2) 32...♙b6 33.♙xf8+ ♖xf8 34.♙xd2 cxd2 35.♖a8+-;

B3) 32...♖f2 33.♙g1 ♙xc2 34.♖f7! ♖c5 35.b8 ♖d2 36.♖d6!.

30...♖f2 In addition to an obvious mate threat on g2, the ...♖f2-e1 maneuver will henceforth be Black's big trump.

31.♙xd2 cxd2 32.♙f1 Kosteniuk now needs to take care of her defence in earnest. 32.b7 is beautifully met with 32...♖e1+! 33.♙xe1 dxe1 ♖+ 34.♖xe1 ♙xe1 and Black is out of the woods.

32...♖e1! The most tenacious move. Surprisingly, the artistic 32...♖e1 now loses quickly to the prosaic 33.g3 ♙xg3 34.hxg3 ♖xg3 35.♖b3+-.

33.♙d3 33.g3 is met by 33...♙d8.

33...♖e1 34.b7 But now 34.g3 is less clear-cut after 34...♙xg3 35.hxg3 ♖xg3 36.♖a2+ ♖h8 37.♙xd2 ♖h3+.

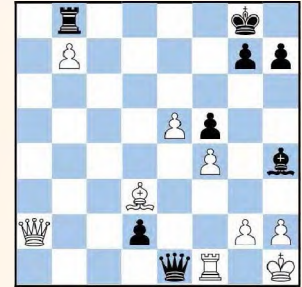
34...♙b8 35.♖a2+ Kosteniuk obviously goes for the throat with ♖a8 in mind.

35...♙f8? A very human decision, probably made under severe time pressure. The drawback of this move, however, is that it leads to extreme exposure of the black king.

35...♙h8 just looks unreasonable due to various back rank mating patterns, yet it was the way to go! Upon 36.♖a8 Black's main survival idea is revealed by 36...♖xf1+ 37.♙xf1 d1 ♖ 38.♖xb8+ ♔d8! when Black is alive and kicking!

36.♖a8 Again, a perfectly human move in the heat of a fierce battle under time pressure. Quite surprisingly, 36.♖a7 was even stronger. A brief explanation

why? You will see it soon. Well, two poor white queens on a8 and b8 turn out to be harassed by the black rook on d8... So 36...♔d8 (On 36...♙xb7 37.♖a8+! is the point. 37...♙d8 38.♖xd8+ ♙f7 39.♙c4+ ♙g6 40.♖g5 mate.) 37.b8 ♖ ♖xf1+ 38.♙xf1 d1 ♖ and now, with the queen on a7 instead of a8, the white queen pair is effective, leaving White multiple ways to win, even by the spiritless 39.♖b5.



36...d1 ♖ The last mistake in the scorching heat of the battle.

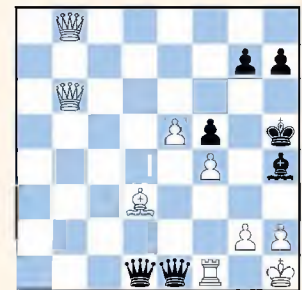
36...♖xf1+ loses to 37.♙xf1 d1 ♖ (37...♙d8 offers no miraculous escape as 38.♙e2 proves Black's mating threats are just an illusion.) 38.♖xb8+ ♔d8 39.♖d6+ ♖xd6 40.exd6+-.

The last chance to clutch at straws for the Georgian GM was 36...♔d8! 37.b8 ♖ ♖xf1+ 38.♙xf1 d1 ♖+ and incredibly, I don't see the way the white queens could survive either by 39.♖a3+ ♙e7 or 39.♖b4 ♙e7. That said, Black's position remains difficult, though not entirely hopeless.

37.♖xb8+ ♙f7 38.♖c7+ Kosteniuk's queen is now on the way to g1. The fate of the game has been sealed.

38...♙g6 Or 38...♙e7 39.♙c4+ ♙g6 40.♖b6+ ♙h5 41.b8 ♖.

39.♖b6+ ♙h5 40.b8 ♖! Let's relish this four-queen position – as the end of a breathtaking ladies' game is at hand.



40...♖xf1+ 41.♙xf1 ♖xf1+ 42.♖g1 ♖xf4 43.♖d1+ The odds of one queen against two are too heavy a burden.

Black resigned ■

IS THE GAME OF CHESS COMING TO AN END OR NOT?!

A horizon effect

Advances in technology are racing ahead at a speed which is close to unimaginable. Will there still be a future for human input into chess?

■ By Jon Edwards

The speed with which the strength of chess engines is growing is itself a reflection of how quickly neural net technology is progressing throughout other more conventional activities. Programmers have long targeted chess as a harbinger of what they assumed would affect life more generally. So, they said, solve chess, and conquering many other human activities will be within our grasp. Cab drivers may soon find themselves the victim of cars that drive themselves. But more still, professions we once deemed secure are now under fire. Educators, lawyers, doctors will soon be stressed by regenerative AI. I made these points on May 23rd at the Marshall Chess Club in a talk that the Marshall recorded and publicly provided the link. (www.marshallchessclub.org)

To my wife's chagrin, I added a stock tip. Don't stress about the social change. Invest in it. And so I recommended Nvidia. Of course, recommending stocks falls well outside of polite company and would be wholly inappropriate here. Stocks can plummet, after all. In this case, to my fortune and glee, Nvidia soared 25% two days later.

I digress, of course, because the real point is that in just two years, chess is under significant stress. The over-the-board game will be secure, so long as we all support the need for careful enforcement of security measures at tournaments. But my cherished correspondence chess, the real canary in the coal mine, is in hospice. Very much at issue, I think, is whether the new approaches still have a horizon effect that humans can exploit. We have all seen computer lines that roll on for dozens of moves all to gain a single tempo. Is that our future?

The original work on TableBases sought to eliminate the end of the game from any ambiguity. Solve the beginning and the endgame and all we are left with is a shrinking discussion in the middle. That might well spell the solution of chess, what with Moore's Law doubling available processing power every 18 months, but if we can broaden out the discussion, with long tempo-gaining sequences, there may still be some hope.

The usual approach, algorithms that rely upon



Jon Edwards is the newly crowned World Correspondence Chess Champion living in Pennington, NJ. He also won the 10th US Championship. Jon has written more than 40 chess books, notably *The Chess Analyst* (1999), *Sacking the Citadel* (2010), and *ChessBase Complete* (2014), which has recently received its 2019 Supplement Covering ChessBase 13, 14 & 15. He is regular columnist for *Chess Life for Kids*. His web site, Chess is Fun, provides free chess instruction.

increasing computational strength for their brute force approach have given way to neural nets that persist in learning, day-by-day, even while we eat and sleep.

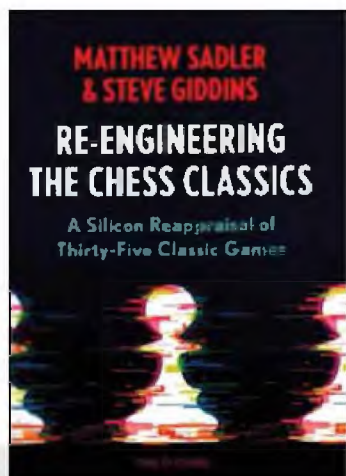
We all have access to this technology. Stockfish 16 is now out and remains free to download (<https://stockfishchess.org/download/>). You can also freely download all new development versions of Stockfish 16 at <https://abrok.eu/stockfish/>

Happily, I am coming to understand, even the neural net approaches do have a horizon effect! There are plenty of YouTube videos out there showing Stockfish losing to known gambits whose evaluations are known to theory but apparently not to the engine.



JEREMY GAIGE ARCHIVE

I am proud to announce that Andy Ansel and I have completed the scanning of the most important parts of the Jeremy Gaige archive. Gaige (1927–2011) was a meticulous chess archivist best remembered for his four-volume compendium of chess crosstables and for his *Chess Personalia*, which contains basic biographic data on chess players. Prior to his death, Gaige gifted two cartons (containing 11 research binders) to well-known chess historian Andy Ansel. After his death, the remainder of Gaige's archive, nine cartons with more than 70 binders, were forwarded to me by New York City book seller Fred Wilson. Andy and I are seeking a long-term archival home for Gaige's many obscure, and now scanned, monographs.



BEAUTY SPOILERS

ChessBase 17 has another cool new feature. Open up a game that ChessBase defines as “beautiful” and press F6. ChessBase will take you to a sacrifice. In the case of my game against Whiteside in 1993, F6 takes me here. It’s White to move.



The game continued 31.♔c7!? and I went on to win after 31...♘f3+ 32.♕h1, but as is so often the case these days, my combination from 1993 was flawed. Stockfish quickly shows that Black can hold with 31...♗xc7 32.♖xg6+ ♔f8 33.♖xf6+ ♕g8 34.♖xd4 ♖e2 35.♖a1 ♗d2! A move that Whiteside and I both failed to find 30 years ago.

That’s a common malady and indeed, a new book by Matthew Sadler and Steve Giddins, *Re-Engineering the Chess Classics* (New in Chess, 2023) shows that the old classics, however much they warm our hearts, are not immune from the recommendations of modern engines. I have digested the book despite the fact that their definition of a “Classic” game does not in any way match mine.

Discover The Threats

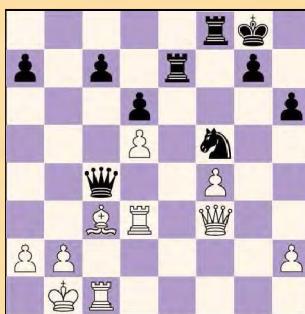
By GM Nikola Nestorovic

Solutions on page 91

1.

Glenn Flear 2489
Viktor Bologan 2679

French Team Championship, Belfort 2004



Black to move

2.

Liviu D. Nisipeanu 2678
Matthieu Cornette 2591

Bundesliga 2015/2016

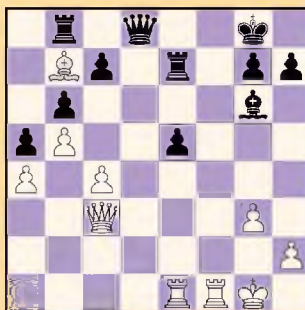


White to move

3.

Suat Atalik 2572
Dejan Nestorovic 2387

Silver Lake Open, Veliko Gradiste 2016

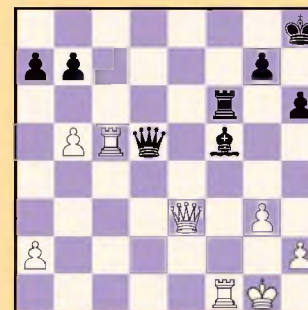


White to move

4.

G.Akash 2495
Sreyas Payyappat 2105

Indian Team Championship, Pollachi 2023

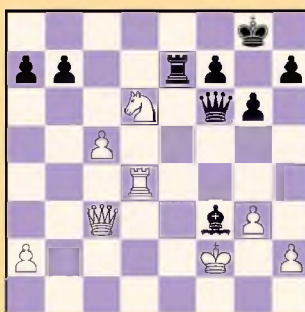


Black to move

5.

Durka
Jablanski

Unknown source

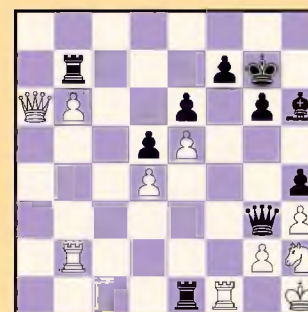


White to move

6.

Velimir Ivic 2582
Felix Meissner 2362

Serbia Open, Belgrade 2021



Black to move



VOLATILITY, PRICE PER MOVE AND CARLSEN'S APPROACH

Investors or gamblers

Chess is a game of choices. Occasionally, it may happen that your choices carry a significant difference, and then you end up as a gambler. What does one need to know in order to be availed with merely equal choices on every turn, and in a longer run? How did Carlsen's team cope with this challenge and prepare for him the most suitable portfolio?

■ By Luca Barillaro

T

he concept of price per move, presented in my previous article in ACM #33, has provoked a high interest from readers, so I think it is appropriate to explore it further with some examples taken from the recent practice of top GMs.

In financial markets, volatility is defined as the aptitude of a given financial asset to move more or less quickly in a given period of time. To make the volatility calculation objective, the standard deviation of the price changes is calculated by comparing the differences between the actual price and the average price for each period. It is important to understand the concept of volatility, which is nothing more than uncertainty. Its price is the risk expressed by the market.

Volatility is not only measured on individual asset classes, but also, and above all, on portfolio performance. The Sharpe ratio helps us understand how not only the returns of a portfolio, but also the volatility of that portfolio are important parameters for comparison of different performances among different portfolios. In fact, the Sharpe ratio measures the return on the portfolio net of the risk-free component divided by the volatility of the portfolio itself. The higher the ratio, the better.

It is not enough to say that portfolio A is better than portfolio B just because A returned 10% and B returned 5% over the same time period. The volatility of the two portfolios must also be included in the evaluation. In fact, if A, in order to obtain 10%, has recorded a performance volatility equal to, for example 30%, while B has recorded a volatility of 5%, then B will be the portfolio to choose. This is because the variability of a performance makes it unstable and unsustainable.

In chess we should use the same logic both on performance of an individual player in the tournament "portfolio" and on individual games. Consistency of performance is much more important than reaching extreme peaks followed by failures. In finance, psychological capital goes almost unnoticed, but plays a fundamental role. Experiencing what it means to have large gains and then suffer large losses is devastating. In other words, going from 100 to 120 and then back down to 110 is not so easy and useful, and makes the investor frustrated compared to reaching 110 gradually without leaps. This is because the first investor experienced how it is like to have 120, and now at 110 he feels poorer, while the second investor preserved his psychological capital.

In chess, psychological capital must be preserved equally.

Let's see how. As investors we must choose the right financial products which we understand and which are appropriate to our risk profile and our financial knowledge. The chess player or his/her coach should manage a portfolio of tournaments suitable for the player (as Botvinnik said "choosing the right tournaments") in terms of length, difficulty, and playing conditions, for example. Before choosing a portfolio of openings, according to Botvinnik, it was crucial to choose the right portfolio of tournaments. Risk management starts well before the game!

During the tournament, risk management should focus on managing the price per move or volatility of the opening lines and consequent middlegame positions depending on the player's attitude, opponent's style and, of course, tournament situation.

Caruana - Carlsen
Internet (Blitz) 2023



Magnus was clearly winning, but this "clearly" was only for the engine. ShashChess 28 running on my computer (used also for all the examples in this article) shows 32...♗xg2 with evaluation of -5.62, whereas 32...♗d3 stands at -1.02, and 32...♞f7 at -0.83. A perfectly plausible move like 32...♞e2 was a fatal mistake by Magnus, as after 33.♞a2 White was winning instead. This means only 32...♗xg2 was winning. Overall, this was a high price-per-move game, nonetheless typical of Internet blitz games.

Together with my friends at Alphachess (authors of the book *The Computer Chess World* – recommended by John Edwards in ACM #32, p. 83) we have created a proprietary indicator capable of measuring the average price per move in each game. The concept behind the indicator is the comparison between the first two lines of ShashChess engine and the remaining lines. If the evaluation of the first two lines, or the first line is more than 0.4 higher than the remaining lines (from the second or third onwards), the indicator starts signaling a "high price per move." The concept is similar to that of volatility exposed above. Measuring the deviation of the evaluations allows us to understand if the game is played "on the razor's edge" or not – and for how many moves! By adding up all the deviations and comparing them to the total number of moves we have a sort of volatility indicator of the game.

It is important to understand that we are not dealing with the classical "centipawn" analysis. What we want to investigate is



Luca Barillaro is doctor of economics, an independent financial consultant and trader residing in Modena, Italy. Luca is also an avid chess player, and thanks to his proficiency in using AI for chess preparation, his help was of benefit to several elite grandmasters and their teams.

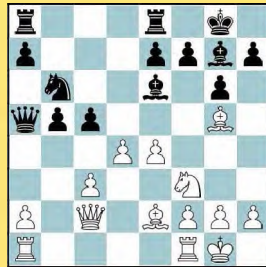


Carlsen - Hammer



Here we have an apparently peaceful position in which a plausible move like 28...f7 is actually an almost decisive mistake. My computer shows the evaluation of +0.15 for 28...f7, +0.42 for 28...h5, and +0.55 for 28...f7, which, in fact, Hammer played and lost the game.

Keymer - Carlsen



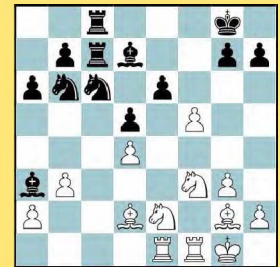
A position that Magnus could play almost on autopilot while Vincent was forced to be very precise, and in the end misjudged his chances in the center by pushing 17.d5 too early.

Carlsen - Nepomniachtchi



After 18.d4! you will see how the first engine lines are almost equivalent when it's Magnus' turn to move, while Ian had to be very precise at all times with a high price-per-move ratio.

Caruana - Carlsen
Stavanger 2023



The diagrammed position was reached after White's move 23. Here my computer shows +0.50 for 23...b4, +0.92 for 23...b4, and +1.01 for 23...e8.

whether during the game the players have been called to choose very precise moves for a long time in order not to lose the advantage or the parity. If the first three or four lines of the engine are equal for a protracted period, then the game has low volatility and, therefore, low price per move.

To give you a practical example let's see the position from Caruana-Carlsen, Internet blitz 2023, after White's move 32.

Magnus Carlsen has built a large part of his invincibility on the selection of lines with low price per move (low volatility), cleverly selected by his team under the leadership of Peter Heine Nielsen. Those lines not only suit Magnus' style, but are also, and above all, tested first by neural network engines and then in numerous training matches, to understand the most important nuances.

Peter Heine's job of selecting the lines and middlegame "portfolio" can be compared to that of a risk manager who slowly builds a portfolio by analyzing not only the returns (advantage in the middlegame), but also, and above all, the volatility and sustainability for the psychological capital for the investor (player). In particular, Peter Heine has managed over the years to

select opening lines and middlegame positions where the price per move tends to be low on average for Magnus, but higher for his opponents. In other words, Magnus is able to play seemingly quiet positions in which his opponents have to make crucial and often non-intuitive choices much more often.

Jon Ludvig Hammer found himself in exactly one of these situations in March this year. He had the black pieces against Magnus and this is the position after White's move 28.

The same goes for Keymer - Carlsen, Wijk aan Zee 2023, after 16 ...c5.

On the same note, a reader may check Game 4 of the Carlsen-Nepomniachtchi, World Championship match in 2021.

One mistake any investor should never make is to deviate from her/his risk tolerance. Investing in very volatile instruments can lead to bitter defeats. This is what seems to have happened to Magnus in Stavanger in May. If it is true that it is sometimes possible to venture a few experiments in online games, constantly relying on lines with a high price-per-move in classical chess seems to be more gambling.

Carlsen didn't shine in this year's edition of the Norway Chess elite tournament mainly due to very questionable choices on the opening lines,

and consequent middlegame positions. The first surprise came in his encounter against Caruana. The French Defence is typically a high price-per-move opening for Black, and Magnus soon found himself playing a middlegame where the difference between the first and second rows was over 0.4. Definitely not a wise decision against a player of Fabiano's caliber.

Even the failure to win against Firouzja, after having reached a position of absolute dominance, shows how Carlsen is not comfortable in positions with a protracted high price per move. The impression is that Magnus wanted to change his style "out of boredom", or to find some enjoyment. After all, it is difficult to find new stimuli and maintain focus and discipline when you have won everything you could throughout more than the last ten years.

The analysis of price per move in games of the top GMs and on the opening lines of our own repertoire can help us to better choose how to enter a tournament by improving risk management in our games and, above all, to eliminate that bad habit of evaluating a position in the post-mortem analysis with a number ("I had +2, but I lost...").

It is not so much the evaluation of the engine that we need to be interested in, but

rather its stability. If there is only one line that guarantees us a +2 advantage, and we have to be precise for four consecutive moves or we have to find an only move among three or four other equally plausible moves, it is very likely that even +2 is not humanly cashable. GM Sergey Tiviakov has dedicated a fantastic chapter of his latest book *Rock Solid Chess* to the subject. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to any interested reader, and even if I don't want to spoil anyone's reading pleasure, I'm sure you will be amazed by the analysis of a game between Kasparov and Karpov presented there.

The price-per-move analysis of our games and the related results can tell us a lot about our inclinations and attitudes and can help us choose a portfolio of openings and middlegames that best suit our risk tolerance. The risk of deviating from this strategy in an undisciplined way is to turn into gamblers – just like investors who, in search of immediate returns, abandon all risk management rules and end up losing consistently. Certainly, there will always be some opportunity to venture very sharp lines, but there was only one Mikhail Tal! Yet, he remained world champion for less than a year.

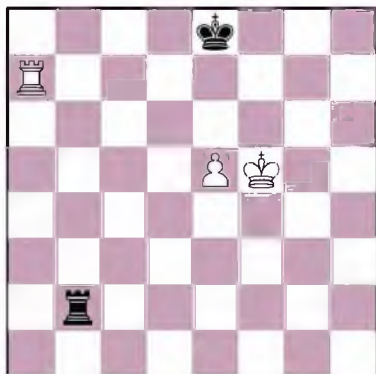


REVISITING ESSENTIAL PATTERNS IN ROOK ENDGAMES

You Thought You Knew The Philidor Position?

Just as you regularly practice and refine your opening strategies, it's essential to frequently revisit and reinforce your grasp of fundamental endgame theory. After all, repetition is often heralded as the mother of all learning.

Philidor Position, 1777



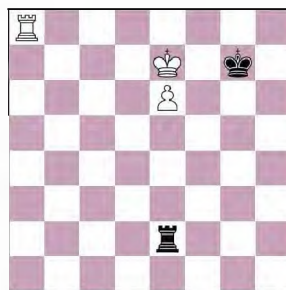
Let's go on a road trip back to the time when America was just one year old. At that time, the world's strongest player published an analysis of a rook ending which remains, to this day, the most important theoretical position. We will closely follow the explanation in *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual*, 5th edition.

With Black to move, 1...♖b6 draws easily. If the white pawn moves (2.e6), then 2...♖b1 leaves the white king with **no refuge from checks from behind**. The best White can do is trade rooks with a simple draw in the pawn ending.

Francois-Andre Danican Philidor was, of course, a genius of chess. In addition to this endgame, he also studied ♖ vs. ♜, then ♖ vs. ♜+♙, and ♜+♙ vs. ♜ endings. He published flawless solutions that grandmasters find it hard to replicate even today. No one after Philidor was that far ahead of his contemporaries, both in theory and practical play.

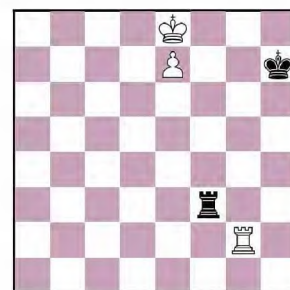
But this simple-looking rook ending, with just five pieces on the board, left its deepest mysteries hidden from Philidor, and from everyone else, for a long time! For more than one hundred years, it was thought that with White to move, this position is a win.

1.♙f6! ♜f2+ This was considered to be the only reasonable defense. After all, the other check, 1...♜b6+, loses quickly to 2.e6. Now Black can only try the first-rank (or "passive") defense with 2...♜b8, but **passive defense only works against a knight pawn or a rook pawn**. Here, White has room on the other side for the rook, and after 3.♖h7 the game is over. 2.♙e6 ♙f8 3.♜a8+ ♙g7 4.♙e7 ♜e2 Black does not have enough checking room on the side, for example: 4...♜b2 5.e6 ♜b7+ 6.♙d6 ♜b6+ 7.♙d7 ♜b7+ 8.♙c6 ♜e7 9.♙d6 ♜b7 10.e7+-. If the white rook had been on b8, then 4...♜a2, with enough distance to check, would have drawn. 5.e6



If the pawn reaches the sixth rank, the rook cannot successfully defend from behind. This usually ends up in something called the "Lucena position" (although it was first discussed more than 100 years after Lucena). White "builds a bridge" (there are other ways to win, but we want to show the bridge because with

a knight pawn, only the bridge wins): 5...♜e1 6.♜a2 ♜e3 7.♜g2+ ♙h7 8.♙f7 ♜f3+ 9.♙e8 ♜f1 10.e7 ♜f3



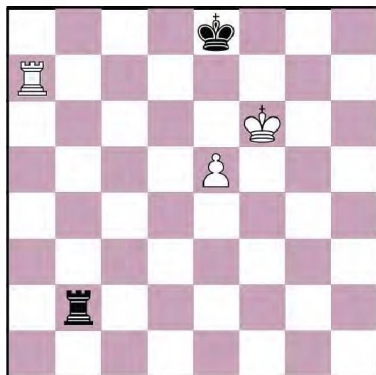
11.♜g4 ♜f1 12.♙d7 ♜d1+ 13.♙e6 ♜e1+ 14.♙f6 ♜f1+ 15.♙e5 ♜e1+ 16.♜e4 winning.



If this was too simple for you, I ask you to stay patient. You will soon see that there are subtleties in these positions that even top-level GMs can miss.

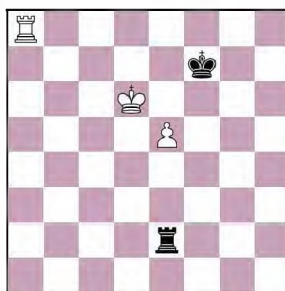


Karstedt Method, 1897



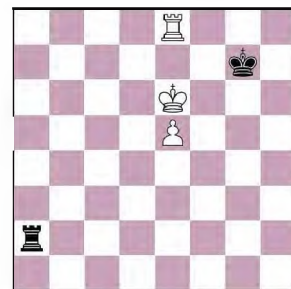
German endgame composer Max Karstedt (1868–1945) is credited with discovering that the Philidor position is also a draw with White to move.

Here, after 1.♔f6, Black must play 1...♞e2! and after 2.♕e6 (2.♞a8+ ♔d7 or 2.e6 ♞f2+ lead nowhere.) 2...♔f8 3.♞a8+ ♔g7 4.♕d6 Black has the key defense 4...♕f7!



This little bit of geometry works if the white pawn is still on the fifth rank. White has nothing better than 5.♞a7+

♕e8 6.♕e6 ♔f8 7.♞a8+ ♔g7 returning to the position we already had. If White tries 8.♞e8, then 8...♞a2!



This ensures plenty of checking distance. Now White comes nowhere close with 9.♕d7 ♞a7+ 10.♕d6 ♞a6+ 11.♕c7 ♕f7, and if instead 9.♞d8, Black can just come back with 9...♞e2!



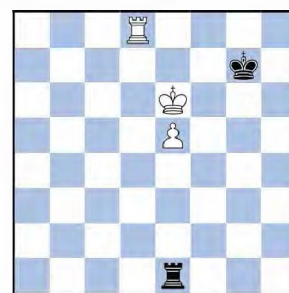
This drawing method is so watertight that, as Mark Dvoretsky explains, Black can even take his king to the long side with 2...♕d8 3.♞a8+ ♕c7 4.♞e8 ♞h1! But the long side is never recommended unless it is the only option. For example, it doesn't work against a bishop pawn.

The Karstedt drawing method is basic and important. But Karstedt didn't become famous for it, and today many people refer to it as the "second defensive method" in the Philidor position. And, as it turns out, many more people haven't committed it to memory by any name.

GM Zoltan Almasi undoubtedly realized right away what he had done.

Our next example shows that even the greatest endgame players of all time are not immune to mistakes like this.

♕f8 68.♞h8+ ♔g7 69.♞d8!? A good try, as Black's best move is now... not to move!



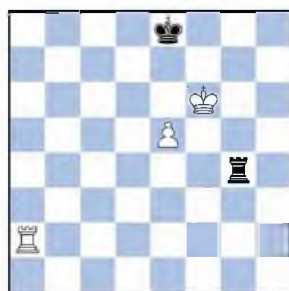
69...♞a1? Although this does not yet throw away the draw (as we mentioned, **four squares is enough checking distance**), we give this move a question mark as it makes it possible for White to create traps.

Black should sit with 69...♞e2! and if 70.♕d6 ♕f7. Only if the white rook goes to e8, should Black release the tension on the pawn with ...♞a1.

70.♕e7 ♞a5 71.e6 ♞a7+ 72.♞d7 ♞a8 73.♞d6!

Pavel Tregubov	2614
Zoltan Almasi	2704

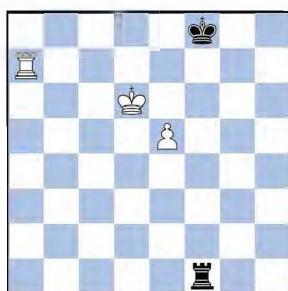
European Championship, Yerevan 2014



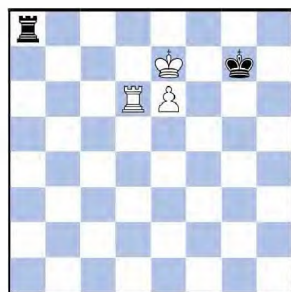
54...♞f4+? Uh oh! Wrong square. We already know that 54...♞e4! draws easily. 55.♕e6 ♕f8 56.♞a8+ ♔g7 57.♕e7 Black resigned

Levon Aronian	2741
Magnus Carlsen	2698

Tal Memorial, Moscow 2006



64...♞d1+ 64...♞e1 would immediately construct the Karstedt position, but the text is also good. 65.♕e6 ♞e1! 66.♞f7+ ♕e8 67.♞h7



73...♖a7+?? In time pressure, it is easy to make a mistake. 73...♖a1?? also loses to 74.♙e8 (if the white rook were on d7 here, 74...♙f6! 75.e7 ♙e6! would draw). The only move is 73...♙g6!=.

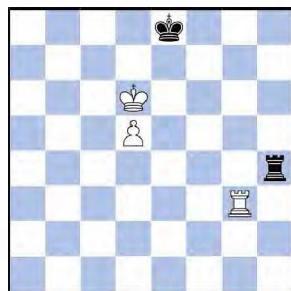
74.♙e8 **Black resigned**, as the white pawn can't be stopped after either 74...♙f6 75.e7+ or 74...♖a8+ 75.♖d8 and 76.e7. The future world champion was 15 years old at the time of this game.

I am showing you all these errors not because I want you to think "Hey, if Magnus messed this up, then I shouldn't be expected to learn any of this. And really, what do these so-called geniuses know?" That's the opposite of the right attitude. Yes, even the top players of the world are human, but you are much more human than they are, and you will make worse blunders and more of them if you don't learn these endings! That's especially true if you literally have seconds to play these positions, as is often the case at the end of a classical game.

Zhu Chen 2480

Mark Taimanov 2455

Cancan Women-Veterans Match,
Roquebrune 1998



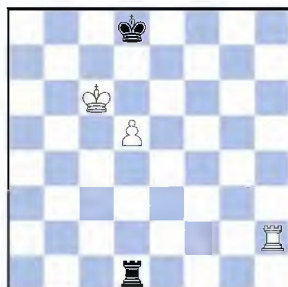
75...♖d4! Facing the future women's world champion, the 72-year-old Mark Taimanov digs out from his memory the Karstedt position. Instead, 75...♖h6+?? would lead to disaster after 76.♙c7.

76.♖g8+ ♙f7 77.♖d8 ♖a4! We see the second defensive method from the short side.

78.♖c8 ♖d4! 79.♖d8 ♖a4 80.♖b8 80.♙c7 achieves nothing: 80...♖a7+ 81.♙b6 ♖a1.

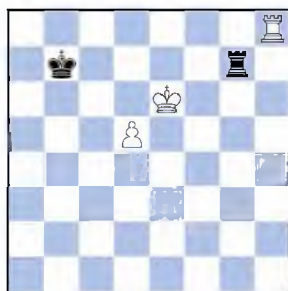
80...♖d4! 81.♖c8 ♖d1 82.♖c2 ♙e8! Another only move. Black cannot allow his king to get cut off with ♖e2.

83.♙c6 ♙e7 84.♖e2+ ♙d8 85.♖h2



85...♖c1+? A senior moment! After demonstrating the correct defense, Taimanov makes the error we are already familiar with, and it is fatal with the white rook on the h-file. He needed to just sit with 85...♖d3.

86.♙d6 ♙c8 87.♖h8+ ♙b7 88.♙d7 ♖c7+ 89.♙e6 ♖g7



90.♖e8? These mistakes can only be explained by time trouble. Simply 90.d6 wins.

90...♖g5? 90...♖g6+! 91.♙d7 ♖h6! draws: the rook distance is long enough.

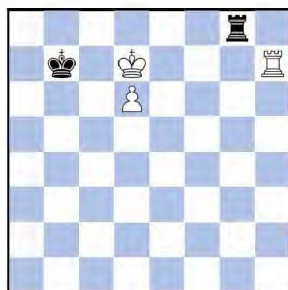
91.d6 ♖g6+ 92.♙d7? 92.♙e7! wins.

92...♖g1? 92...♖h6!=

93.♖e7? 93.♙e7 is again an easy win, but she allows her opponent one more chance...

93...♖g8? 93...♖h1!= is still good for a draw.

94.♖h7



94...♖f8 Black chooses a less stubborn

response than 94...♙b6, after which White wins with 95.♖h1 ♖g7+ 96.♙e6 ♖g6+ 97.♙e7 ♖g7+ 98.♙f6 ♖g2 99.♖d1!

Note that this method would not work if the black king were on b7, as ...♙c8 would stop the pawn. Therefore, White to move in the last diagram would have to create a zugzwang with 1.♙e6+! ♙c6 2.♙e7! ♙b7 3.♙d7! Mark Dvoretsky, in the aforementioned DEM, covers this position very well.

95.♙e7 ♖f1 96.d7 ♖e1+ 97.♙d8 ♙c6 98.♙c8 **Black resigned**

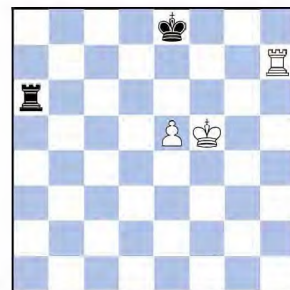
As you see, when you step down a couple notches from 2700, mistakes are right there, just waiting to be made. I had no trouble finding examples of good players failing to execute what looks like a simple Karstedt draw. My bigger problem was deciding which "tragicomedies" to present here.

Now, we started with the actual Philidor position, where the defending rook could occupy the third rank. It's very rare to see masters (or higher) lose that position in classical games, but it happens too:

Aleksandr Lenderman 2614

Oleg Gladyshev 2446

Chigorin Memorial, St Petersburg 2012



We are late in the game, but the increment here was 30 seconds. That should be enough.

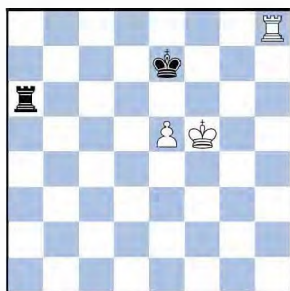
95...♖b6 96.♖c7 ♖a6 All good so far.

97.♖b7 ♙f8 This I already don't like. The king should be directly in front of the pawn whenever possible. Otherwise, White could try to disrupt the defense with ♖d7-d6. Alex Lenderman does not try it here, probably assuming his opponent might get the hint and play 98...♙e8 after 98.♖d7. But Black should be confidently demonstrating the drawing method (rook moving along the third rank), and not confuse the matter with the king. Lenderman slowly concludes that it makes sense to play on for a bit.

98.♖h7 ♙e8 99.♖c7 ♙f8 100.♙e4 ♙e8 101.♙d4 ♖a4+ 102.♙d5 ♖a5+



103.♔e6 ♖a6+ 104.♕f5 ♕f8 105.♞d7
♕e8 Seems like he got the hint, right?
106.♞d5 ♕e7 107.♞b5 ♕e8 108.♞b8+
♕e7 109.♞h8

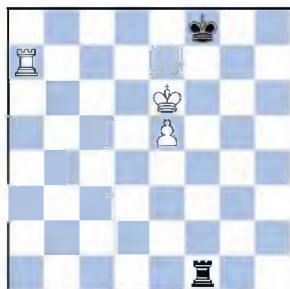


109...♞a1? What?? 109...♞b6 maintains
the Philidor position. I guess when the
clock is running down, even strong players
sometimes find it hard to just "sit."

110.♞h7+ ♕e8 111.♕f6! ♞f1+? Black
misses his chance for the Karstedt position
with 111...♞e1.

112.♕e6 ♕f8 But all is not lost!

113.♞a7



113...♞b1?! Again 113...♞e1 is the
Karstedt method, but the game continuation
still holds.

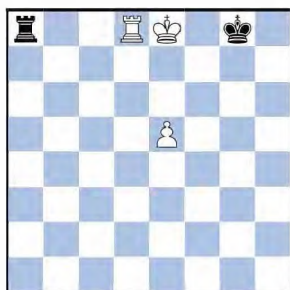
114.♞a8+ ♕g7 115.♞e8 ♞a1 On the
right track!

116.♞d8 ♞a6+? Not a fatal error! How
many times can you go wrong and still
not lose? We already know the best move:
116...♞e1.

117.♕e7 ♞a7+ 118.♞d7 ♞a6 118...♞a8
is safer.

119.♕e8+! ♕g8 120.♞d6! As we saw
in Aronian-Carlsen, a rook on d6 can be
tricky for Black.

120...♞a8+! 121.♞d8!



121...♞a7?? 121...♞a6! draws: 122.♕e7+
♕g7 123.e6 ♞a7+ 124.♞d7 ♞a8

122.e6

Black resigned

Once the pawn gets to e7, there is no hope
for Black.

As you can see, there were three lines of
defense: the third-rank Philidor, the Karstedt,
and then the side checks. In the previous
examples, Black had only two or one of
these available. But I found one more ending
where the defender bungled all three. I like
this one because the winner, Tony Kosten,
actually tried to trick his opponent's rook
away from the third rank - and succeeded!

Anthony Kosten

2507

Gerhard Schroll

2404

Austrian Team Championship 2004



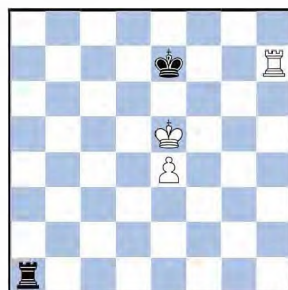
You gotta love the fact that the grandmaster
is not yet ready to call it a draw.

62...♞a1 63.♕f4 ♞a4+ 64.♞e4 Maybe
Black will trade rooks??

64...♞a2 65.♞e5 ♞a4+ 66.♞e4 ♞a2
67.♕f3 The opponent might start getting
annoyed here.

67...♞a3+ 68.e3 ♕f5 69.♞h4 ♞a1
70.♞h5+ ♕g6 71.♞b5 ♕f6 72.♕f4 ♞f1+
73.♕e4 ♞a1 74.♞b6+ ♕e7 75.♞h6
♞a4+ 76.♕e5 ♞a5+ 77.♕f4 ♞a4+ 78.e4
White has occupied Black's third rank. So
Black should slide the Philidor position up
to the fourth rank, with 78...♞a5!

78...♞a1? 79.♕f5 ♞f1+ 80.♕e5 ♞a1
81.♞h7+



81...♕f8? Noooooo! You should go
straight back, or else the white rook can

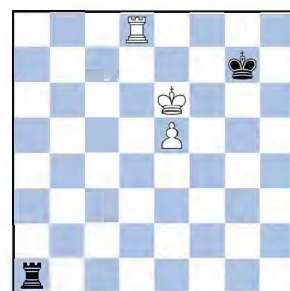
start interposing.

82.♞d7! ♕e8 Black doesn't have the
straight Philidor anymore, although, of
course, 82...♞a6 83.♞d6 ♞a7 84.♕e6 ♞e7+
85.♕d5 ♞a7 is an easy draw. But at the
end of the time control, you want to play
positions that you know by heart!

83.♕e6! ♞a6+ 84.♞d6 ♞a4 85.e5 ♞a1
85...♞a8?? would be terrible: 86.♞b6
♕f8 87.♕f6 ♕e8 88.e6 ♕f8 89.♞b7 ♕g8
90.♞g7+ ♕h8 91.♞g3, etc. Passive defense
works against a knight pawn, not the
bishop or central pawn.

But it was a good time to use the second
defensive method: 85...♞e4 86.♞b6 ♕f8=.

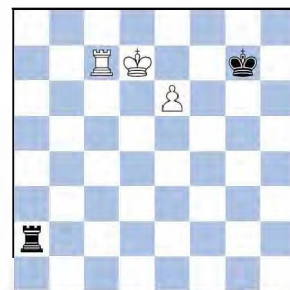
86.♞b6 ♕f8 87.♞b8+ ♕g7 88.♞d8



88...♞a6+? Missing the last chance for
the Karstedt draw with 88...♞e1 89.♞d5
♕f8!, etc.

89.♕e7 ♞a5 90.e6 ♞a7+ 91.♞d7 ♞a1
92.♞c7 ♞a2 The black rook is for some
reason avoiding the eighth rank, which is
usually the safest place for it, once it's on
the side.

93.♕d7!



93...♞d2+?? Black has reached the stage
of despair. 93...♞a8! still holds.

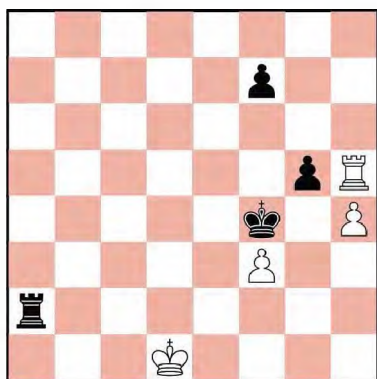
94.♕e8+ ♕g8 95.e7 ♕g7 96.♞c4 ♞a2
97.♞g4+ and we have the Lucena position.

Black resigned





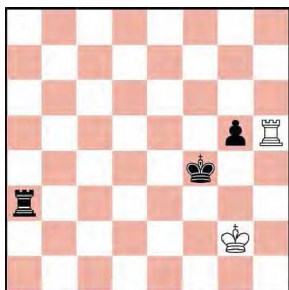
E. Sutovsky 2018



After this kaleidoscope of howlers, I want to finish with the most surprising (♖+♜) vs. ♜ position that I can recall seeing. GM Emil Sutovsky published a detailed analysis of this ending, from the game Vaisser–Martinovic (Vrnjacka Banja 1984), in the article “Illusion of Simplicity” (ChessPro.ru, June 2018).

I will give only the main line.

45...f6!! The game instead continued 45...gxh4? 46.♞xh4+ ♜xf3 47.♞h5 ♜g4 48.♞b5 f5 49.♜e1 ♞a3 50.♜f2 f4 51.♞b2 ♞h3 52.♞b8 ♞h2+ 53.♜g1 ♞a2 54.♞b3 and we have a Philidor position. The draw was soon agreed. 46.hxg5 fxg5 47.♜e1 ♞a3! 48.♜f2 ♞xf3+ 49.♜g2 ♞a3



Wait a minute! The white king is in front of the pawn, and that pawn is not even on its fifth rank yet. How can this

be anything other than a dead draw? But let's think about those three lines of defense and see if they apply here, when you're fighting against a knight pawn.

1. The Philidor third-rank defense. Well, here, the black rook is there. And the white rook is so misplaced that it can't access the next best rank: 50.♞h2 loses to the trade of rooks, as does 50.♞h1.

2. The Karstedt method doesn't apply to the g-pawn because the king can't slide away to the short side (there is no short side), and going to the long side leaves the rook no place to check from.

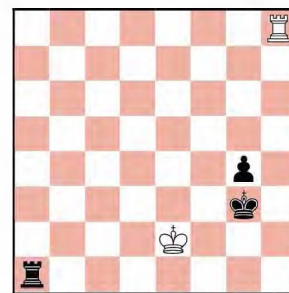
3. Side checks also don't work against the g-pawn: there is no short side.

Indeed, the knight pawn is in some ways the most dangerous: the only defense, other than the third-rank defense, is the passive defense on the first rank. Here, the white rook is offside, and neither defense is feasible. If you move the pawns one file to the left, it's an easy draw because the king escapes through the h-file. But here, White loses.

50.♞h8 ♞a2+ 51.♜g1 ♜g3 The rook needs two moves to get to either the third or first rank.

52.♜f1 This is where you can't go to h1 and then to “i2,” and there is also no 52.♞f8 ♞a1+ 53.♞f1 ♞xf1+ 54.♜xf1 ♜h2+.

52...♞a1+ 53.♜e2 g4 and the Lucena position is unavoidable.



Let's show the bridge again:

54.♞g8 ♞g1 55.♞g7 ♜h2 56.♞h7+ ♜g2 57.♞g7 g3 58.♞h7 ♞a1 59.♞h6 ♞a5 60.♞h8 ♞e5+ 61.♜d2 ♜g1 62.♞g8 g2 63.♞h8 ♜f2 64.♞f8+ ♜g3 65.♞g8+ ♜f3 66.♞f8+ 66.♞g7 ♞e4! 66...♜g4 67.♞g8+ ♞g5+.

How much undiscovered beauty is there in seemingly simple endgames?

I recommend refreshing this “basic” endgame theory regularly. If people starting with Philidor and all the way to Magnus Carlsen made mistakes here, it's not so basic after all.

Although we mostly focused on the Philidor position here (the third-rank defense and the Karstedt method), our journey also took us on some turns. We encountered some surprises (I suspect, even for many GMs):

1. White can set some dangerous traps against the side check defense (for example, with ♞d6!). With no time on the clock, the defender has to know it cold.
2. If the black rook is behind the central pawn on the fifth rank, the defending king can even go to the long side.
3. The defender can lose with a king in front of the knight pawn, even if it hasn't reached the fifth rank.

I hope I have convinced you that these endings are not just practically useful but also, and more importantly, fascinating.

JOIN BCM

A BRITISH CHESS CLASSIC



MONTHLY MAGAZINE • 64 PAGES • ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE





ALEKHINE'S NEW JERSEY VICTORY

The Lost Supertournament of 1929

■ By Thomas Shupe

In 1928, an eager chess enthusiast by the name of Victor Spark, made his family's hotels available to the chess world and successfully organized a couple of significant chess events. However, his ambitions increased further and resulted in an international tournament in 1929, featuring the reigning world champion Alexander Alekhine along with the best U.S. masters of the time.



▲ Alexander Alekhine, Fourth World Chess Champion

By the 1920s, Bradley Beach, NJ, had become a very popular resort town and attracted thousands of visitors from New York City and surrounding areas. This included Victor D. Spark, a chess enthusiast and member of the Manhattan Chess Club ("MCC"). A native of Brooklyn, Spark was a veteran of World War I. He served in the 6th Marine Regiment, which fought valiantly in France as part of the U.S. 2nd Division, American Expeditionary Force. After the war, Spark went to work for his father, Ned, who owned two hotels in Bradley Beach – Hotel La Reine and the Bradley Hotel. Construction of Hotel La Reine and the adjoining Bradley Hotel was completed in 1900 and 1928, respectively.

Spark and MCC played an instrumental role in Bradley Beach's foray into chess. In September 1928, Hotel La Reine hosted the 2nd Annual Congress of the National Chess Federation (predecessor to US Chess). Spark organized Bradley Beach 1928 and most of the tournament participants were also MCC members, including: Dr. Norbert Lederer (tournament director), Edward Lasker, I.A. Horowitz, Oscar Tenner, and eventual tournament winner, Abraham Kupchik.



Thomas Shupe is a Copy & Content Writer for Chess.com. In 2022 Tom won the Chess Journalists of America Award for Best Historical Article (Online). Although he only plays online these days, Tom has achieved the rank of Expert and is rated USCF 2025. A native of the Jersey Shore, Tom resides in Alexandria, Virginia, with his wife, daughter, and cat (named Chess, of course).

A DREAM DATE SWIPES LEFT

Shortly after Bradley Beach 1928, former World Champion Emanuel Lasker accepted an invitation from Spark to visit Bradley Beach and stay at his family's hotel. Lasker's stay at Hotel La Reine was part pleasure, but mostly business. At the time, Spark was seeking to solidify Bradley Beach's rapid rise to prominence in the chess world. He was in the midst of negotiations to host at Hotel La Reine a rematch between World Champion Alexander Alekhine and Jose Raul Capablanca, who surprisingly lost the 1927 World Chess Championship in Buenos Aires. As evidenced by his visit, it appears that Lasker was serving as mediator between the three parties to organize the match. Alas, Alekhine eventually declined and instead agreed to a match with Efim Bogoljubov. Lasker went on to serve as an arbiter during this match, which confirms

the active role he played in organizing the 1929 World Chess Championship. However, Spark's efforts were likely in vain, as Alekhine blatantly avoided playing Capablanca for the rest of his chess career.

ALEKHINE'S ODYSSEY

After upsetting Capablanca for the title in 1927, Alekhine embarked on a two-year worldwide simultaneous exhibition tour, which brought him to New York City in March 1929. After being the guest of honor at a dinner held by the University Club, Alekhine kicked off his American tour with a series of exhibitions produced by MCC. First, he played a forty-board simultaneous exhibition at MCC's headquarters in Hotel Sherman Square. Next, he played ten hand-picked opponents blindfolded. Finally, he played a three-board consultation match, where teams of MCC members put their



heads together in an attempt to defeat the world champion.

While he did not play Alekhine, Spark was almost certainly in attendance at these events along with the other MCC members. Seeking a consolation for Bradley Beach's failed world championship bid, this appears to be the occasion when Spark and MCC invited Alekhine to play in a tournament in Bradley Beach. Shortly after these events, *The New York Times* reported that Alekhine accepted an offer to play in Bradley Beach before he returned to his home in Paris. In the meantime, Alekhine gave simultaneous exhibitions in Boston, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Chicago, Cincinnati, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Zacatecas, Guadalajara, and Mexico City.

”

This tournament proved to be Alekhine's only master-level tournament between his world championship matches with Capablanca and Bogoljubov in 1927 and 1929, respectively.

Alekhine kept his promise and finally arrived in Bradley Beach on June 2, 1929 for the final leg of his tour. This tournament proved to be Alekhine's only master-level tournament between his world championship matches with Capablanca and Bogoljubov in 1927 and 1929, respectively. This significance makes it all the more surprising that Bradley Beach 1929 has largely been ignored by chess historians!

FOUR STARS OUT OF FIVE

Alekhine's score (8½/9) would lead one to believe that he was on top form and won the tournament with ease. Indeed, chess journalists of the time came to this conclusion. *The New York Times* reported: "Fulfilling general expectations, Dr. Alexander Alekhine of Paris, chess champion of the world, today won the international masters' tournament which has been in progress in the solarium of the Hotel La Reine

since Monday of last week. This he accomplished without the loss of a game, thanks to his victory over Lajos Steiner of Budapest, the runner-up, in the ninth and final round."

In reality, Alekhine was incredibly fortunate to win Bradley Beach 1929 given Lajos Steiner's strong performance. Alekhine found his footing in the latter half of the tournament, but his first four games were an unmitigated disaster by world champion standards – he blundered in each game and made many mistakes. Here are these games in order by rounds of play.

Alexander Alekhine

Isidor Turover

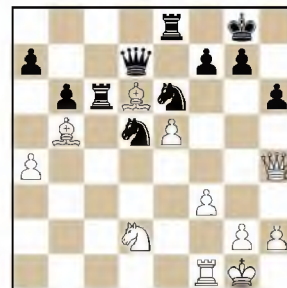
Bradley Beach 1929



Alexander Alekhine

Maurice Fox

Bradley Beach 1929



30.♗e4? 30.♗c4 ♞xc4 31.♜xd7 ♞cc8 32.♜xe8 ♞xe8 33.♞c1.
30...a6 31.♜xc6 ♗xc6 32.f4 ♜c5 33.♜xc5 ♗xc5+ 34.♜h1 ♜c3? 34...♜e3!-+
35.♗d3 b5 36.axb5 axb5 37.h3 b4 38.♜h2 ♗d5 39.♗xd5 ♜xd5 40.♜g3 ♜c3 41.♜f3 ♞d8 42.♜e3 ♜d5+ 43.♜e4? 43.♜e2=
43...♜c3+?! 43...♜xf4!♠
44.♜e3 and White won in 90 moves.

Horace Ransom Bigelow

Alexander Alekhine

Bradley Beach 1929



▲ The tournament venue, Hotel La Reine, ca. 1929.
Photo courtesy of the Bradley Beach Historical Society.



18...♞d4? and Black won in 46 moves. The fascinating 18...♞e8! would bring Black an easy win after, for example, 19.exf5 ♞xe2+ 20.♟b1 ♞xf5+ 21.♟a2 ♞xg2++.

Alexander Kevitz

Alexander Alekhine

Bradley Beach 1929



25.♞xd4? 25.♟xb7! ♞xb7 26.♞b2±
25...♞a6 26.♟xa6 ♞xd4 27.♞xc6 axb4+
28.♟c7 ♞ab8? 28...♞a3 29.♟b5 ♞d3++
29.♟d5 ♞e5 30.♞c4 ♞c3 31.♟xc3?
 31.a3!=
31...bxc3 32.♞c2 ♞h5 33.♟g2 ♞d1
34.♞xc3 ♞b1 35.♞f5 ♟g8? 35...♞f1+
 36.♟f3 ♟g8++
36.e5? 36.♞c4!±
36...♞f1+ and Black won in 48 moves.

Alekhine also committed some inaccuracies in Round 8 against Herman Steiner, the game for which he was awarded the brilliancy prize.

D28

Alexander Alekhine

Herman Steiner

Bradley Beach 1929

1.d4 ♟f6 2.♟f3 d5 3.c4 dxc4 4.e3 e6
5.♞xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.♞e2 ♟bd7 8.♟c3
♞c7 9.d5?! 9.a4
9...exd5?! 9...♟b6! =
10.♞xd5 ♞d6 11.e4 0-0 12.♞g5 ♟g4
13.h3 ♟ge5 14.♟h4 ♟b6 15.f4 ♟c6



16.f5?! 16.e5 ♞e7 17.♞xc6



▲ On the roof of the Hotel La Reine.

Seated (left to right): Alexander Kevitz, Hartwig Cassel (since deceased), Victor Spark, Dr. Alexander Alekhine, Dr. Norbert L. Lederer, Frank J. Marshall and Abraham Kupchik.

Standing (left to right): George P. Northrop, I. S. Turover, Rafael Cintron, Herman Steiner, Lajos Steiner, H. Ranson Bigelow, Maurice Fox, Herman Helms and J. Edmund Lister.

A) 17...♞xg5 18.♞e4! ♞d8 (18...♞xh4
 19.♞h5 h6 20.♞xh4+-) 19.a4+-

B) 17...bxc6 18.♞h5±
16...♟e5? 16...♟b4!? 17.f6 ♞e8 18.♞d2±
17.♞h5 ♞e8 18.♞f4 ♞e7 19.f6 ♞f8
20.fxg7 ♞xg7 21.♞af1 ♞e6 22.♟f5
♞xd5 23.♟xg7 ♟g6 24.♟xe8 ♞xe8
25.♟xd5 Black resigned

It was no secret Alekhine drank heavily during his chess career. After a months-long tour of the United States during the Prohibition Era, Alekhine probably welcomed a visit to the Jersey Shore - the national hub for bootlegging activities. This might well explain his slow start to the tournament!

SPECIAL EVENT AND CLOSING CEREMONY

Afterwards, there was a farewell rapid transit play tournament. Rapid transit play was a precursor to modern day blitz chess. Instead of three or five minutes per game, rapid transit play allotted players a certain amount of time per move. In the 1920s, it appears the most popular time control was ten seconds per move. Therefore, a player had to make each move within ten seconds, or else they lost on time. There were nine participants in the tournament, including Alekhine and Frank J. Marshall. Once again Alekhine emerged victorious; he won seven games and drew the other

On the lawn at Bradley Beach.

Seated

(left to right):

I. S. Turover,

S. D. Factor,

Dr. N. L. Lederer,

Edward Lasker

and A. Kupchik.

Standing

(left to right):

Oscar Tenner,

I. Horowitz,

Victor D. Spark,

H. Helms and

S. Mlotkowski.





with Marshall. That evening, Bradley Beach 1929 was concluded with a dinner at Hotel La Reine. *The New York Times* reported: "Covers were laid for fifty and Mayor Frank C. Borden Jr. of Bradley Beach made an address in which he thanked the visiting experts for coming here to play, congratulated the winners and extolled the virtues of the royal game." The other speakers that evening included: Dr. Lederer, tournament director, who presented the awards; S.S. Van Dine, murder mystery novelist, who funded the brilliancy prize; Alekhine, Marshall, Victor D. Spark, and Edward Lasker.

Alekhine bid farewell to Bradley Beach and returned to New York City. At Hotel

Murder Will Out. Dr. Alekhine, holding a black Bishop, is here shown on the veranda of the Hotel La Reine, face to face with S. S. Van Dine, author of mystery stories and otherwise known as Willard Huntington Wright.



”

Since he arrived in New York, Alekhine played 616 games, of which he won 515, lost 47 and drew 54.

Astor, he won exhibition matches against Charles Jaffe and Frank Marshall. And finally, he held a blindfold chess exhibition against eight opponents. All told, since he arrived in New York, Alekhine played 616 games, of which he won 515, lost 47 and drew 54. Later in the week, Alekhine set sail for his home in Paris. Shortly before boarding his ship, Alekhine provided a quote to a reporter from *The New York Times*: "I shall never forget the many courtesies shown me everywhere, and shall carry with me the pleasantest memories of my journeyings over here."

Alekhine rounded out 1929 by serving as special correspondent for *The New York Times* at Carlsbad 1929 (he did not play), and easily defeating Efim Bogoljubov in the 1929 World Chess Championship.

IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES, IT WAS THE WORST OF TIMES

Bradley Beach 1929 was the town's swan song of the "Roaring Twenties." The New York Stock Exchange collapsed just a few months after the tournament. "Black Tuesday" was the start of the Great Depression, which lasted until the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Real estate prices plummeted, exacerbated by debt incurred during the optimistic

1920s. These economic conditions were catastrophic for the Spark family, Hotel La Reine, and the Bradley Hotel. The ill-timed Bradley Hotel addition cost the Spark family \$500,000 in 1928, which is approximately \$8 million today! Bradley Beach's meteoric rise in the chess world came to a grinding halt; Hotel La Reine never hosted another chess tournament.

Four years after World War II, a fire caused considerable damage to Hotel La Reine. It took fire companies from twelve nearby communities to extinguish the flames. Luckily, only a few rooms were occupied and no one was hurt. New owners repaired and renovated the hotels, which experienced a brief renaissance in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet by the early 1970s, the hotels were abandoned and slated for demolition. In 1974, before they could be demolished, both hotels were destroyed by a suspicious fire. The fire started at Hotel La Reine and quickly spread next door to

the Bradley Hotel. Bradley Beach's Fire Chief said the fire "appeared suspicious because the utilities in the building had been turned off." It took firefighters from seven companies more than three hours to get the fire under control. Arson was suspected, but never proved.

Today, La Reine Avenue – a mere half mile long – is all that is left to remind visitors of the majestic hotel that hosted two world chess champions. The story's tragic ending reminds me of many of my own chess games, where a very promising position went down in flames. And I'm left staring at my scoresheet asking myself, "what could have been?"

"A second chess tournament stands to the credit of Bradley Beach, NJ, which bids fair to become a Mecca for followers of our game and in time may rival in this respect the famous resorts abroad."

–Cassell and Helms;

American Chess Bulletin; Volume 26; 1929

American Chess Magazine felt that Mr. Shupe's extensive history of Bradley Beach 1929, which appeared originally online on chess.com, was worthy of attention for our readers. He condensed his research into this article.

Photo of the final tournament standings and crosstable courtesy of Thomas Shupe.

BRADLEY BEACH 1929												
INTERNATIONAL CHESS TOURNAMENT												
HOTEL LA REINE • NEW JERSEY • USA												
DIRECTOR - NORBERT L. LEDERER												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	W L D	Score
1. Alexander ALEKHIN	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8 0 1	8½ - ½
2. Lajos STEINER	0	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	6 1 2	7 - 2
3. Abraham KUPCHIK	-	0	-	1	-	1	0	1	1	1	4 2 3	5½ - 3½
4. Isidor TUROVER	0	-	-	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	4 2 3	5½ - 3½
5. Maurice FOX	0	0	0	-	-	1	1	1	1	1	4 3 2	5 - 4
6. Frank MARSHALL	0	-	-	0	-	0	1	1	1	1	3 3 3	4½ - 4½
7. Alexander KEVITZ	0	0	0	1	0	1	-	1	-	-	3 4 2	4 - 5
8. Herman STEINER	0	0	1	0	0	0	-	0	1	1	2 6 1	2½ - 6½
9. Rafael CINTRON	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2 7 0	2 - 7
10. H. R. BIGELOW	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0 8 1	½ - 8½

Edited by
James R. Schroeder



MAKE YOUR MOVE: BRADLEY BEACH 1929

Imagine you are in the solarium of Hotel La Reine. Now find the game's continuation or improve on the master's play!

PROBLEM 1

Lajos Steiner
Abraham Kupchik



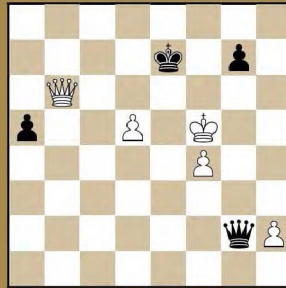
PROBLEM 4

Alexander Kevitz
Isidor Turover



PROBLEM 2

Frank Marshall
Alexander Alekhine



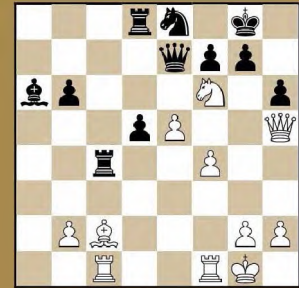
PROBLEM 5

Alexander Kevitz
Maurice Fox



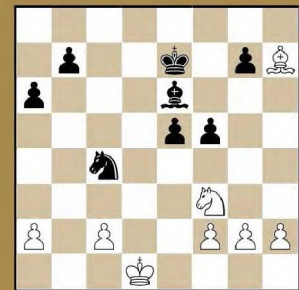
PROBLEM 3

Herman Steiner
Lajos Steiner



PROBLEM 6

Lajos Steiner
Alexander Alekhine



PROBLEM 1

Solution: If you have a key idea and your opponent is preventing it, the first question you should always ask yourself is "what happens if I just do it anyway?"

36...e5!-+ With this strong move, Black rids himself of a backward pawn and sets his kingside pawn majority in motion. Despite the hanging pawn on f5, the tactics work in Black's favor due to the x-ray on the e-file.

Instead, Kupchik played **36...xe3??** and **Black went on to lose.**

PROBLEM 2

Solution: **52...xd5+ 53.g6 d6+!** **53...e6+??** would allow White to win a tempo eventually with **f4-f5+.**

54.xd6+ xd6 55.f5 a4 56.xg7 This move is why the position is losing for White. The king is forced onto the a1-h8 diagonal! This is the type of move that is

easy to miss when evaluating a king and pawn ending.

56...a3 57.f6 a2 58.f7 a1+ With check! **59.g8 g1+ White resigned.**

PROBLEM 3

Solution: **30...xf6 30...gxf6 31.xh6** **xc2-+**

31.exf6 e3+! I suspect Herman missed that Lajos could save his queen with a check. Most importantly, this move removes a defender from the rook and sets up the winning tactic.

32.h1 xc2! 33.xc2 xf1-+ Black won.

PROBLEM 4

Solution: **17.b3!** A silent but deadly move. Black's position is a train wreck on the dark squares.

17...d5 18.a3+- Turover finally castled his king to safety, but for the hefty

price of a piece. **White won.**

PROBLEM 5

Solution: **18.f5!!** Unfortunately, Kevitz played **18.h3??** and eventually lost the game. He had the correct idea, but the wrong move order.

18...xf5 19.h3 g7 20.f5 h8 21.d7! xd7 22.xe7 af8 23.xd7 **xe5 24.g4+ h6 25.d4+-** Black is helpless against **h4+** followed by **g4** mate.

PROBLEM 6

This position arose in the dramatic final round encounter between the tournament leaders.

Solution: **24...f6!-+** A crucial move to prevent **g5.** Alekhine eventually forced resignation by trapping Steiner's light-squared bishop, thereby securing his tournament victory. **Black won.**

Fresh Leaves from the Bookshelf

By FM Carsten Hansen

10 NOTEWORTHY BOOKS

- 01 The Human Factor in Chess – The Testbook**
by Karsten Mueller, Luis Engel, & Makan Rafeiee (JBV Chess Books 2023) ★★★★★
- 02 Technique in Chess**
by Mark Dvoretsky with Artur Yusupov (Russell Enterprises 2023) ★★★★★
- 03 How I Became a Chess Grandmaster**
by Vinay Bhat (Quality Chess 2023) ★★★★★
- 04 Spassky's Best Games**
by Alexey Bezgodov & Dmitriy Oleinikov (New In Chess 2023) ★★★★★
- 05 Opening Repertoire: The English Defence**
by Jose Gonzalez (Everyman Chess 2023) ★★★★★
- 06 The Queen's Gambit Accepted**
by Max Dlugy (Russell Enterprises 2023) ★★★★★
- 07 The Open Sicilian**
by Ivan Saric (Chessable 2023) ★★★★★
- 08 Re-Engineering The Chess Classics**
by Matthew Sadler & Steve Giddins (New In Chess 2023) ★★★★★
- 09 Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings – Vol V – Minor Pieces**
by Chess Informant Ed. Board (Chess Informant 2023) ★★★★★
- 10 Max Euwe's Best Games**
by Jan Timman (New In Chess 2023) ★★★★★



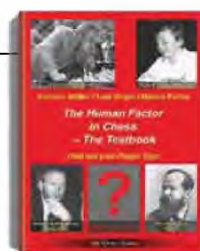
Carsten Hansen is a FIDE Master and FIDE Trainer, residing in Bayonne, New Jersey. He has written more than forty books, mostly on chess openings and chess tactics. You can find his work on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The summer and vacation time is upon us, and that can be an excellent opportunity to play some OTB tournament chess. However this doesn't mean that the publisher's schedule for bringing out chess books changes dramatically, but it does seem like they are at least taking a breather – although with the heatwave we are currently experiencing in the USA, enjoying the sunshine seems mostly replaced by taking refuge and staying indoors in air-conditioned rooms. In turn this, of course, may encourage us to catch up our reading of any chess books that we have acquired in the past year.

This time, we have a selection of interesting books, some of which, in the cases of those on Spassky and Euwe, I would say were long overdue. Thank you, New In Chess, for publishing these fine works. There's also a new volume of Chess Informant available, now the 156th in the series. As usual, there is a huge amount of interesting material.

Finally, I should mention that I have a new book out, once more co-written with Californian International Master Cyrus Lakdawala, Chess Endgame Planning. It is aimed at players rated 1500 and above whose knowledge and practical play is lacking in this phase of the game, particularly when it comes to accurately assessing the situation on the board and finding resources for both attack and defense. I hope you will check it out.

01

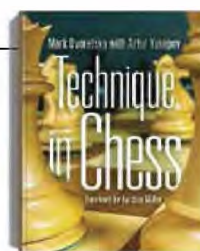


The Human Factor in Chess – The Testbook

by Karsten Mueller, Luis Engel, & Makan Rafeiee

We regularly feature books by German Grandmaster Karsten Mueller, which is no surprise because he is one of the most productive and excellent authors around today. The present work is based on a ChessBase "book," which delves into the different kinds of players, as defined by Danish Grandmaster Lars Bo Hansen in his excellent *Foundations of Chess Strategy*. The four types documented here are Activist, Reflector, Pragmatic, and Theorist. The book presents a series of tests that help the reader define themselves as players. It is not an easy read, but for ambitious players, it presents a ton of excellent material.

02



Technique in Chess

by Mark Dvoretsky with Artur Yusupov

We start off with the uncrowned king of chess coaches, Mark Dvoretsky, who shepherded countless players to chess greatness. With his untimely death, he left behind not only manuscripts but his fabled card archive of training positions, with which he had helped students during his years of coaching. Thanks to the efforts of Russell Enterprises, we have already seen the release of certain manuscripts he had been working on, and now, with the assistance of former world number

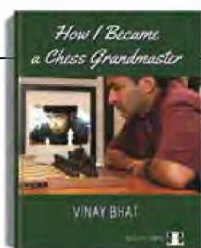


three and world championship candidate Artur Yusupov, the most famous of Dvoretsky's students, we have his work book available to the chess playing community at large.

"And the rest is a matter of technique" is a phrase that we have heard countless times in books, magazines, and even chess broadcasts. Yet, usually, it isn't all that easy, and anyway 'technique' is a very broad term that covers a lot of ground.

Here, at the start of Part 1, Yusupov defines technique as "the ability to play the endgame accurately and safely, taking advantage of all opportunities that arise, while limiting the opponent's chances as much as possible." He then goes on to show several types of technique by means of carefully annotated games, occasionally reflecting on annotations written by the players. For the second part of the book, Yusupov has selected 102 exercises from Dvoretsky's archive adding carefully annotated solutions, thereby making it a goldmine of profound instructional material.

03



How I Became a Chess Grandmaster

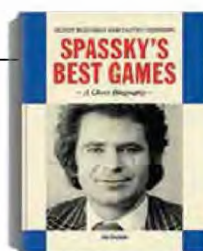
by Vinay Bhat

This book is one of precious few that tells the story of how a young player made it up through the ranks of American Chess, struggled, plateaued, faced challenges, lost the joy of chess, and found it again amid academic and professional challenges. In a time where young players seem to power through to the GM title at ever younger ages,

it is quite refreshing to read about someone who didn't just make it happen, despite being phenomenally talented and apparently having everything going for them. Vinay Bhat should be familiar to most, becoming a National Master at 10 and an International Master at 15, but then seemed to stall completely and only gained the Grandmaster title much later.

This very honest book contains a ton of advice, both on what to do and what to avoid, how to overcome plateaus, how to work on your game, your openings and preparation, your weaknesses and strengths, your understanding, and yourself as a chess player. Supporting both the story and the narrative of chess improvement is a wonderful trove of annotated games by the author himself. For those who are serious about their games and their improvement as a chess player and person, this is a valuable read that I have enjoyed working my way through and which I highly recommend.

04



Spassky's Best Games

by Alexey Bezgodov & Dmitriy Oleinikov

It is not often that a book has both a preface and two forewords, but this new publication from New In Chess has exactly that. That the forewords are by two former world champions signifies that the rest of the book is about someone special. The forewords by Kasparov and Kramnik are very different in style. Kasparov's is short and to the point, cherishing the humor of

his predecessor and bemoaning the fact that Spassky never wrote a book of his own. The latter, by Kramnik, is a much more heartfelt and six pages long discussion of Spassky, the class act, the all-rounder.

The book is split up into two parts, a biographical section written by Dmitriy Oleinikov, who, according to the back cover, is a well-known chess journalist and enthusiastic amateur player, and also the games section, which contains 60 annotated games, mostly by grandmaster Alexey Bezgodov. The book as a whole is pretty good, but I wish there had been more games, and the annotations more in-depth, akin to those by Timman in the Euwe book mentioned later in this column. Chess fans have long been aching for a biography of Spassky and this book will definitely numb the fans for a while, although I think most will hope for something more, longer and in-depth. That being said, it is an enjoyable book, and the games are excellent, entertaining, and instructive.

05



Opening Repertoire: The English Defence

by Jose Gonzalez

The English Defence, which arises after 1.d4 e6 2.c4 b6, is a dynamic and frequently sharp way of countering for Black against 1.d4 and 1.c4, often going over to lines that resemble both the Queen's Indian and Nimzo-Indian Defenses.

This book covers the entire complex that is the English Defence, but also takes a look at lines that avoid the main

lines for White, such as 1.d4 e6 2.♟f3. The material, which is split into 11 chapters, is capably covered by the Spanish Grandmaster and Coach Jose Gonzalez, who some may recognize from Chessable, but who was mostly unknown to me.

For the purpose of presenting a repertoire, this book is well-executed in the traditional style of this series with stem games, a solid mix of opening theory, explanatory prose, various exercises, and lots of interesting ideas. Overall a very good book.

06



The Queen's Gambit Accepted - A Modern Counterattack in an Ancient Opening

by Max Dlugy

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, one of the few true specialists on the Queen's Gambit Accepted (QGA) was the author of this book, American Grandmaster and legend Max Dlugy. What is interesting is that after a lengthy absence from OTB chess, Dlugy went right back to playing the QGA. He is, therefore, a natural choice of author for this book, which presents a carefully and thoroughly analyzed repertoire for Black. The first part of the book is the repertoire section, where the theory is dissected, and the main lines for Black are chosen. Actually this is where my only points of criticism can be found; sometimes, the author offers a sideline, the coverage of which occasionally carries on for several pages. I think it would have been more practical for the reader if the line was made



a main line in itself so as to be able to navigate the material better. Also, the analysis presents countless very long variations, concluding in well after move 20, sometimes after move 30, and if my memory serves me well, even move 40. The lines are occasionally quite interesting, but without accompanying commentary, it can be difficult to understand for someone who is not already a strong player.

The second part of the book presents 33 annotated games, including six of the author's own. All in all this is a very good opening book, in some ways constructed in the fashion of a traditional opening monograph, but given the level of the presentation, I suspect it will be too complicated for most players rated below 2000.

07



The Open Sicilian – An Ambitious White Repertoire for Club Players

by Ivan Saric

I suppose not all of us were meant to study openings like machines, endlessly repeating lines on chessable in an attempt to somehow commit them to memory. At least, that must be the message that chessable is sending by now publishing some of their courses as books, in addition to the now familiar electronic format. Naturally, it is not all of their courses that get the book treatment, only the more popular ones. That includes the present volume, which sees Croatian Grandmaster Ivan Saric offer a repertoire for White in the Open Sicilian. From the outset, I have to compliment

Saric on a couple of things: 1) He doesn't take ridiculous shortcuts to limit the scope of the book, 2) the repertoire is ambitious without being overwhelming, which allows him to include everything in one volume. Some of us older players remember well how Khalifman covered a repertoire for White in 40 or so volumes (okay, that's an exaggeration), and few could keep up. Nevertheless, I am impressed by the quality of analysis, the presented ideas, and the practicality of the overall material.

That being said, Saric occasionally gets a little too grandmasterly in his assessments, giving the reader an evaluation or a loose description of a plan without diving into why it is so or how it can be accomplished. But this is an exception to the rule. Incidentally, here the diagrams are in color, and the typography different from usual, although I'm not sure I particularly love the chosen font.

For strong club players, who I would categorize as those above 1900, this book can be very valuable. For those below, I would say that lots of the material is overkill, but can with the assistance of a coach, become accessible.

08



Re-Engineering The Chess Classics – A Silicon Reappraisal of Thirty-Five Classic Games

by Matthew Sadler & Steve Giddins

Before assessing this book, I will let you in on a secret from the world of chess authorship – not every position is given

equal amounts of time for perusal and computer analysis. This may seem trivial, but it is important to understand. Therefore, despite the material having been worked over with an engine, it occasionally goes somewhat faster, not allowing the engine to grasp all subtleties and really get to the bottom of every position. This, of course, means that a book is not the final word on a variation; in fact, it is far from it because a position can be evaluated as equal by the engine, even at a deep ply count but it (the engine) doesn't take into account whether the position is equally easy to play for the players who would end up in a given position. There have been positions in my books where the engines were in full agreement that the evaluation would be 0.00 and thus completely equal, but where the grandmaster games, including those who are top class, show a score favoring one side of 80-20, which is the true measure of the evaluation, although one side has to play fantastically well and really understand the position just to stay in the game.

Now back to this book, the authors, Grandmaster Matthew Sadler and FM Steve Giddins, are familiar names, both with several excellent books to their credit. They have taken it upon themselves to analyze 35 classic games starting way back in the 19th century and concluding with a game from 1998. Some of the games are outright classics that regular readers of chess books will have encountered again and again; others are less known but will still be familiar to regular readers of historical chess material.

The authors, other than providing a lot of traditional annotations to the games, have also let top engines play out more or less every single position in the book, along with countless suggested lines from various annotators over the years. This provides us

with a different type of look and book than we are used to. The computer games will, of course, often end in draws when positions are holdable or equal and end decisively when they are not. However, gaining an understanding where that threshold is passed can be interesting, especially if you are already inclined to seek the deeper truth in chess and want to know where we humans typically come up short and where the engines find surprising resources to make a defense stand and an advantage count.

This book is not an easy read, not is it for everyone, but the effort that has gone into making the project come to life is admirable, and I will definitely be taking some time to explore what the computer games have come up with in the games of some of my favorite players and in my favorite openings.

09



Encyclopaedia of Chess Endings – Vol V – Minor Pieces – 2nd Edition

by Chess Informant Editorial Board

There are books of all kinds on the endgame, general manuals, instructional materials and some devoted to a specific subset of endgames, including collections of endgame studies, and then there are the Encyclopaedias that Chess Informant started to publish many, many years ago. I have most of the volumes in the old original set, some of which I used, but more often rather regrettably left unread.

So what is the Encyclopaedia and how does it separate



itself from other books on endgames? These Encyclopaedias are broken into multiple volumes; there is a volume on pawn endings, two on rook endings, one on queen endings, and finally, one on minor piece endings. I don't recall there ever being a volume on endgames with mixed pieces, although that, too, could be an interesting deep dive. Each volume contains a mixture of endgame studies, educational examples, and examples from practical play. This volume clocks in at just over 2000 examples "of greatest historical and educational value." The material is further broken down into chapters depending on the number of pawns and whether they are on the same flank.

In this volume, there are ten chapters, each covering a different classification, i.e., different types of endgames within minor piece endings. All examples are analyzed carefully and checked with modern engines and tablebases. This definitely ensures a different level of accuracy. In the original volumes, I occasionally tried to see if I could locate analytical errors by the annotators. My success was modest, but whenever it happened, it was obviously a joyous moment.

While fascinating in themselves, these books are definitely not for average players, they are far too complex and frankly too overwhelming in their sheer volume of examples, while the languageless annotations can also be intimidating. However all this may be particularly useful for chess coaches who are looking for material for their students in certain types of endings, and, of course, also relevant suckers such as myself who have a never ending appetite for books on endgames although we rarely read those we already have.

Nevertheless, it is an important work.

10



Max Euwe's Best Games – The Fifth World Chess Champion (1935–37)

by Jan Timman

Although there have been other books and game collections about the only Dutch World Champion, Max Euwe, there have not been as many as he deserved, and those that have been written have all had their shortcomings in one way or another. This book, however, seems to fill the gaping void that was a collection of Euwe's best games, carefully and thoroughly annotated by a strong grandmaster. The fact that the annotator turns out to be Jan Timman, arguably the most prominent Dutch successor of Euwe's, having been one of the top players from the late 1970s and throughout most of the 1980s, as well as a world championship candidate and contestant. Of course, Timman has since proven himself as a phenomenal author, with several brilliant books to his credit.

In this book, Timman gives some biographical details and discusses tournaments in which Euwe participated, while sharing some stories. However the meat of the book is the annotated games of which there are no less than 80 – 75 wins, and five draws, all of which have been excellently dissected and analyzed by the author.

This is a truly wonderful book about a fascinating player and person, and I will be enjoying the games and commentaries for a long time to come.

SOLUTIONS TO THREATS EXERCISES FROM PAGE 75

1 29...♘h4 A threat has been created!
30.♙xg7? Unfortunately for White, there is no time for counterattack! 30.♙g3! was the correct reaction, as after 30...♙xf4 31.♙xf4 ♖xf4 32.♙a5 the position is close to equal.
30...♙e1!! White has no way to prevent the loss of material.
0–1

2 23.♘f5! A very strong threat is created!
23...♙f8? Poor defense. 23...♙xc1! was necessary, when after 24.♘xe7+ ♙xe7 25.♙xc1 White has the advantage.
24.♙h3! Another great threat! Black is no longer able to save material. 1–0

3 26.♙d1 Creating a threat.
26...♙e8? Poor defense. 26...♙d7 27.♙d5+ ♔h8 28.♙xe5+ was the lesser evil for Black.
27.♙c6 ♙c8 28.♙a3! Black has no resources which will enable him to avoid the loss of material. **White won.**

4 By playing 29.♙c5, it seems that White has made a threat that wins material!?
29...♙h3!! A beautiful counterthreat as Black's threats against the white king are stronger.
30.♙c8+? A bad reaction. The only defense was 30.♙e8+ ♔h7 31.♙g6+!! Phenomenal counterplay that enables White to save himself. 31...♙xg6 (31...♔h8 32.♙e8+ ♔h7 33.♙g6+!!; Or 31...♔xg6?? 32.♙xf6+ ♔xf6 33.♙xd5+–) 32.♙xd5 ♙xf1=.
30...♔h7 **White** has no good moves left, therefore he **resigned.**

5 1.♘f5! The threat is ♙d8 checkmate! And at the same time, it prevents checks after potential bishop moves.
1...♙e8?? A bad defense against the threat. Of course, Black does not fall for 1...gxf5?? 2.♙d8+ ♔g7 3.♙g8+!+–.
1...♙e2+!! was the proper defense, when there might follow 2.♔xf3 (2.♔f1 ♙e5+) 2...♙e8 3.♙d3 gxf5 with equal chances.
1...♙e5!! was another solid defensive option, when, for example, 2.♙d8+ ♙xd8 3.♙xe5 gxf5 4.♔xf3 ♙d3+ the position looks drawish after 5.♔f4 h6.
2.♙d8!! A phenomenal discovered threat!
2...♙xc3 2...♙xd8 is met by 3.♙g7 mate. And 2...♙xd8 just loses material after 3.♙xf6+–.
3.♙xe8 **Mate.**

6 44...♙f4! Threatening checkmate on h2.
45.♘g4? A poor defense to the threat. 45.♘f3!! was the correct and only defense! Then after 45...♙e3 46.♙xb7 ♙xf3 47.gxf3 ♙xh3+ 48.♔g1 ♙g3+ 49.♙g2 ♙e3+ 50.♙ff2 ♙xf2+ 51.♔f1 ♙xf3 52.♙xf2 ♙d1+ 53.♔g2 ♙g4+ will end in a perpetual check.
45...♙a3!! Punishment in the form of a double attack combined with deflection of the white queen, against which there is no defense.
46.♙b5 46.♙xa3 runs into 46...♙xf1 mate.
46...♙xb2 **White resigned.**



U.S. TOURNAMENTS

DULLES, VA

May 24–29, 2023
10th Cherry Blossom Classic
(9 rounds)

1-2 Vasif DURARBAYLI (AZE),
Mikhail ANTIPOV (FID) 6½
3-11 Illia NYZHNYK (UKR), John
BURKE, Semen KHANIN (RUS),
Viktor MATVISHEN (UKR), Gergely
KANTOR (HUN), Safal BORA,
Juraj DRUSKA (SVK), Josiah
STEARMAN, Craig HILBY 6

WHEELING, IL

May 25–29, 2023
32nd Annual Chicago Open
(9 rounds)

1-3 Awonder LIANG, Jianchao
ZHOU (CHN), Emilio CORDOVA
(PER) 7
4-8 Giorgi MARGVELASHVILI
(GEO), Ehsan GHAEMMAGHAMI
(IRI), Dimitar MARDOV, Michael
MULYAR, Olivier CHIKU-RATTE
(CAN) 6½
9-15 Fidel CORRALES,
Grzegorz NASUTA (POL), Robby
KEVLISHVILI (NED), Oskar
WIECZOREK (POL), Jason WANG,
Jakub KOSAKOWSKI (POL), Sam
SCHMAKEL 6

SUNNYVALE, CA

May 25–29, 2023
1000GM Memorial Day IM Norm
(9 rounds Scheveningen)

Team 1 (Masters)
Anish VIVEKANANTHAN 8
Diego FLORES QUILLAS (PER) 7
Gianmarco LEIVA (PER) 6½
Sebastian SANCHEZ (COL) 6
Jony VALDES (CUB), Robert
VILLAGRAN (CHI), Rochelle
WU 5½
Derek WU, Arturo MORALES
(PER) 4½
Team 2 (Challengers)
Pranav SATHISH 5½
Ashritha ESWARAN 4½
Bryan XIE 3½
Milind MAITI, Andrew GUO 3
Nathan YAN, Yu-Cheng LIANG 2½
Adway BANSAL 2
Patrick LIU 1½

I have avoided covering 1000GM's regular series of IM Norm Scheveningen events in the past, for fear of confusing readers with their admittedly somewhat complex format. As a reminder, in the Scheveningen System players are sorted into teams, and only face opponents outside their own team. In this case it's convenient for the titled players, who don't have to waste time facing each other with no real goal, and also for the lower rated norm seekers, who certainly benefit from facing the strongest opposition possible. As a result, the score necessary for an IM Norm was an unusually low 6/9.

While none of the challengers succeeded in their goal – Pranav

By FM Grayson Rorrer, Features Editor

ACM would like to invite tournament organizers and players to submit announcements, results and games to be featured in Tournament Reviews section.

Send your submissions to
office@acmchess.com
or visit **www.acmchess.com/submit**.

Please refer in the subject line to our
Features Editor, **FM Grayson Rorrer**.



Sathish was closest, with a commendable 5½/9 – FM Anish Vivekananthan deserves a special congratulations for annihilating his talented young opposition with an impressive undefeated 8/9, in the process crossing 2400 FIDE and thereby earning the IM title.

A50

Anish Vivekananthan 2374

Patrick Liu 2191

1000GM Memorial Day,
Sunnyvale 2023
Notes by Anish Vivekananthan

1.d4 ♖f6 I prepared for the wrong line here. I was actually expecting some Semi-Slav with 1...d5 instead of 1...♖f6, so I was a bit curious as to what he had cooked up.
2.c4 c6 Transforming back to a Semi-Slav, albeit using a weird move order which gives White more alternatives.
3.♖f3 d5 4.♖b3 A relatively rare move, but it is one of my favorite lines against the Semi-Slav.
4...g6 5.♖c3 ♗g7 6.♖f4 0-0! I really don't like this move for Black. I feel like now it becomes hard to generate counterplay and Black's play feels a bit aimless. 6...dxc4 looked better, when we, at least, have the imbalance of White getting the big center in exchange for having the queen out early.
7.e3



7...dxc4? A huge strategic mistake. Not only am I not forced to recapture with my queen, but I also get to develop my bishop in one turn while

having a very nice pawn structure. Better was 7...♗a5!?

8.♗xc4 b5 9.♗e2 a5 10.0-0 ♖bd7
11.♗fd1 Here, I already liked my position a lot. Black has a weakness on c6 and it is highly unlikely that he can ever achieve the ...c5 breakthrough. Also trying to roll the pawns down on the queenside with ...a4 or ...b4 will just result in me blocking his queenside pawns.
11...♗b7 12.♖e5 e6 13.♗f3 Slowly adding pressure to the c6 pawn and forcing Black to make concessions.
13...♖b6 14.♗ac1 ♗fd8



15.♖xd7! An extremely important move to make. Black is still threatening to push for ...a4 and ...c5 in some situations, so as to free up his position and get rid of the c6 weakness while activating his bishop. I cannot allow this under normal circumstances.

15...♖xd7 16.♖e4 Taking control of c5 and threatening a potential ♖d6.

16...♗f8 17.♗d6 I came to the conclusion that, even though my dark-squared bishop is strong, if I can favorably trade off bishops then his kingside will be very weak because of the weak dark squares.

17...♗ac8 Still attempting to play for the ...c5 break, but it is too little too late.

18.♗xf8 ♖xf8 19.♖d6 ♗c7 20.h4! I was extremely proud of this move. Strategically it is a very strong idea which indicates that I realized the potential for Black to eventually play some moves like ...♗a6 and ...c5 to free up his position. However, now that all of his pieces are on the

queenside aiming for the ...c5 break, I redirect my attention to the other side of the board!



20...h5 21.e4! Once I have provoked this weakening move I make my intentions clear that I am not only threatening to advance e4-e5 and secure a bind on his position, but I will also shuffle my queen from the queenside to the kingside where Black's king has no protectors!

21...♗a6 22.♗e3 c5 Black finally gets in the ...c5 break. But at what cost?

23.♗g5 ♗b8 24.♗f4 Black resigned

Overall I felt that I had played a very good positional game in which I was able to take advantage of my opponent's mistakes in the opening.

NEW YORK, NY

May 25–29, 2023
1000GM NY Norm Memorial Day
– IM B (12-player Scheveningen)

Team 1
Oliver BARBOSA (PHI) 7
Gabor NAGY (HUN) 6½
Mykola BORTNYK (HUN) 5½
Team 2
Alice LEE 4
Qi PANG 3½
Ansh SHAH 3
Team 3
Akira NAKADA 5½
Pedro ESPINOSA 5
Eshaan HEBBAR 1
Team 4
Justin CHEN 7
Terry LUO 5
Oluwaseun BISIRIYU-SALAM
(NGR) 1

NEW YORK, NY

May 25–29, 2023
1000GM NY Norm Memorial Day
– IM C (10-player round robin)

1 Mark PARAGUA (PHI) 7
2 Miklos NEMETH (HUN) 6½
3 Danila POLIANNIKOV 6
4-5 Iris MOU, Aiden REISS 4½
6-7 Megan LEE, Rushaan
MAHAJAN 4
8 Martin ZUMSANDE (GER) ... 3½
9 Nathaniel MOOR 3
10 Bilgen SAZCI (TUR) 2

1000GM has continued their experiment of late with another



Norm Invitational, in collaboration with NYCCChessNorms, mixing a traditional round-robin format with the lesser used Scheveningen System (outlined above). Justin Chen was the only player to achieve his objective, scoring 7/9 and his second IM Norm in the Scheveningen section – so perhaps there really is something to it!

There was also a GM Scheveningen section, but one with only six players. Presumably they were just playing for rating.

NAPERVILLE, IL

May 31–June 4, 2023

Leonid Shamkovich Memorial IM Norm Invitational (10-player round robin)

1 Gabor NAGY (HUN)	7½
2-3 Darcy LIMA (BRA), Grayson RORRER	5½
4-5 Mohamed EZAT (EGY), Liam PUTNAM	5
6 Jiangwei YU (CHN)	4½
7-8 Avi KAPLAN, Steve WONGSO	3½
9 Pedro RIVERA (CUB)	3
10 James CHIRILOV	2

Elite Chess honored the late Leonid Shamkovich's date of birth by putting together an IM Norm Invitational, as well as a FIDE Open running concurrently over the last two days. None of the players even came close to earning a norm – 7/9 is a tough score! – though, after a period of rough results, 5½/9 was a refreshingly strong result for myself. If the tournament hadn't been as top heavy I feel I would have had a good chance to make a norm with my level of play, but unfortunately I suffered bad losses against GMs Gabor Nagy and Darcy Lima, who ended up taking the top two positions. Still, there was plenty of reason for satisfaction – apart from the top three seeds I only conceded two draws, good enough for a 20-point rating gain, as well as a tie for second place, for what it's worth. My wins were well executed, particularly considering my recent level of play, and felt quite deserved. Hopefully it will be a good long while before I have to endure tough results similar to those I "achieved" in early 2023!

LAS VEGAS, NV

June 8–12, 2023

1000GM Las Vegas Super Swiss (9 rounds)

1-2 Hans NIEMANN, Mikhail ANTIPOV (FID)	7
3-6 Josiah STEARMAN, Jianchao ZHOU (CHN), Semen KHANIN (RUS), Iliya NYZHNYK (UKR) ..	6½
7-11 Daniel FERNANDEZ (ENG), Sam SCHMAKEL, Andrew GUO, Denes BOROS (HUN), Noah WARD	6

SCHAUMBURG, IL

June 22–25, 2023

U.S. Cadet Championship (8 player round-robin)

1 Erick ZHAO	5
2 Brewington HARDAWAY	4½

3-4 Ryo CHEN, Vishnu VANAPALLI	4
5-6 Evan PARK, Harshid KUNKA	3½
7 Eric LI	2
8 Tanitoluwa ADEWUMI	1½

PHILADELPHIA, PA

June 24–28, 2023

16th Annual Philadelphia International (9 rounds)

1-2 Zaven ANDRIASIAN (ARM), Bilel BELLAHCENE (ALG)	7
3-9 Hans NIEMANN, Viktor MATVIISHEN (UKR), Sam SCHMAKEL, Tuan MINH LE (VIE), Fidel CORRALES, Victor MIKHALEVSKI (ISR), Mykola BORTNYK (UKR)	6½
10-15 Djurabek KHAMRAKULOV (UZB), Semen KHANIN (RUS), Gevorg HARUTJUNYAN (ARM), Jianchao ZHOU (CHN), Christian CRUZ (PER), Pablo HERRERA (CHI)	6

Despite being a powerful event in its own right, the Philadelphia International is often overlooked in the shadow of the considerably stronger World Open held directly after its conclusion. GMs Zaven Andriasian and Bilel Bellahcene tied for first, scoring a superb 7/9 – and undefeated at that – while in the group of players half a point off the mark IM Sam Schmakel deserves special mention for scoring his first GM Norm! Roaring back from a loss to the eventual winner, Schmakel took down two very strong Grandmasters on command – to lock in a norm with one round to spare.

PHILADELPHIA, PA

June 30–July 4, 2023

51st Annual World Open (9 rounds)

1 Fidel CORRALES	7½
2-9 Hans NIEMANN, Aram HAKOBYAN (ARM), Semen KHANIN (RUS), Jianchao ZHOU (CHN), Andrew HONG, Djurabek KHAMRAKULOV (UZB), Arman MIKAEELIAN (ARM), Justin WANG	7
10-15 Zaven ANDRIASIAN (ARM), Tuan MINH LE (VIE), Mikhail ANTIPOV (FID), Abhimanyu MISHRA, Lazaro BRUZON, Viktor MATVIISHEN	6½

The Philadelphia International/World Open combination is a great chance for players to get much needed experience, while many other open tournaments in the U.S. tend to either be spread out or contested on dates that clashed with each other. GM Fidel Corrales took full advantage, following up on a tie for third in the International with a clear first in the landmark World Open! Tentatively a GM norm was achieved by IM Justin Wang with a powerful 7/9, while New York FMs Brewington Hardaway and Gus Huston appear to have achieved their final IM Norms in the same

event, with 6 and 6½ respectively. Certainly a fitting conclusion to this chapter of their respective journeys in chess, which are, of course, only just beginning!

NEW YORK, NY

July 6–10, 2023

1000GM NY Summer Norm - GM A (10-player round robin)

1-2 Maximilian LU, Justin WANG	6½
3 Arthur GUO	5½
4-5 Oliver BARBOSA (PHI), Victor MIKHALEVSKI (ISR)	5
6 Aleksandr OSTROVSKIY	4½
7 Zbigniew PAKLEZA (POL)	4
8 Martin ZUMSANDE (GER)	3½
9 Alice LEE	3
10 Kevin WANG	1½

NEW YORK, NY

July 6–10, 2023

1000GM NY Summer Norm - GM B (12-player Scheveningen)

Team 1	
Mark PARAGUA (PHI)	6½
Mykola BORTNYK (UKR)	6½
Michael SONG (CAN)	6
Team 2	
Pedro ESPINOSA	5½
Danila POLIANNIKOV	5
Qi PANG	4½
Team 3	
Max RUSONIK (CAN)	3½
Joshua COLAS	3
Nathaniel MOOR	1½
Team 4	
Justin LEE	4½
Tanitoluwa ADEWUMI	4
Andrea LA MANNA (ITA)	3½

NEW YORK, NY

July 6–10, 2023

1000GM NY Summer Norm - IM C (12-player Scheveningen)

Team 1	
Jacek STOPA (POL)	7
Piotr BRODOWSKI (POL)	5½
Leonid YUDASIN (ISR)	5½
Team 2	
Akira NAKADA	6½
Eugene YOO	3½
Iris MOU	2½
Team 3	
Marcus MIYASAKA	5
Grant XU	4
Alexandre KRETCHETOV	3
Team 4	
Tejas RAMA	4½
Aiden REISS	3½
Iliia KAKUSHADZE (GRE)	3½

In another 1000GM/NYCCChessNorms collaboration, which seems to be a long term commitment from both sides, a somewhat different layout was seen – instead of having a GM Scheveningen and IM round-robin, the Summer GM/IM Norm Invitational saw a GM round-robin and two IM Scheveningen sections.

GM Norms were achieved by IMs Maximilian Lu (his first) and Justin Wang (his second), who tied for first with 6½/9, while FM Akira Nakada scored his first IM Norm with the same score.

CHARLOTTE, NC

July 9–13, 2023

Charlotte Norm Super Swiss (9 rounds)

1-7 Daniel NARODITSKY, Lazaro BRUZON, Jianchao ZHOU (CHN), Pablo HERRERA (CHI), Gil POPILSKI, Vladimir GEORGIEV (MKD), Gus HUSTON	6½
8-9 Yasser QUESADA (CUB), Andy WOODWARD	6
10-15 Sergey ERENBURG, Elshan MORADIABADI, John FEDOROWICZ, Alonso ZAPATA (COL), Vishnu VANAPALLI, Deepak AARON	5½

The Charlotte Chess Center seems to be constantly working on projects and ideas both to help promote the game of chess more broadly and also make strong tournaments more accessible for ambitious players throughout the country. The Charlotte Norm Super Swiss is one such conception, wherein players are guaranteed a field with more than 20 foreigners, thereby fulfilling the requirements for a "Super Swiss" – a tournament where players can earn title norms regardless of the federations which their opponents are listed under. This provision wasn't taken advantage of on this occasion, but certainly helps to avoid frustrating situations common in other opens where a player performs at an IM Norm level but lacks an additional foreign opponent.

In such a monstrously strong field – 14 GMs and 12 IMs were in attendance, along with a myriad of other titled players – it's no real surprise that none of the top seeds were able to distance themselves from their rivals. Amidst a seven way tie for first place, one name clearly stands out – FM Gus Huston had a stunning performance, picking up from a loss to top seeded GM Naroditsky and scoring 5/6, including back-to-back victories over GMs Quesada and Erenburg. If not for a somewhat slow start he would have been in serious contention for a GM norm, but as it is he had to "settle" for 6½/9, a fourth IM Norm, the title (he crossed 2400) along with a piece of delectable first place pie. Truly a dream performance, there's no doubt he'll be on the hunt for GM Norms soon enough.

FM Vishnu Vanapalli and Deepak Aaron also succeeded in scoring IM Norms (their second and third respectively), certainly no walk in the park – Vanapalli had to win on demand as Black in the final round, while Aaron had already clinched the norm – his final one for the title – after drawing with GM Naroditsky in round 8, and even missing a sudden chance to take the full point!

My performance was quite unusual, an eventual 5/9 after breaking a 5-game drawing streak – a personal record! – on the last day. I can't be too happy considering the multitude of missed opportunities, despite gaining five rating points and sharing the U2300 prize.



TOURNAMENTS ABROAD

SHARJAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

May 17–25, 2023

6th Sharjah Masters (9 rounds)

1 Arjun ERIGAISI (IND)	6½
2-8 Samuel SEVIAN, Gukesh D. (IND), Yangyi YU (CHN), Haik MARTIROSYAN (ARM), Hans NIEMANN, M. AMIN TABATABAEI (IRI), Grigoriy OPARIN	6
9-15 Nihal SARIN (IND), Thai Dai Van NGUYEN (CZE), Nodirbek YAKKUBOEV (UZB), Ivan CHEPARINOV (BUL), S.L. NARAYANAN (IND), Sanan SJUGIROV (RUS), R. PRAGGNANANDHAA (IND)	5½

NICOSIA, CYPRUS

May 16–27, 2023

FIDE Women's Grand Prix (12 player round-robin)

1 Dinara WAGNER (GER)	7
2-4 Harika DRONAVALLI (IND), Polina SHUVALOVA (RUS), Tan ZHONGYI (CHN)	6½
5 Kateryna LAGNO (RUS)	6
6-9 Gunay MAMMADZADA (AZE), Bibisara ASSAUBAYEVA (KAZ), Nana DZAGNIDZE (GEO), Aleksandra GORYACHKINA (FID)	5½
10 Alexandra KOSTENIUK (SUI)	5
11 Bella KHOTENASHVILI (GEO)	4½
12 Oliwia KIOLBASA (POL)	2

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

May 27–June 1, 2023

SixDays Budapest GM A (10 player round-robin)

1 Arthur GUO	6½
2-3 Dominik HORVATH (AUT), Gleb DUDIN (HUN)	6
4 Isik CAN (TUR)	5½
5-6 David BERCZES (HUN), Anto MANISH (IND)	4½
7 Gergely ACZEL (HUN)	4
8-9 Misa PAP (SRB), Dey SHAHIL (IND)	3
10 Balazs PASZTOR (HUN)	2

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

June 3–13, 2023

First Saturday GM (10 player round-robin)

1 Arthur GUO	7
2 Dey SHAHIL (IND)	6
3-5 Sahaj GROVER (IND), Andrei KOVALEV (BLR), Zhen LOW (SGP)	5
6-7 Bach NGO, Valeriy AVESKULOV (UKR)	4½
8 G.B. HARSHAVARDHAN (IND)	4
9 Kirill SHOSHIN (FID)	2½
10 Varshini SAHITHI (IND)	1½

IM Arthur Guo has been on an incredible streak of late – in back-

to-back Hungarian GM Norm Invitationals he scored his final GM Norms, and added one more just for good measure at the Dortmund Sparkassen Open. Three norms in just one month is a remarkable accomplishment! Despite narrowly missing a chance to take home the U.S. Junior Closed Championship crown, Arthur's recent performances should propel his rating above 2500, granting him the GM title. An outstanding reward for the work he has undoubtedly been putting in.

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

May 27–June 4, 2023

23rd Dubai Open (9 rounds)

1-4 Chithambaram ARAVINDH (IND), Javokhir SINDAROV (UZB), Arjun ERIGAISI (IND), Maxim MATLAKOV (RUS)	6½
5-15 Yangyi YU (CHN), M. AMIN TABATABAEI (IRI), Emin OHANYAN (ARM), Haowen XUE (CHN), Abhimanyu MISHRA, Volodar MURZIN (FID), Shant SARGSYAN (ARM), Venkataraman KARTHIK (IND), Vahap SANAL (TUR), Saleh SALEM (UAE), Maksim CHIGAEV (FID)	6

MONTREAL, CANADA

June 6–11, 2023

Canadian Transnational Championship – Crown (9 rounds)

1 Toms KANTANS (LAT)	7½
2-3 Mateusz BARTEL (POL), Shawn RODRIGUE-LEMIEUX (CAN)	6½
4-7 A wonder LIANG, Marin BOSIÖCIC (CRO), Viktor MATVIISHEN (UKR), Nikolay NORITSYN (CAN)	6
8-14 Lazaro BRUZON, Nikita MESHKOVS (LAT), Alexander LENDERMAN, Omar QUINTANA (CUB), Razvan PREOTU (CAN), Mark HEIMANN, Mark PLOTKIN (CAN)	5½

Historically there has not been any great chess culture in Canada, but I am glad to report that this "tradition" is swiftly changing. The Canadian Transnational Championship was easily one of the strongest tournaments in Canadian chess history, co-organized by Toronto's Annex Chess Club – who also helped propel the 2022 Ontario Open to new levels, as reported on in ACM#27, p.40-51 – and Montreal's Maplewood Chess Club. The tournament was also part of the 2023 FIDE Circuit, where the highest performer throughout all eligible tournaments will earn a berth in the 2024 Candidates – held, where else, in Toronto! I don't think it is an exaggeration to speculate that Canada is currently undergoing

a serious chess boom. GM Hikaru Nakamura even graced the tournament with a visit on the final day, giving a speech and challenging several players in blitz after the final round was complete.

Latvian GM Toms Kantans ran away with the tournament, laughing in the face of a poor 1½/3 start – including a loss to eventual second-place finisher GM Bartel – to close out the event with six straight wins, taking first place a point clear of the field with 7½/9! The last day wasn't lacking in good news for local fans, though – Canadian IMs Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux (World Junior Champion U-18) and Nikolay Noritsyn finished with 6½ and 6 respectively, picking up their second and first GM norms respectively!

FM Alice Lee finished with an even score which, in this tough field, proved sufficient to secure her final IM Norm! After this success, Alice went on to win the 2023 U.S. Girls' Junior Championship in Saint Louis.

B52

Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux 2469

Andy Woodward 2468

Canadian Transnational Championship, Montreal 2023

Notes by Shawn Rodrigue-Lemieux

After a solid draw with Black against A wonder Liang in round 6, I was paired against another American prodigy in round 7, Andy Woodward, this time with the white pieces. I had 4½/6, and I most likely needed at least 1½/3 in the final rounds to gain a GM norm.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.♙b5+ Avoiding the Najdorf Variation was by far my best chance against such a strong and fast calculator!

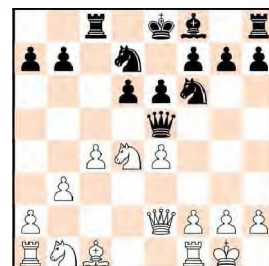
3...♙d7 4.♙xd7+ ♔xd7 5.0-0 ♚gf6 6.♙e2 e6 7.d4 cxd4 8.♙xd4 My preparation ended here, and I was satisfied with this position. White has a space advantage and an easy development, while Black's plans seem less straightforward. 8...♙c8 9.c4 Establishing a sort of Maroczy Bind, one of the most solid structures in chess. With the light-squared bishops already traded, I thought I was better since my central pawns no longer block my bishop.

9...♙a5 After my opponent blitzed out this move, I started to get worried! I had not expected this idea,



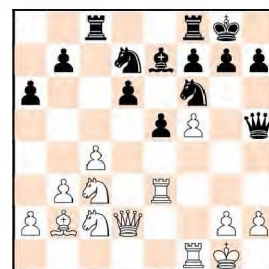
and Andy was clearly still familiar with this position.

10.b3 ♙e5 Executing the idea behind Black's 9th move.



White will lose the e4 pawn, but this is compensated by his huge lead in development. My opponent later confessed that he had played this position before, and that he knew it was still equal. Even though I was losing a pawn, I also knew that White could not be worse with accurate play, due to his advantage in development and space.

11.♙b2 ♙xe4 12.♙d2 ♙g6 13.♙c3 a6 14.f4 I have to create counterplay as quickly as possible, otherwise Black will simply consolidate his position with an extra pawn! 14...♙h5 15.f5 e5 16.♙ae1 ♙e7 17.♙c2 0-0 18.♙e3

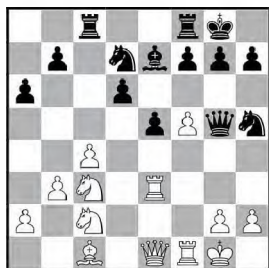


18...♙g5?! 18...d5! is a very powerful move for Black, opening up the center and threatening ...♙c5. Then, 19.♙h3 (19.cxd5? loses to 19...♙c5+) 19...♙g4 20.♙e1 (20.cxd5? gives Black a solid advantage after 20...♙e4 21.♙e1 ♔xc3 22.♙xc3 ♙xc3 23.♙xc3 ♙c8 since Black's pieces join the game extremely quickly.) 20...d4!? (Somehow, the engine recommends 20...g5!? which is an incredible move that prevents ♙h4, trapping the queen. White has no resources to take advantage of Black's weakened position!) 21.♙h4 ♙xh4 22.♙xh4 dxc3 23.♙xc3 b5 ♙ Black has sacrificed his queen, but in return got a rook and a knight, as well as some rapid counterplay on the queenside. With White's poor coordination, the position is simply equal.



19. ♖e1 My opponent forgot about this strong maneuver. The idea is to play ♗c1, when his queen will quickly run out of squares to escape! 19...h5 Black does not have time for 19...b5 since his queen gets trapped after 20. ♖g3 ♖h5 (20... ♖h4 is impossible due to 21. ♗xg7+ ♗xg7 22. ♖xh4) 21. ♗h3 ♖g4 22. ♗h4 ♖g5 23. ♗c1.

19... ♗h5! was a better way to deal with the threat of 20. ♗c1.



20...d5! 21. ♗e2 ♗c5+ 22. ♗h1 ♖d8 23. ♗xd5 ♗h6 24. ♗g5 h6 25. ♗h4 ♗e7 26. ♗xe7+ ♖xe7 27. ♗e3 White has won the pawn back and maintains the better position due to his initiative, but Black still remains totally in the game.

20. ♗c1 ♖h6 21. ♗xe5?! Too materialistic. 21. ♗h3 would've been a better way to proceed, forcing the queen to a passive square: 21... ♖h7 22. ♖d1 b5 23. ♗e3 bxc4 24. bxc4 and though White is still down a pawn, his initiative and activity are overwhelming.

21... ♖xc1 22. ♖xc1 dxe5 23. ♗h1 b5 Black suddenly gets a lot of counterplay very quickly, and I don't have enough time to consolidate my material advantage.

24. ♗e3

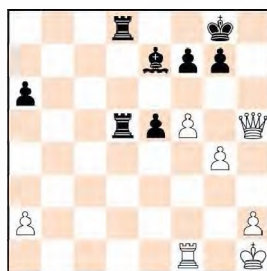


24... ♗b6? 24... bxc4! 25. bxc4 ♗fe8=

25. ♖d1? 25. g4! is a great opportunity that we both missed during the game. The idea is that White gets a strong attack without wasting any time, and Black doesn't have time to execute counterplay on the queenside! Then, after 25...hxc4 26. ♖g1 is devastating, with ♗xg4 coming next.

25... bxc4 26. bxc4 ♗fd8 27. ♗cd5 ♗bxd5 28. ♗xd5 ♗xd5 29. cxd5 ♗c5! Holding onto the h-pawn with 29...h4 would be inaccurate, since White would now be in time to defend his d5 pawn with 30. ♖d3 ♗c5 31. ♗d1.

30. ♖xh5 ♗cxd5 31. g4



31...e4! The idea which I missed. Black generates counterplay while preventing my attack. The key is that it will take White some time to play g5 and f6, since the rook on d5 pins the g-pawn.

32. g5 e3 After this move, I realized that the position was getting tricky and that my attack was not as powerful as anticipated.

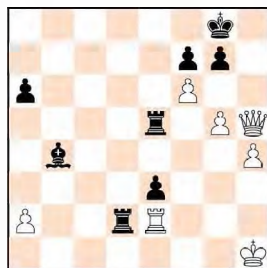
33. h4 33. ♖f3? is refuted by the simple 33... ♗xg5.

33. f6 is ineffective due to 33... ♗xf6. 33. g6 most likely leads to a draw after 33... fxc6 34. ♖xc6 ♗f6 35. ♗g1 ♗d1 36. ♗xd1 ♗xd1+ 37. ♗g2 ♗d2+ 38. ♗f3 e2 39. ♗e8+ ♗h7 40. ♖g6+ and White has nothing better than a draw.

33... ♗e5 A strong move, maintaining the pin along the fifth rank.

34. ♗e1 ♗b4 35. ♗e2 ♗d2 35... ♗xf5 36. ♗xe3 g6 37. ♖g4 should be a draw, although Black is probably the one exerting pressure.

36. f6 Trying to create attacking chances on Black's king.



36... ♗xf6?! I was very happy to see this move on the board, since it gives me legitimate play against his king.

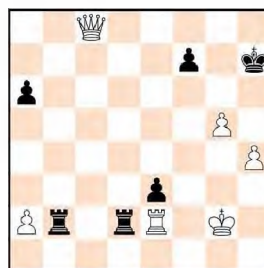
I was hoping for 36... ♗xe2?? which loses after 37. fxc7 ♗xc7 38. ♖h6+ ♗g8 39. g6 fxc6 40. ♗xc6+ ♗h8 41. ♖f6+ ♗h7 42. ♖xe5 with a winning endgame for White, since Black has an exposed king and a lack of coordination.

36... g6 37. ♖f3 ♗xe2 38. ♖xe2 a5= was probably the simplest option, where neither side can play for more than a draw.

37. ♖g4! f5? 37... ♗f8 is the only move to stay in the game. However, my opponent understandably rejected it in view of 38. gxf6+ ♗h7 39. ♗xe3 ♗xe3 40. ♖f5+ ♗h8 41. ♖h5+ ♗g8 42. ♖g5+ ♗h8 43. ♖xe3 However, Black is somehow holding after 43... ♗xa2 44. ♖b3 ♗a1+ 45. ♗g2 ♗g8.

38. ♖xb4 ♗b5 A very resourceful idea that does not work because of one detail.

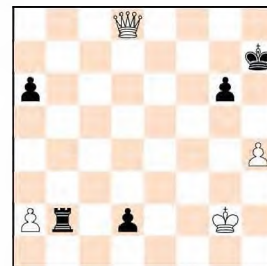
39. ♖c4 ♗b1+ 40. ♗g2 ♗bb2 41. ♖c8+ ♗h7 42. ♖xf5+ ♗g8 43. ♖c8+ ♗h7



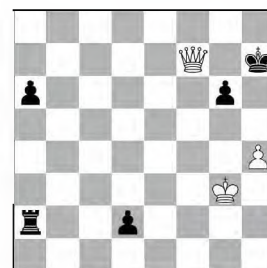
44. g6+! The idea missed by my opponent when he played 36... ♗xf6. After 44. ♗xd2 exd2 White cannot stop ...d1 ♖ without playing g5-g6, since 45. ♖d7?? fails to 45...d1 ♖ with a devastating discovered check. But 45. g6+! fxc6 transposes to the game.

44... fxc6 Forced. 44... ♗xc6 allows White to win material after 45. ♖g8+ ♗h6 46. ♖h8+ ♗g6 47. ♖xb2 ♗xb2 48. ♗xb2.

45. ♖c7+ ♗h6 46. ♖f4+ ♗h7 47. ♖f7+ ♗h6 48. ♖f8+ ♗h7 49. ♖e7+ ♗g8 50. ♗xd2 exd2 51. ♖d8+ ♗h7



52. ♗g3 The key idea was to give a check on the d-file, in order to move my king away from the second rank. 52... ♗xa2 53. ♖e7+ ♗h6 54. ♖d8 ♗h7 55. ♗f3? More accurate was 55. ♖e7+ ♗h6 56. ♖f8+ ♗h7 57. ♖f7+



A) 57... ♗h6 58. ♖g8! forces 58... g5 59. ♖xg5+ ♗h7 60. ♖e7+ ♗h6

Chess Academy Marija & Merab



Gagunashvili Chess Academy offers online chess lessons for children and adults. GM Merab and WIM Marija, founders of the Academy, would like to transfer their rich experience gained as players and trainers to all the chess lovers. Marija teaches children basics of chess in a fun and exciting way, while Merab helps them enrich, develop and apply their knowledge until they win their first titles.

You can contact us via email
academy@chessgagunashvili.com
 Viber or WhatsApp
+995 599 40 81 75





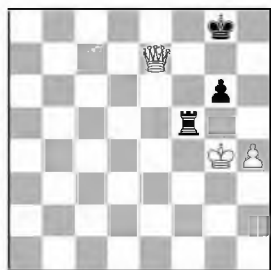
61.♖d6+ ♗g7 62.♕f3+-

B) 57...♗h8 58.♖d7! forcing Black's king to step to the back rank. 58...♗a5 59.♗xd2 ♗h5. Black ideally wants to put his rook on f5, attempting to meet ♗g4 with ...♗g7, in order to make the win more difficult for his opponent. However, he simply doesn't have time to do so because now 59...♗f5 runs into 60.♖h6+! winning. 60.♗g4 Black doesn't have enough time to consolidate. It now becomes clear why it was important to force Black's king to the back rank!

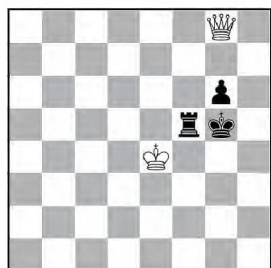
55...♗a5! 56.♖d7+ ♗g8 57.♗xd2 ♗f5+ Since this move comes with check, Black is able to timely prevent ♖h6!

58.♗e4 a5? The final mistake, which allows White to win on the spot.

58...♗h5 would've made White's position much more difficult to convert: 59.♖d7 ♗f8 (59...♗xh4+? allows 60.♗e5 when White's king will win the g6 pawn.) 60.♗f3 ♗f5+ 61.♗g4 ♗g8 62.♗c8+ ♗g7 63.♗xa6 ♗h7 64.♖b7+ ♗h8 65.♖d7 ♗g8 66.♗e7



66...♗h8 (66...♗h5 fails for 67.♖f6.) 67.h5! The only way to make progress. 67...♗xh5 68.♖f8+ ♗h7 69.♖f7+ ♗h6 (Funnily enough, after 69...♗h8 70.♖xg6 ♗h4+ 71.♗f5 ♗f4+ 72.♗e6 there is no stalemate and White wins!) 70.♖g8 ♗g5+ 71.♗f4 ♗f5+ 72.♗e4 ♗g5



This position is technically winning for White, since the black king is no longer on g8. Whenever the queen is behind opponent's king like this, the position is almost always winning, since fortresses are impossible and White can usually force Black into a zugzwang. I was calculating this during the game and I knew this position was winning, but I was seriously hoping that I wouldn't have to convert it! 73.♖h8 ♗f1 74.♗e5 ♗e1+ 75.♗d5 ♗d1+ (75...♗f1 76.♗e6) 76.♗e6 White's main idea is to get the king behind Black's pawn, and then to force Black into a zugzwang.

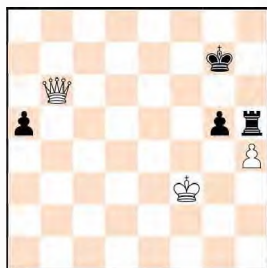
76...♗f1 77.♖e5+ ♗f5 78.♖h2 ♗f6+ 79.♗e7 ♗f5 80.♖h3 ♗f4 81.♖g3+ ♗f5 (81...♗g4 82.♖e5+ ♗h4 83.♗f6 ♗h3 84.♖e6 ♗g3 85.♖e2 ♗h3 86.♖f3+ ♗h4 87.♖e3 g5 88.♖e1+ ♗h3 89.♗f5+-) 82.♗f7 g5 83.♖d3+ ♗e5+ 84.♗g6 g4 85.♗g5+-

59.♖h6! ♗f7 60.♖h7+ ♗f6

61.♖g8 We now get a similar ending to the one analyzed above, except that White still has a pawn on h4, which makes his winning task much easier.

61...♗h5 62.♗f3 g5 63.♖d8+ ♗g6 64.♖d6+ ♗f5 65.♖c5+ ♗g6

66.♖b6+ ♗g7



67.♗g4! When I was calculating this line a few moves earlier, I intended to play 67.♖xa5??, which would be a monumental blunder because of 67...g4+ 68.♗xg4 ♗xa5 winning the queen. A real shocker!

67...♗xh4+ 68.♗xg5 ♗b4 69.♖c7+ ♗h8 70.♗f6 Preventing all the checks.

70...♗g4 71.♖c8+ ♗g8 72.♖h3 mate. After this game, I went on to draw my final two games and finished in a tie for second place with 6½/9, earning my second GM norm. This tournament was truly a great experience for me, as I got the chance to face my first two 2600+ rated opponents, as well as a future star in Andy Woodward. It was definitely one of the strongest tournaments in Canadian history!

TEPLICE, CZECH REPUBLIC

June 10-18, 2023

16th Teplice Open (9 rounds)

1 Frederik SVANE (GER) 7½

2-6 Shant SARGSYAN (ARM), Evgeny ROMANOV (NOR), Rasmus SVANE (GER), Evgenios IOANNIDIS (GRE), Yahil SOKOLOVSKY (ISR) 7

7-15 Leandro KRYSA (ARG), Pawel TECLAF (POL), Eitaj SAFARLI (AZE), Hampus SORENSEN (SWE), Anton DEMCHENKO (FID), Guha MITRABHA (IND), Gergely KANTOR (HUN), Tor KAASEN (NOR), Jergus PECHAC (SVK) 6½

16th Teplice Open (9 rounds)

1 Frederik SVANE (GER) 7½

2-6 Shant SARGSYAN (ARM), Evgeny ROMANOV (NOR), Rasmus SVANE (GER), Evgenios IOANNIDIS (GRE), Yahil SOKOLOVSKY (ISR) 7

7-15 Leandro KRYSA (ARG), Pawel TECLAF (POL), Eitaj SAFARLI (AZE), Hampus SORENSEN (SWE), Anton DEMCHENKO (FID), Guha MITRABHA (IND), Gergely KANTOR (HUN), Tor KAASEN (NOR), Jergus PECHAC (SVK) 6½

16th Teplice Open (9 rounds)

1 Frederik SVANE (GER) 7½

2-6 Shant SARGSYAN (ARM), Evgeny ROMANOV (NOR), Rasmus SVANE (GER), Evgenios IOANNIDIS (GRE), Yahil SOKOLOVSKY (ISR) 7

7-15 Leandro KRYSA (ARG), Pawel TECLAF (POL), Eitaj SAFARLI (AZE), Hampus SORENSEN (SWE), Anton DEMCHENKO (FID), Guha MITRABHA (IND), Gergely KANTOR (HUN), Tor KAASEN (NOR), Jergus PECHAC (SVK) 6½

16th Teplice Open (9 rounds)

1 Frederik SVANE (GER) 7½

2-6 Shant SARGSYAN (ARM), Evgeny ROMANOV (NOR), Rasmus SVANE (GER), Evgenios IOANNIDIS (GRE), Yahil SOKOLOVSKY (ISR) 7

7-15 Leandro KRYSA (ARG), Pawel TECLAF (POL), Eitaj SAFARLI (AZE), Hampus SORENSEN (SWE), Anton DEMCHENKO (FID), Guha MITRABHA (IND), Gergely KANTOR (HUN), Tor KAASEN (NOR), Jergus PECHAC (SVK) 6½

16th Teplice Open (9 rounds)

1 Frederik SVANE (GER) 7½

2-6 Shant SARGSYAN (ARM), Evgeny ROMANOV (NOR), Rasmus SVANE (GER), Evgenios IOANNIDIS (GRE), Yahil SOKOLOVSKY (ISR) 7

7-15 Leandro KRYSA (ARG), Pawel TECLAF (POL), Eitaj SAFARLI (AZE), Hampus SORENSEN (SWE), Anton DEMCHENKO (FID), Guha MITRABHA (IND), Gergely KANTOR (HUN), Tor KAASEN (NOR), Jergus PECHAC (SVK) 6½

16th Teplice Open (9 rounds)

1 Frederik SVANE (GER) 7½

2-6 Shant SARGSYAN (ARM), Evgeny ROMANOV (NOR), Rasmus SVANE (GER), Evgenios IOANNIDIS (GRE), Yahil SOKOLOVSKY (ISR) 7

7-15 Leandro KRYSA (ARG), Pawel TECLAF (POL), Eitaj SAFARLI (AZE), Hampus SORENSEN (SWE), Anton DEMCHENKO (FID), Guha MITRABHA (IND), Gergely KANTOR (HUN), Tor KAASEN (NOR), Jergus PECHAC (SVK) 6½

16th Teplice Open (9 rounds)

1 Frederik SVANE (GER) 7½

2-6 Shant SARGSYAN (ARM), Evgeny ROMANOV (NOR), Rasmus SVANE (GER), Evgenios IOANNIDIS (GRE), Yahil SOKOLOVSKY (ISR) 7

7-15 Leandro KRYSA (ARG), Pawel TECLAF (POL), Eitaj SAFARLI (AZE), Hampus SORENSEN (SWE), Anton DEMCHENKO (FID), Guha MITRABHA (IND), Gergely KANTOR (HUN), Tor KAASEN (NOR), Jergus PECHAC (SVK) 6½

16th Teplice Open (9 rounds)

1 Frederik SVANE (GER) 7½

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, July 11-19, 2023 V. Geza Hetenyi Memorial Super GM															
Rk	Name	FED	ELO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	R. PRAGGNANANDHAA	IND	2690	•	0	1	½	½	½	1	1	1	1	6½	2833
2	M. Amin TABATABAEI	IRI	2689	1	•	½	½	0	½	½	1	½	1	5½	2747
3	Sanan SJUGIROV	RUS	2699	0	½	•	0	½	1	1	1	½	1	5½	2746
4	Radoslaw WOJASZEK	POL	2676	½	½	1	•	½	½	1	½	½	0	5	2711
5	Pavel ELJANOV	UKR	2694	½	1	½	½	•	½	0	½	1	½	5	2709
6	Maxim MATLAKOV	RUS	2673	½	½	0	½	½	•	0	1	1	1	5	2712
7	Parham MAGHSOODLOO	IRI	2719	0	½	0	0	1	1	•	0	½	½	3½	2583
8	Adam KOZAK	HUN	2571	0	0	0	½	½	0	1	•	½	1	3½	2600
9	Kirill SHEVCHENKO	ROU	2694	0	½	½	½	0	0	½	½	•	½	3	2541
10	Peter PROHASZKA	HUN	2585	0	0	0	1	½	0	½	0	½	•	2½	2512

DORASZELSKI (GER), Stefan

COLIJN (NED) 3½

10 Srithan SAYPURI (IND) 2½

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

1-3 Vasyi IVANCHUK (UKR), David

ANTON GUIJARRO (ESP), Jorden

VAN FOREEST (NED) 3

4-5 Nils GRANDELUS (SWE),

Radoslaw WOJASZEK (POL) . 2½

6 Bartosz SOCKO (POL) 1

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vitaliy BERNADSKIY (UKR), Andrey RYCHAGOV (RUS), Rodion RADZHABOV (RUS) 6

AKTOBE, KAZAKHSTAN

June 20-27, 2023

Vladimir Dvorkovich Memorial

(9 rounds)

1 Bardiya DANESHVAR (IRI) ... 7½

2-3 Maxim MATLAKOV (FID), Timur GAREYEV 7

4-7 Mihail NIKITENKO (BLR), Asylbek ABDYZHAPAR (KGZ), Arystanbek URAZAYEV (KAZ), Evgeny ALEKSEEV (ISR) 6½

8-15 Manuel PETROSYAN (ARM), Saparmyrat ATABAYEV (TKM), Vladislav KOVALEV (FID), Aleksandr SHIMANOV (RUS), Leon LIVAIC (CRO), Vital



A MAGAZINE THAT HAS TAKEN THE CHESS WORLD BY STORM!

It's like getting a book of instruction, news, and close-ups every other month – one you would be proud to casually lay out on your coffee table.

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

ACMCHESS.COM/SUBSCRIBE



Six Times Per Year
100 Pages Per Issue

6 Issues for
\$99.99



Q&A 5x5

WHERE GRANDMASTERS ADVISE YOUNG PLAYERS

01 What is the advantage of someone starting to play chess at an early age? When is it best to start? And for those who might be late in learning the game, are they able to get back on track to becoming a titled player?

Chess as a game is changing, and the earlier you start, the more chances you have to succeed. Most strong players begin at a very young age so that they get more time to learn this complex game. Also, children's brains are more adaptable than adults, meaning they can learn new skills and concepts better. I would suggest the best period to start playing chess is between 5 and 8. Of course, there is always time to start playing chess and reap the benefits of the game. However, beginning at an early age can give children a significant advantage. There are a few things that adults can do to get back on track to becoming a titled player: they should find a good chess coach who can help them develop their skills, join a chess club and play in tournaments where they can compete regularly.

02 If there are three main departments of the game — opening, middlegame and endgame — what portion of our time should we spend on each? And what is the most important?

At the end of the day, to become a strong chess player, one must master all three aspects of the game. The question of how much time should be spent on

each of these mainly depends on your level in chess and your strengths and weaknesses. At an early stage, I recommend focusing primarily on the middle and endgames, and as one gets stronger, the openings also start to play an important role. I would say that the middlegame is the most important as it decides the game, and middlegame understanding is what differentiates a strong from a weak player. So, the middlegame is something everyone should spend the majority of their time on — to study various aspects like piece placement, pawn structures, tactics, etc.

03 From your own experience can you recall any specific type of opening position or endgame theme that an aspiring chess player should be sure to study because of its particular importance?

The basic pawn and rook endgames. It's essential to know the basics of these endgames as they play a crucial role in either converting winning positions or achieving draws. The main reason for this is that, by the time you get to these positions, you have probably already played for 4-5 hours and are pretty exhausted, unable to think precisely, and then knowing these endgames will help us a lot. I remember my coach telling me that I have to know them so well that,



GM Rahul Srivasthav Peddi

India's 74th grandmaster

Student of Finance and Economics at the University of Texas in Dallas

Top scorer for his university chess team in the past two years

Thanks to playing chess, he has visited nearly 30 countries all over the world

even if someone wakes me up in the middle of my sleep, I should still be able to remember them!

04 Not everyone can be a chess world champion. But how can chess be of benefit in life and business?

Everyone should consider playing chess at some

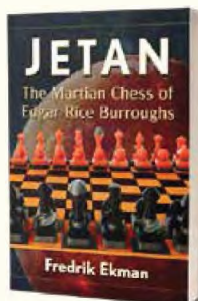
point. If not professionally, at least as a hobby, as chess is not like any other sport. It challenges our brains in every way possible. One develops various skills by playing chess: problem-solving, critical thinking, planning, etc. And these skills are not just restricted to chess. They transfer to other parts of life like Business, Education, etc. As a student, I have experienced this myself — I can navigate through my college life much more easily thanks to the skills I have developed through chess.

05 Why would you recommend chess to youngsters? What joys may they expect to experience on this thrilling journey, in addition to those you have mentioned in your previous answer?

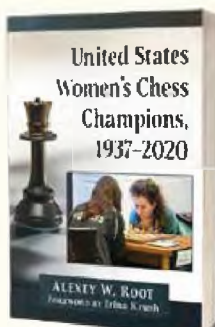
I highly recommend chess to youngsters. There are, of course, a lot of advantages to playing chess, like developing creativity, discipline, and focus. But I want to focus on something else — an important lesson that kids can learn is how to accept defeats. We always face setbacks, many things don't go as planned, but we have to learn to accept this and move forward. And this is something chess can teach! In chess, you lose all the time but play again, and you win, just like in life. This, for me, is the most significant skill I learned and used in other parts of my life.

“[The] classic McFarland book: a deeply researched, lovingly produced and definitive enquiry into an area of chess with a view to being the last word on the subject”—*British Chess Magazine*

Jetan. *The Martian Chess of Edgar Rice Burroughs*. Fredrik Ekman. **NEWLY PUBLISHED.** 2022, \$49.95 paperback (7 × 10), 211pp., 149 illustrations, appendices, bibliography, index, 978-1-4766-8793-3. “Masterful...Even the most ardent Burroughs enthusiast will learn something new”—Scott Tracy Griffin, author of *Tarzan on Film*.



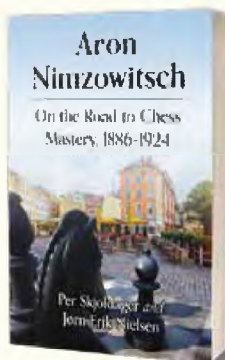
United States Women's Chess Champions, 1937–2020. Alexey W. Root. **NEWLY PUBLISHED.** 2022, \$49.95 paperback (7 × 10), 238pp., 29 photographs, 171 annotated games, 93 diagrams, 60 cross-tables, bibliography, index, 978-1-4766-8693-6. “A major accomplishment and one chess historians will gratefully appreciate...fascinating”—IM John Donaldson (Mechanics' Institute).



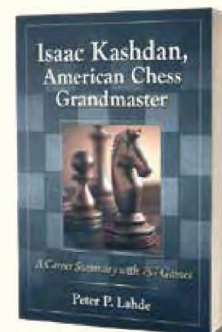
Mikhail Botvinnik. *The Life and Games of a World Chess Champion*. Andy Soltis. 2022 [original lib. bdg. 2014], \$49.95 **now paperback** (7 × 10), 284pp., 107 annotated games, 128 diagrams, 12 photos, chronology, appendices, notes, bibliography, indexes, 978-1-4766-9139-8. **BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD**—*Chess Journalists of America*, **BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD**—English Chess Federation.



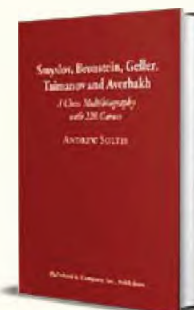
Aron Nimzowitsch. *On the Road to Chess Mastery, 1886–1924*. Per Skjoldager and Jørn Erik Nielsen. 2022 [original lib. bdg. 2012], \$49.95 **now paperback** (7 × 10) 468pp., 426 annotated games, 88 photos, 10 maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, indexes, 978-1-4766-9137-4. “Strongly recommended!”—*Chess Today*; “Fascinating”—*Chess*. **BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD**—*Chess Cafe*.



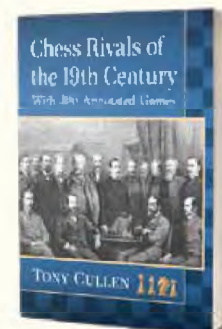
Isaac Kashdan, American Chess Grandmaster. *A Career Summary with 757 Games*. Peter P. Lahde. 2023 [original lib. bdg. 2009], \$49.95 **now paperback** (7 × 10), 360pp., 11 photographs, facsimiles, diagrams, tables, appendices, bibliography, indexes, 978-1-4766-9295-1. “Lahde’s book is important, and he deserves our thanks for filling a longstanding void”—*Chess Life*.



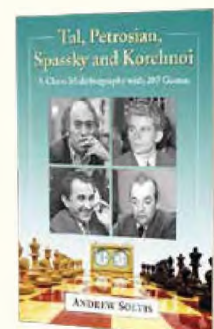
Smyslov, Bronstein, Geller, Taimanov and Averbakh. *A Chess Multibiography with 220 Games*. Andrew Soltis. 2021, \$65 library binding (7 × 10), 392pp., 44 photographs, 227 diagrams, appendices, notes, bibliography, indexes, 978-1-4766-7793-4. Fate played a capricious role in the lives of five of the greatest. **BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD**—*Chess Journalists of America*



Chess Rivals of the 19th Century. *With 300 Annotated Games*. Tony Cullen. 2021, \$45 paperback (7 × 10), 477pp., 54 photographs, diagrams, bibliography, indexes, 978-1-4766-8072-9. More than a third of the 300 annotated games analyzed by past masters and checked by powerful engines. Fifty masters: with brief biographies, anecdotes and an endgame section. “A treasure trove”—*Chess*.



Tal, Petrosian, Spassky and Korchnoi. *A Chess Multibiography with 207 Games*. Andrew Soltis. 2020 [original lib. bdg. 2019], \$45 **now paperback** (7 × 10), 394pp., 30 photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, indexes, 978-1-4766-8364-5. “Arguably the best book Soltis has ever written”—IM John Donaldson. **BOOK OF THE YEAR AWARD**—*Chess Journalists of America*.



OPENING ENCYCLOPAEDIA 2023



YOUR EASY ACCESS TO OPENING THEORY

Anyone who is seriously concerned with openings cannot be without the Opening Encyclopaedia

The new 2023 edition is by far the most comprehensive theoretical chess work: 1,396 theory articles offer a huge treasure-trove of ideas and high-quality analyses! There are 66 new major articles and 384 new or updated opening surveys that have been added in this edition. In addition: 70 top-class videos for 29 hours of playing time in total! For beginners there is a tutorial for each opening area, in which the most important ideas and strategies are presented. The icing on the cake: Grandmaster Dorian Rogozenco presents current trends in world-class chess. Secure yourself the decisive advantage with this unique opening library!

Improved menu structure

All 1,396 opening articles are not just specified by the opening name, but also by the line notation - a big plus for a faster search

and a better overview! Under the main categories "Open openings", "Semi-open openings", "Closed Openings", and "Flank openings" you will find all articles classified by opening name. Each of them can be called up with a mouse click, and you can just as easily switch from one article to the next. So you can find your favourite openings easily and quickly!

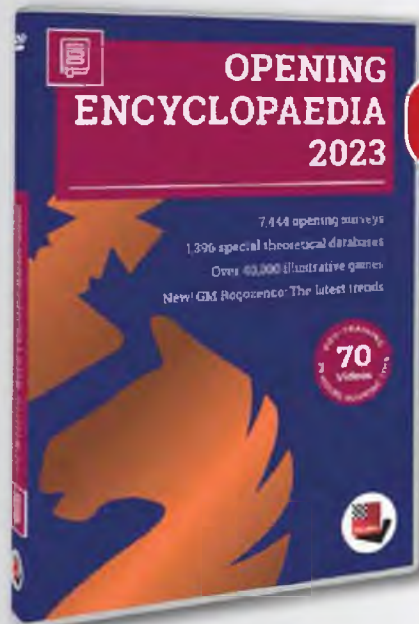
Current trends in world-class chess

New in the Opening Encyclopaedia 2023: Grandmaster Dorian Rogozenco presents current opening trends in world-class chess in video format, which includes such things as games from the Candidates Tournament 2022 and the Olympiad 2022.

70 videos - 29 hours of playing time

In addition, the new edition offers an updated collection of 70 selected videos by well-known ChessBase authors such as Daniel King, Dorian Rogozenco, Rustam Kasimdzhanov, Markus Ragger, Mihail Marin, Erwin I'Ami and many more. Over 29 hours of the best chess entertainment await you!

The opening tutorials provide a general overview for all known systems. From here you can go directly by mouse click to the in-depth opening articles. Have you already found the right openings for you? Let yourself be inspired and see which opening suits you best!



**MORE CONTENT.
MORE IDEAS.**



All novelties at a glance:

- Over 1,396 opening articles with professional analyses
- 70 selected opening videos. Total playing time: 29 hrs.
- 3 videos on current opening trends (1.e4, 1.d4, and 1.Nf3/1.c4) by GM Dorian Rogozenco
- Opening tutorials introducing all known openings for beginners
- 7,444 opening overviews, 384 of them newly created
- Intuitive menu structure, sorting by opening names, comfortable access

Opening Encyclopaedia 2023:

Full version
Update from Version 2022

US\$ 129.90
US\$ 79.90