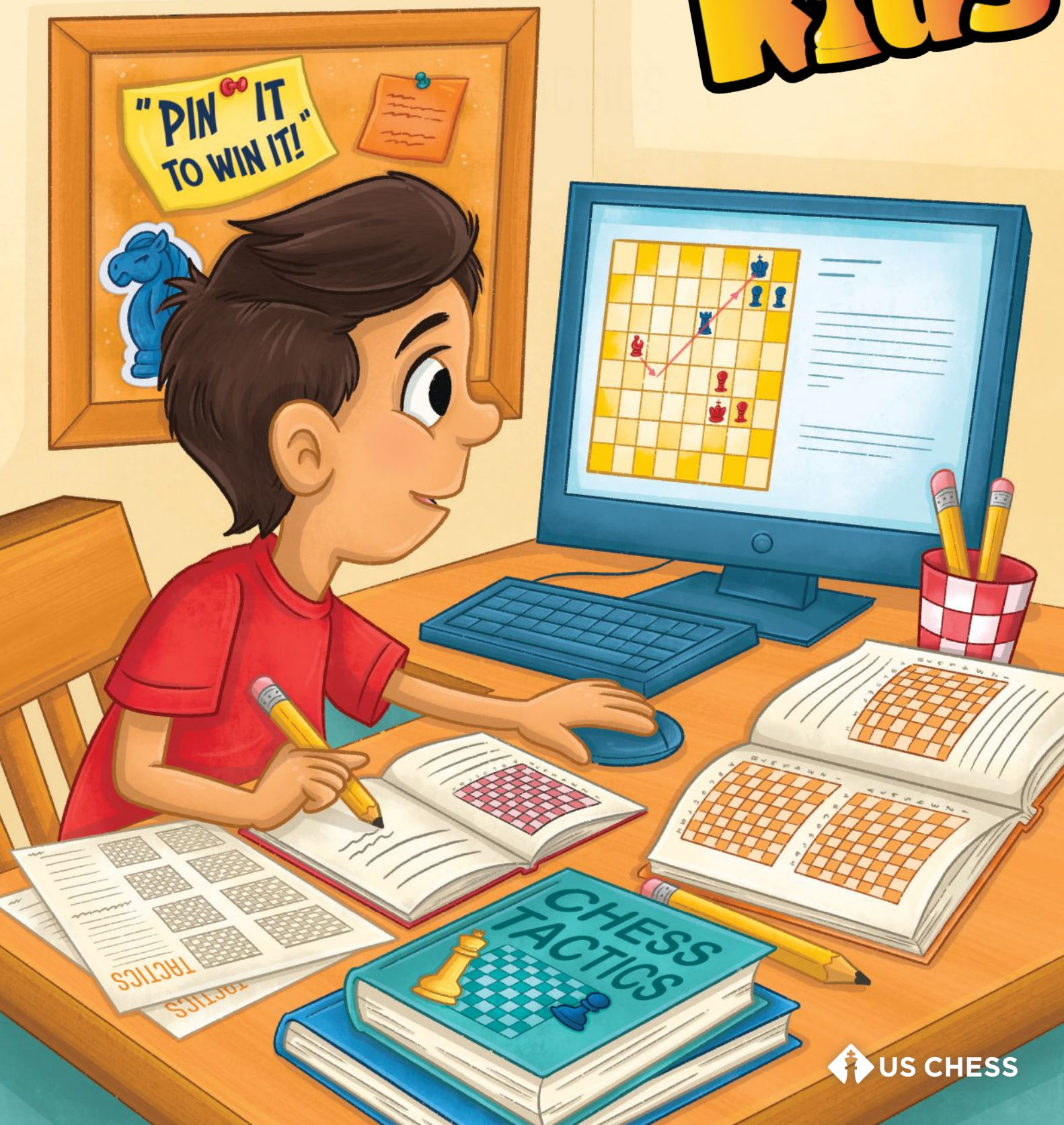


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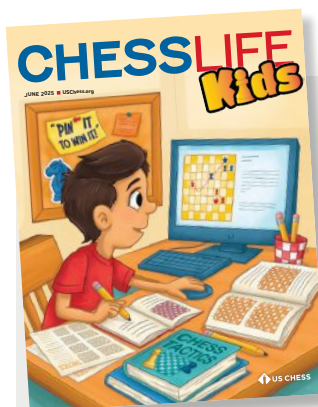
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ON THE COVER

"Chess is 99% tactics!" Maybe you've heard this quote before, and while I don't think it's true, it's also not entirely wrong. Tactics can win and lose games, and you have to spend a lot of time studying them if you want to be a strong player. But should you read books or solve puzzles on screens to improve? Is one better than the other? Find out more in this month's cover story.

ART: NIKKI BOETGER



Activity versus the Italian

BY JOHN HARTMANN

CHESS, LIKE LIFE, is full of trade-offs, and our 1. e4 e5 repertoire is no exception.

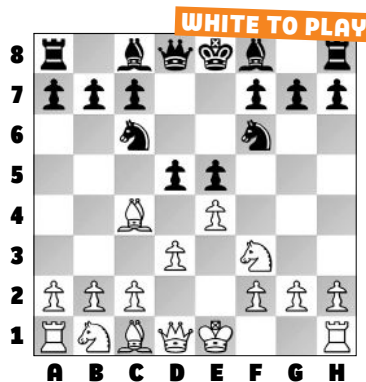
Perhaps the most important decision a 1. ... e5 player has to make is how to handle the Italian Game (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4), which has overtaken the Ruy Lopez as the most common response to 1. ... e5. Our repertoire includes the Two Knights (3. ... Nf6) instead of the Giuoco Piano (3. ... Bc5). This means we avoid some tricky continuations: the old Giuoco main line (4. c3 Nf6 5. d4) and the Evans Gambit (4. b4).

We still have some gambits to face, including two important ones (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d4 exd4 5. e5 and 5. 0-0) that are kind of lumped together. We'll talk about them next issue.

But White can also play 4. d3, which looks like a nothing move but can cause a lot of problems, in no small part because of its flexibility: White chooses plans where they may mix and match c2-c3, Nb1-c3, Bc1-g5, and a2-a4, and Black has to be prepared to deal with all of them.

White can play 4. d3 after 3. ...

Bc5 too, but here's where the Two Knights move order comes in handy: With the knight developed to f6, we can hit back immediately with the subject of this month's column, 4. ... d5.



With the d-pawn push Black immediately attacks the bishop, threatens to take twice on e4 and aims for active play. While 4. ... d5 is played less often on the master level than 4. ... Bc5, it has found some top-level fans in recent years, and even here a bit of theory is building up. Still, modern engines show that the opening is sound, and White has plenty of ways to go wrong, especially on the scholastic level.

Let's take a look at what White might do on moves 5 and 6,

and then examine Black's two alternatives after 6. 0-0 in detail.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 d5 5. exd5

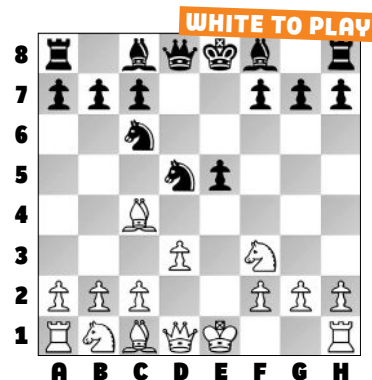
This is the only move that lets White fight for an advantage. Other moves include:

(a) **5. Bb3?!** allows us to execute our threat: **5. ... dxe4 6. Ng5** (attacking f7; 6. dxe4 Qxd1+ 7. Kxd1 Nxe4 leaves Black up a clean pawn and White can't castle) **6. ... Be6! 7. Bxe6** (7. Nxe6 fxe6 8. Bxe6 exd3 is nice for Black) **7. ... fxe6 8. Nxe6?** (8. Nxe4 Nxe4 9. dxe4 Qh4! lets Black try to grab the e4-pawn) **8. ... Qd7 9. Nxf8 Rxf8 10. 0-0 exd3** with advantage to Black.

(b) **5. Bb5** looks tricky, pinning the knight, but Black gets the advantage with **5. ... dxe4 6. Nxe5 Qd5 7. Bxc6+ bxc6 8. d4** (8. Nc4 exd3!) **8. ... c5! 9. Nc3** and now either 9. ... Qe6! or just 9. ... Qxd4.

(c) **5. Bxd5 Nxd5 6. exd5 Qxd5 7. Nc3 Qd6** leaves Black with space and the bishop pair.

5. ... Nxd5



6. 0-0

Again White has plenty of options, but only this move lets them fight for an advantage.

(a) **6. Ng5** threatens Qd1-f3 with threats to f7 and d5, but Black can respond actively with **6. ... f6!** (6. ... Be7 allows the Fried-Liveresque 7. Nxf7 Kxf7 8. Qf3+ which gives

White great attacking chances) and now (a1) **7. Ne4 Be6**; worse is (a2) **7. Nf3 Be6**, while (a3) **7. Qf3?** loses to **7. ... Nd4!**.

(b) We saw **6. Bxd5?! Qxd5 7. Nc3 Qd6** in the notes to move five.

(c) **6. Qe2** threatens the e5-pawn, but Black can calmly defend it with **6. ... f6!** and if **7. d4** (7. 0-0 Nb6 8. Bb3 Bg4 9. h3? Nd4!) **7. ... Bg4! 8. dxe5 Nxe5** is equal.

(d) **6. Bb5** again looks active, pinning the knight, but it's a bit slow. Black can develop and defend the e5-pawn with **6. ... Bd6**. One key point is that 7. Bxc6+ bxc6 gives Black good development and two bishops at the cost of doubled c-pawns.

(e) The slow **6. Bb3**, anticipating ... Nd5-b6, is met by **6. ... Bg4** with the idea of ... Qd8-d6 and ... 0-0-0.

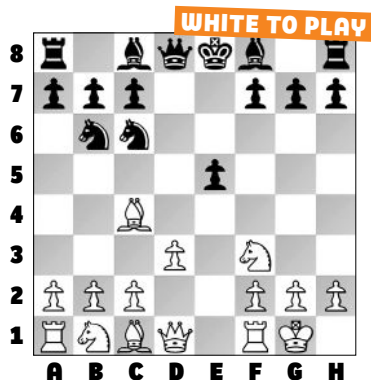
(f) **6. c3 Nb6 7. Bb3** (If 7. Bb5 Bd6 White is down a tempo on the main line) **7. ... Bf5 8. d4 exd4 9. cxd4 Be7** is equal.

(g) **6. Bg5 f6! 7. Bh4 Be6** and ... g7-g5 threatens to shut the bishop out for many moves.

Black has two main lines here. We'll look at **6. ... Nb6** first, and then a bonus variation: **6. ... Be7**.

6. ... Nb6

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 d5 5. exd5 Nxd5 6. 0-0 Nb6

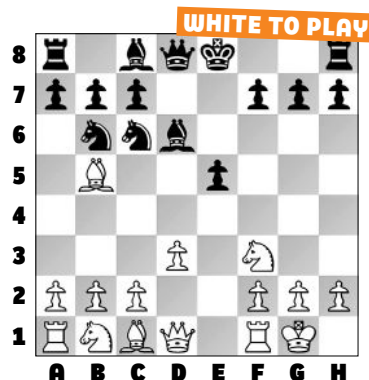


Now White has two main responses to the attack on the c4-bishop: 7. Bb5 and 7. Bb3. Some people may try to fry your liver with 7. Bxf7+? Kxf7 8. Ng5+ Kg8 9. Qf3 but 9. ... Qf6! leaves Black a piece up for a pawn.

7. Bb5

How should Black defend the pawn?

7. Bb5 Bd6



A tactical solution to Black's problems.

7. ... f6 is another option that resembles some of the 6. ... Be7 variations. White can try to pry open the e-file with 8. d4 Be7 9. dxe5 0-0! when Black has some, but perhaps not full, compensation for the pawn.

8. Bxc6+

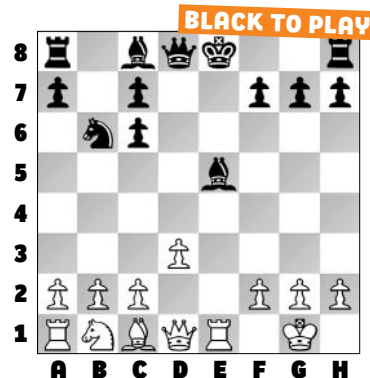
White's most serious try for an advantage. Note that 8. Nxe5 Bxe5 9. Bxc6+ bxc6 transposes to our main line.

(a) White can also try **8. Re1 f6 9. d4 0-0! 10. Bxc6 bxc6 11. dxe5 fxe5 12. Bg5** (12. Nxe5?? Bxe5) **12. ... Qe8** with ... Bc8-g4 and/or ... Qe8-h5 to come, pressuring the white king.

(b) If **8. d4 e4!? 9. Re1** (did you see 9. d5 Nxd5 10. Qxd5 Bxh2+!?) **9. ... f5! 10. Ne5 0-0!** and now if **11. Nxc6** (or 11. Bxc6 bxc6 12. Nxc6 Qh4)

11. ... bxc6 12. Bxc6 Bxh2+ 13. Kxh2 Qd6+ Black gets the piece back and weakens White's king cover.

8. ... bxc6 9. Nxe5 Bxe5 10. Re1



It looks like White should just win back the bishop and keep the extra pawn, but Black has some resources.

10. ... Qe7!

Playable, but not quite as good, is 10. ... f6 11. d4 0-0 12. dxe5 Qxd1 13. Rxd1 fxe5. White certainly has an edge here.

11. Kh1!

White's best move, getting the king off the dark squares.

If 11. f4 first Black can play 11. ... Bd4+! 12. Kh1 Be6 13. f5 0-0! 14. fxe6 Nd5! and Black's development advantage gives them good compensation, while 11. d4 is met by 11. ... Bxh2+! 12. Kxh2 Be6.

11. ... 0-0 12. f4

If 12. d4 Rd8! 13. f4 c5! with the idea 14. fxe5 Bb7 and the d4-pawn will soon fall.

12. ... f6! 13. fxe5 fxe5 14. Nc3 Nd5

White is slightly better, but Black's pieces are active. A game between Wesley So and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov (Chess24, 2022) continued 15. Ne4 Bf5 16. Bg5 Qb4 when White was a bit better with an interesting battle ahead.

7. Bb3

7. Bb3

White saves the bishop and keeps the pressure on f7. I don't think this is too challenging for Black, as we have time to develop and activate another piece.

7. ... Bg4!

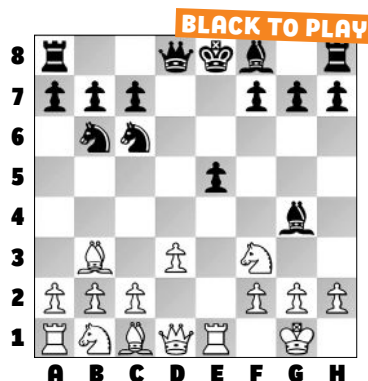
This pins the knight and prepares queenside castling once the queen moves.

8. h3

White hopes for 8. ... Bxf3 9. Qxf3 with pressure on f7, but chess isn't checkers! You don't have to capture just because you can!

What else can White try?

(a) **8. Re1** is sneaky strong!



Here White would love to play 9. Nxe5; if 9. ... Bxd1? 10. Nxc6!+ is crushing. So how does Black defend the e5-pawn?

(a1) **8. ... Qe7 9. h3 Bh5** and we have transposed to 8. h3 Bh5 9. Re1. Remember not to take the knight!

(a2) **8. ... Qf6** is OK here. We threaten to take twice on f3 and destroy White's kingside, and since White hasn't played h2-h3 yet, they don't have time to break the pin with h2-h3 and g2-g4: **9. Be3** (9. Nbd2 0-0-0!; 9. Bg5?? Bxf3) **9. ... Bxf3 10. Qxf3 Qxf3 11. gxf3 Bd6 12. a4 Nd7**.

(a3) Be aware that **8. ... f6??** is a terrible mistake here due to **9. Nxe5! Nxe5** (9. ... Bxd1?? 10. Nxc6+) **10. Qxg4**.

(b) **8. Bxf7+?** doesn't work: **8. ... Kxf7 9. Ng5+ Qxg5! 10. Bxg5 Bxd1 11. Rxd1** and Black is up a piece.

(c) **8. Bg5?** loses to **8. ... Bxf3**.

(d) **8. c3** is a typical move in the Italian, but here it doesn't add much to White's position. Black can go for the standard **8. ... Qf6** (or just 8. ... Be7 followed by castling kingside) **9. Nbd2 0-0-0**.

(e) Finally, **8. Nbd2** is slow. Black can play the standard 8. ... Qe7 or throw in 8. ... Bd6 first for more flexibility.

8. ... Bh5 9. Re1

White's idea is g2-g4 next, breaking the pin and threatening the e5-pawn. What is Black's next move?

9. ... Qe7!

This is a key move to remember. The queen leaves the f6-square for the f7-pawn to defend e5 while also preparing queenside castling. (a) **9. ... Qf6?** is bad once h2-h3 has been played. White continues **10. g4 Bg6 11. Nc3** and now Bc1-g5 can really mess Black up, while (b) **9. ... Be7? 10. g4 Bg6 11. Nxe5** gives White a center pawn for free.

10. d4

Trying to make use of the pin, but Black has a nice counter!

Other moves: (a) **10. g4 Bg6 11. Nc3** and now **11. ... f6!**, (b) **10. Nc3 0-0-0**, (c) **10. Nbd2 0-0-0**, and (d) **10. a4 a5!**, stopping the a-pawn from advancing further.

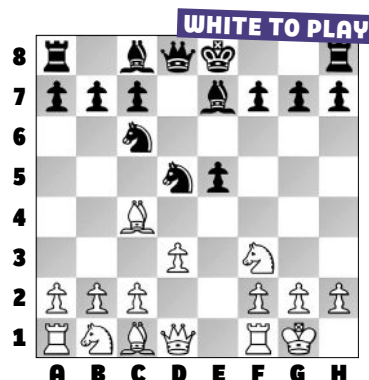
10. ... 0-0-0 11. c3 f6

Black should tuck the king away on b8 and then consider trying a kingside pawn storm. Another move is 11. ... Qd6.

Usually we recommend only one variation for Black in our repertoire, but in case you wanted something sharper than 6. ... Nb6 we thought it was a good idea to offer an alternative. It's also useful to know just in case you play the same opponent over and over again — this way you'll have another move to trick them with!

BONUS: 6. ... Be7

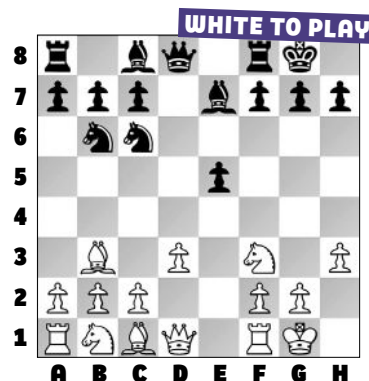
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 d5 5. exd5 Nxd5 6. 0-0 Be7



7. Re1

Probably best, but White can vary.

(a) White can try the quiet but strong **7. h3**, preventing ... Bc8-g4, but now we can play **7. ... Nb6!** (another idea is 7. ... f6 8. Re1 Be6!) **8. Bb3** (8. Bb5 requires 8. ... f6! 9. Re1 0-0 and Black is solid) **8. ... 0-0**.



Black has to take a little care to defend the e5-pawn here after **9. Re1 Nd7** (or 9. ... Qd6) **10. Nbd2**.

Black could also try 8. ... a5, trying to unsettle the bishop and change the queenside structure.

(b) We should also note that 7. **Nc3** allows the simple 7. ... **Nxc3** 8. **bxc3** 0-0, when 9. **Re1** **Bf6** is equal.

7. ... f6

Defending the e5-pawn, but potentially weakening the light squares a bit. In this variation Black will allow a few weaknesses, and potentially sacrifice a pawn, with activity for compensation.

Note that 7. ... **Nb6** 8. **Bb3** is a worse 6. ... **Nb6** kind of position.

8. d4

Trying to make use of the half-open e-file. What else might you face?

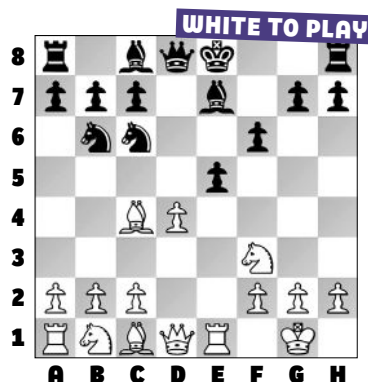
(a) 8. **c3** is a bit slow and blocks the c3-square. We can develop normally: 8. ... **Bg4** and if 9. **h3** **Bh5!**.

(b) 8. **h3** forces us to change plans with 8. ... **Be6** (defending d5 and guarding the light squares) 9. **Bb3** a5!?

(c) 8. **Nc3** isn't great here: 8. ... **Be6** (8. ... **Nxc3?** 9. **bxc3** leaves Black's light squares very weak with ... **f7-f6** already played) 9. **Nxd5** (note that 9. **d4??** **Nxc3** 10. **bxc3** **Bxc4** just loses a piece) 9. ... **Bxd5** 10. **Bxd5** **Qxd5** is better for Black as there's no good way to chase the queen from the center. Now perhaps Black tries to push the kingside pawns and attack the white king.

(d) Finally, 8. **Bb3** prevents any ... **Nd5-b6** attacks, but it is a bit slow. White can develop actively with 8. ... **Bg4**! 9. **h3** **Bh5!** (this is a big theme in this opening — keep the pin and the tension!) 10. **Nc3** **Nxc3** 11. **bxc3** **Qd6** and queenside castling soon.

8. ... Nb6!

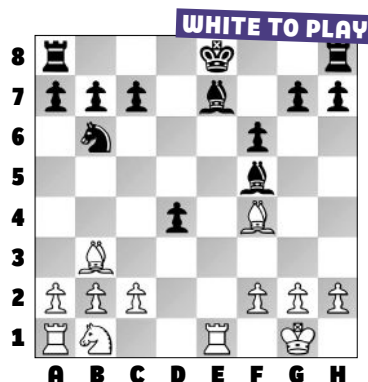


This is the key position in the 6. ... **Be7** variation. White has two moves to consider.

9. Bb5

Pinning the knight. White threatens to win a pawn — or is Black sacrificing one for activity?

White may have a better move. The alternative is 9. **Bb3** **Nxd4** (9. ... **a5** is also possible, chasing the bishop) 10. **Nxd4** **Qxd4** 11. **Qxd4** **exd4** 12. **Bf4** and now 12. ... **Bf5!**.



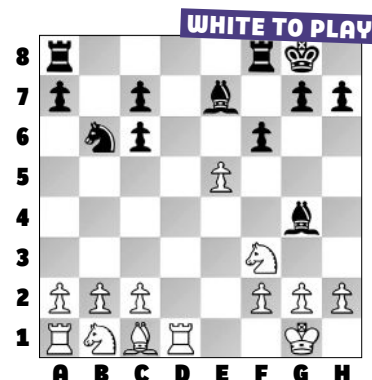
Black plays to activate their pieces, even if it means giving back the c7-pawn: 13. **Bxc7** **Kd7!**, breaking the pin and attacking the bishop. If White tries to further damage Black's pawns with 14. **Bxb6** (likely stronger for White is 14. **Nd2** **Bc5** 15. **Ne4!** **Kxc7** 16. **Nxc5** **Rae8** and Black is fine) 14. ... **axb6** Black has two bishops and targets on a2 and c2; for example, 15. **Nd2** **Bc5** 16. **Ne4** **Kc7**.

9. ... 0-0 10. Bxc6

Tamer is 10. **dxe5** **Qxd1** 11. **Rxd1**

Nxe5 12. **Nxe5** **fxe5** with an equal position.

10. ... bxc6 11. dxe5 Qxd1 12. Rxd1 Bg4



It's true that White is up a pawn, but I think Black has excellent compensation with the two bishops, the pressure on the f3-knight, potential outposts for the black knight on d5 or c4, and White's lack of development.

13. exf6

This just helps Black, but I'm not sure there's anything better.

(a) 13. **Nbd2** is met by 13. ... **fxe5** 14. **Re1** **Rae8**. Now if 15. **Nxe5** **Bc5!** with tremendous pressure. White must play 16. **Ndf3** **Bxf3** 17. **gxf3** and now either 17. ... **Bd6** or 17. ... **Bd4** are equal. Black is down a pawn but both sides have damaged pawn structures, and Black has the safer king.

(b) 13. **Rd3** tries to unpin, but 13. ... **Bf5** 14. **Rd2** **Nc4** is awkward for White.

13. ... Bxf6 14. Nbd2

If (a) 14. **Nc3** **Rae8** with the initiative, while again (b) 14. **Rd3?** breaks the pin but leaves the back rank at risk after 14. ... **Rae8!**.

14. ... Rae8

Black has full compensation for the pawn with beautiful piece play. ♦



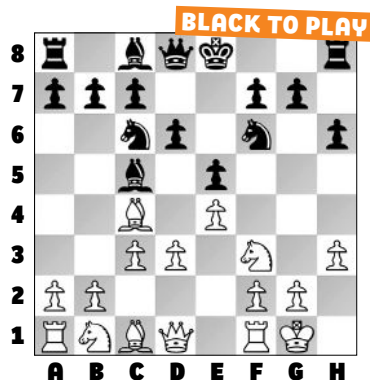
Patterns of Attack

Part 3

BY NM TIM MCGREW

IN THE LAST two columns, we've looked at two kingside formations: one with no pawns moved in front of the castled King, and the other with the h-pawn moved forward to h6 (or h3, if we're considering White's castle). This time, we continue the study of the castle with ... h6, but instead of studying piece sacrifices on h6, we will look at line-opening ideas where the attacker throws forward the g-pawn.

A very simple example that is relevant to modern opening theory occurs in the Two Knights Defense after **1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 h6!? 5. 0-0 Bc5 6. c3 d6 7. h3.**



White has played modestly in the center and castled early, intending to play a maneuvering game resembling the closed Spanish. Black has reacted by developing rapidly and playing 4. ... h6. That wasn't just to deter White from putting a piece on g5 — Black has been waiting for the combination of kingside castling and h2-h3 from White. Over the next two or three moves, Black will start aggressive kingside action with the push ... g7-g5. The computer actually approves of this move, which Black plans to follow up with ... g5-g4 to open the g-file. If White doesn't react very precisely, they are going to find themselves on the receiving end of a mating attack.

The game Dr_Mariarty2900 – RaceKing_2022 ([Lichess.org](https://lichess.org/2024), 2024) shows us a FM conducting the attack from the Black side: **7. ... a6 8. b4 Ba7 9. a4 g5 10. Qb3 Qe7 11. Nh2 g4! 12. hxg4 Nxg4 13. Nxg4 Bxg4 14. Be3 Rg8 15. Bxa7 Bf3! 16. Bxf7+ Kd8 17. Rc1 Rxc2+ 18. Kf1 Qg5!, White resigned.** The black queen controls the d2-square, so

even if White's king tries to run, 19. ... Rg1 is mate.

What made this attack work so smoothly? Black had not castled, so the rook could come into play on g8. The “hook” on h3 meant that ... g5-g4 would open the g-file one way or another: either White will take on g4, as in the game, or Black will take on h3. In either case, the assault ratio tilts heavily in Black's favor with the addition of that rook to the attack. Since Black preserved the dark-squared bishop with ... a7-a6 and ... Bc5-a7, and White didn't block the diagonal with d3-d4, the White f-pawn remained pinned. Simply ignoring the pawn on g4 with 12. h4 would have allowed 12. ... g3 13. Nf3 Ng4, when Black overwhelms the f2-square.

As a general rule, waiting for your opponent to castle and play ... h7-h6 (or h2-h3) won't work; you usually have to castle yourself. But if you have the center well under control, you may be able to use the g-pawn “can opener” as a middlegame weapon. In our next game, GM Daniel Naroditsky (“RebeccaHarris”) displays his understanding of this idea against a Ukrainian master.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE (B13)

[RebeccaHarris \(2888\)](#)

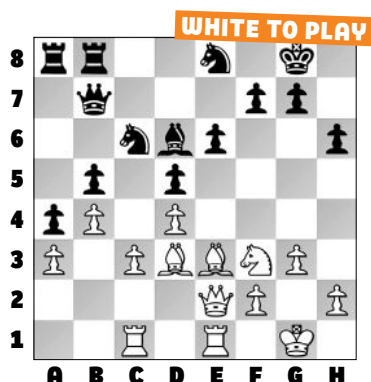
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1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. exd5 cxd5 4. Nf3 Nf6 5. Ne5 Nc6 6. Bb5 Bd7 7. Nxd7 Qxd7 8. c3 e6 9. O-O Bd6 10. Nd2 a6 11. Bd3 Qc7 12. g3 O-O 13. Re1 Rfe8 14. Nf3 h6 15. Be3 b5 16. a3 Reb8 17. Qc2 a5 18. b4 a4?! 19. Qe2 Qb7 20. Rac1 Ne8?!

White has played an early Nf3-e5 in the Exchange Variation

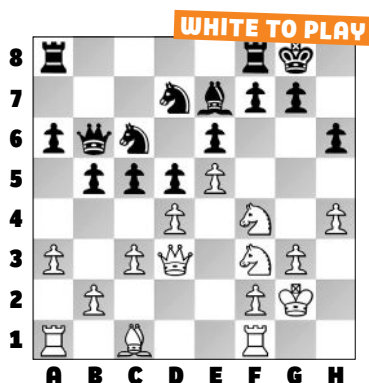
against the Caro-Kann, and Black responded correctly with a minority attack but then closed the queenside too early, eliminating his pressure there and giving White a free hand to pursue active operations on the kingside. A piece sacrifice on h6 looks a little bit too bold, because White doesn't have enough of an advantage in the assault ratio after that sacrifice. But Naroditsky bets on the center's remaining closed and prepares to use the g3-g4 thrust against Black's pawn on h6:



21. Kh1 Bc7?! Black doesn't sense the coming danger. He should have gone back to f6 with the knight to try to generate some piece play in the center. **22. g4 Nd6?** Heading to the "outpost" square c4, but the queenside is the wrong place to be playing. Black had to try 22. ... e5 here, opening the center to make White pay for playing the weakening pawn move to g4 in front of his own king. **23. Rg1 Nc4 24. g5 h5** Black tries to keep lines closed, but Naroditsky correctly walks right on past. **25. g6! Bd8** It is too late now for 25. ... f6 26. Ng5!! fxg5 27. Bxg5! Kf8 28. Qxe6 and Black collapses. **26. Ng5 fxg6 27. Bxg6 e5 28. Qxh5 Bf6 29. Ne6, Black resigned.**

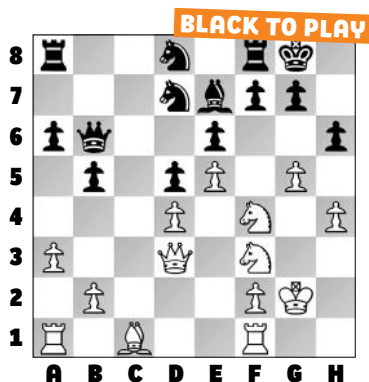
When the center is firmly blocked, the prospects of a

kingside pawn advance in front of one's own king are greater. Watch how a Russian FM takes advantage of a closed center in the game Kostik_Mostik – SinisterChaly (*Lichess.org*, 2025): **1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Bd3 Bxd3 5. Qxd3 e6** This is not a very ambitious line, but White makes up for it a little later on. **6. Ne2 Nd7 7. c3 Ne7 8. Nd2 a6 9. 0-0 c5 10. Nf3 Nc6 11. a3 b5 12. Nf4 Be7** White's space advantage lies on the kingside, so White reorganizes there to give his Rook access to h1. **13. g3 0-0 14. h4 Qb6 15. Kg2 h6?**



Finally, Black commits himself to ... h7-h6 — and immediately regrets it. Active play on the queenside with 15. ... b4, not creating any weaknesses in the kingside pawn wall, was absolutely necessary. White latches on to the "hook" at h6 without delay.

16. g4! cxd4 17. cxd4 Nd8 18. g5



Black is lost now, but he hastens the end by capturing on g5, opening the h-file for White's rook to join the attack. He could have offered more stubborn resistance with 18. ... h5.

18. ... hxg5? 19. hxg5 g6

Now White finishes the game with a few sharp blows.

20. Nxg6! Re8 21. Rh1! Kg7 22. Nxe7 Rxe7 23. Qh7+, Black resigned.

For our final example, Polish IM Mateusz Kołosowski improvises an opening — it's a version of the Jobava London — and builds his entire plan around the g4-g5 push.

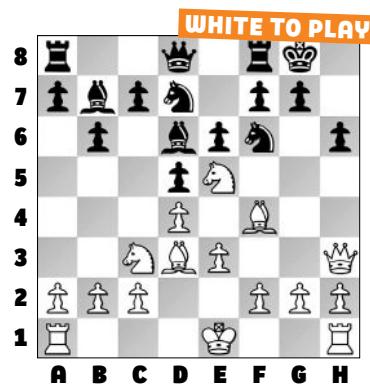
LONDON SYSTEM (D00)

AttackingBeast (2679)

Calzonesdesuperman (2577)

Lichess.org, 2024

1. d4 d5 2. Nf3 Nf6 3. Nc3 e6 4. Bf4 Bd6 5. e3 0-0 6. Bd3 b6 7. Ne5 Bb7 8. Qf3 Nbd7 9. Qh3 h6



Now a bishop sacrifice on h6 would be good enough only for a draw. But the center is locked down firmly, so with g2-g4, White's attack almost plays itself:

10. g4! Bxe5 11. dxe5 Ne4 12. Bxe4 dxe4 13. 0-0-0 Qe7 14. g5 hxg5 15. Rhg1 gxf4 16. Rxg7+ Kxg7 17. Rg1+, Black resigned. ♠

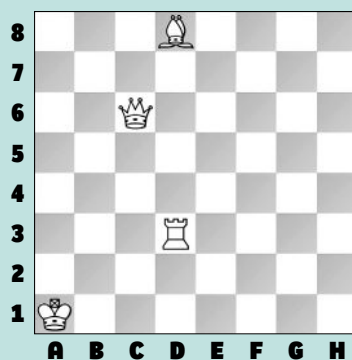
Puzzle Me THIS Puzzle Me THAT

BY JEFF COAKLEY



Somebody once said, "Chess is like music." They're both fun to play! We don't have any music puzzles, unless you wonder why *xylophone* starts with "x" and not "z." But we do have 10 new chess problems for you. A little bit of this and a little bit of that. Some have special rules. Others are the standard kind of positions that might happen in your games. Good luck!

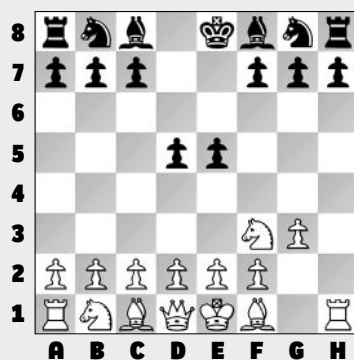
1. Triple Loyd



Place the black king on the board so that

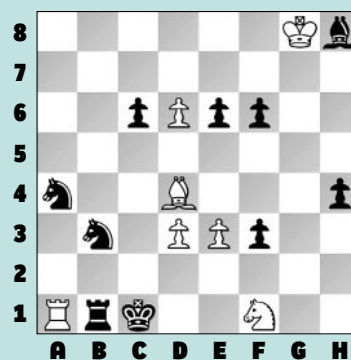
- Black is in checkmate.
- Black is in stalemate.
- White has mate in one.

2. Proof Game



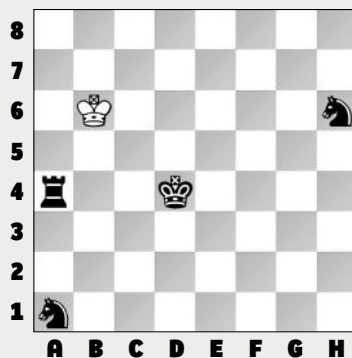
This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

3. Maze Race



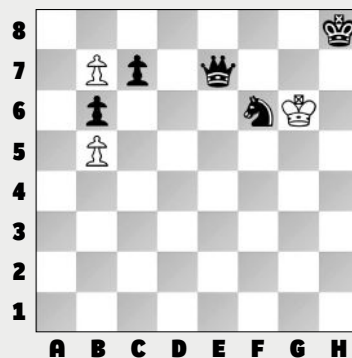
Only one white piece (rook, bishop, or knight) may move. Black does not get a turn. Capture the black king without taking any pieces or moving to a square guarded by Black. Which piece is fastest? Which is slowest?

4. Inverted Loyd



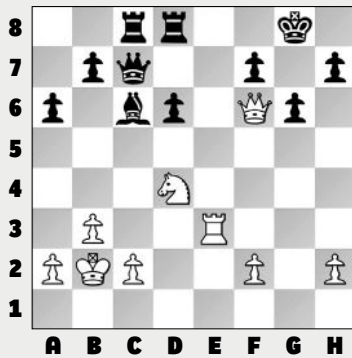
Add a white rook, bishop, and knight so that White has mate in one.

5. Series-Mate in 9



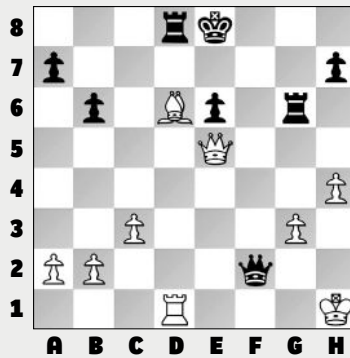
White plays 9 moves in a row to checkmate Black. Only the final move may give check. Captures are allowed. Black does not get a turn. White may not place their own king in check, even if they get it out of check on the next move.

6. Mate in 5



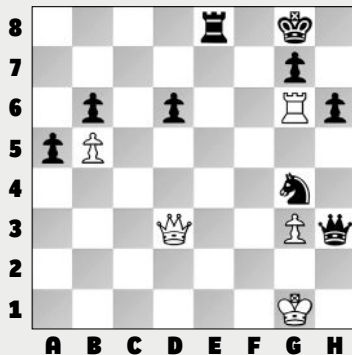
White to play. Mate in five.

7. Combo



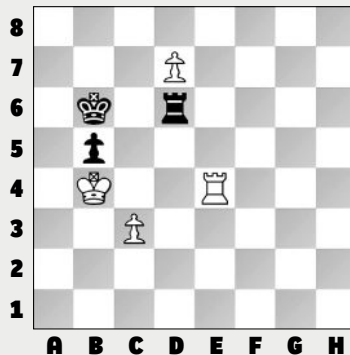
White to play and win material.

8. Defense



White to play and not lose.

9. Endgame



White to play and win.

10. Synthetic Game

Make up a game in which White wins with the move 5. Ba3 mate.

Answers:

1) A. Kc1 mate. B. Kb4 stalemate. C. Kg4, allowing 1. Qf3 mate. **2)** 1. g4 e5 2. g5 Qxg5 3. Nf3 Qg3 4. hxg3 d5. **3)** The rook is fastest. The bishop is slowest. Here are the lines: Ra1-a2-h2-h1-g1-g6-h6-h7-b7-b4-c4xc1 (11 moves), Nf1-h2-g4-f2-h3-f4-g6-f8-d7-b8-a6-b4-a2xc1 (13), Bd4-a7-b8-c7-d8-e7-f8-h6-f4-h2-g1-f2-e1-b4-a3xc1 (15). **4)** Add Re3 Ba7 Na5 for 1. Kc6 mate. **5)** 1. b8=B Promoting to queen or rook would check. Knighting the pawn is one move too slow. **2. Ba7!** The obvious 2. Bxc7? 3. Bxb6 also takes

an extra move. It's speedier to let the second pawn capture on c7 so that it can promote on c8. **3. Bxb6 4. Bd4 5. b6 6. bxc7 7. c8=N 8. Nxe7 9. Bxf6 mate. 6)** 1. Nf5 The knight is sacrificed to open the g-file. The game is equal after 1. Re7? Qxe7 2. Qxe7. **1. ... gxf5** The knight must be taken to stop 2. Qg7 mate. **2. Qg5+** This is the hard move to find. Black defends successfully after 2. Rg3+? Kf8. **2. ... Kh8** The alternative 2. ... Kf8 is met by 3. Qh6+ Kg8 4. Rg3+ Kh8 5. Qg7 (or 5. Qf6) mate. **3. Rg3** Threatening 4. Qg7 mate.

3. ... Rg8 Or 3. ... f6 4. Qxf6+ Qg7 5. Qxg7 mate. **4. Qf6+ Rg7 5. Qxg7 mate. 7)** Both kings look to be in danger, but it's the black queen that falls first. **1. Qb5+** Black has two choices, neither good. Note that after 1. Qh8+? Kf7! Black can hold the draw. **1. ... Rd7 2. Qxd7+** The queen is sacrificed to set up a *discovered check*. **2. ... Kxd7 3. Bc5+ Kc6 4. Bxf2** White has won back the queen and is now up a bishop and a pawn. Black's other option is **1. ... Kf7 2. Rf1**, with a *pin* on the queen. After **2. ... Qxf1 3. Qxf1**, White has queen and bishop versus two rooks. One possible continuation is 3. ... Rf6 4. Qc4 Rxd6? 5. Qc7+ Kg6 6. Qxd6. **8)** Black has a big material advantage and the white king is about to get mated. But White saves the day, forcing a *stalemate* by giving away their rook and queen! Did you notice that the white king and pawns have no moves? **1. Rxg7+ Kxg7 1. ... Kf8 2. Qf5+ Kxg7 3. Qg6+** leads to the same position and 1. ... Kh8? loses to 2. Qh7 mate. **2. Qg6+ Kxg6 stalemate** or **2. ... Kh8 3. Qg7+ Kxg7 stalemate**. The white queen could also be given away with other checks. **9)** White has an extra pawn on the verge of promotion. 1. Rd4? looks good but Black can draw after 1. ... Rxd4 2. cxd4 Kc7 3. Kxb5 Kxd7. The game is also equal after 1. Re7? Rd1 (but not after 1. ... Kc7 2. Kxb5 Rxd7? 3. Rxd7 Kxd7). White promotes their pawn by *pinning* the black rook with **1. Re6**. It's an easy win following **1. ... Rxe6 2. d8=Q+ Kc6 3. Qc8+ Kd6 4. Kxb5** or even 4. Qxe6+ Kxe6 5. Kxb5. Black also loses after 1. ... Kc7 2. Rxd6 Kxd6 3. d8=Q+. **10)** **1. e3 e5** (or 1. ... e6) **2. b3 Ke7 3. Qg4 Kd6 4. Qe6+ Kc5 5. Ba3 mate**. White's moves can be played in different orders. Also possible are 3. Qf3 Kd6 4. Qxb7 and 1. ... d5 (or 1. ... d6) 2. b3 Kd7. ♦

Online or



On Paper

BY **JOHN HARTMANN**

This is also true about chess, and tactics in particular.

I started playing chess before there were websites and tactics trainers. Along with over-the-board games and post-mortems with opponents, you studied printed material to improve. You solved puzzles from newspaper columns, chess magazines, and the few books you could find at your local shop.

Today, of course, things are different. Most young players check their games with Stockfish instead of each other. They practice tactics online, playing round after round of Puzzle Rush or Puzzle Streak to sharpen up. The only books you see at tournaments belong to the grownups.

I began to wonder: Was anything lost when we switched from

LAST YEAR I started taking piano lessons. If you've played any musical instrument, you know that learning the names of notes — middle C, bass clef F, treble G — is not always easy. It definitely wasn't for me.

So I asked my teacher whether she could recommend something to help. She pointed me to an app called Flashnote, which depicts notes on the grand clef for you to name. Winged unicorns raced across the screen as I got more notes right. It was a lot of fun.

And then Yulia, my teacher, told me something very interesting.

"It's not like it was when I was learning back in Russia," she said with a small smile. "I had to write each note hundreds of times in a music paper notebook."

That got me thinking. Technology and the internet have changed the way we learn to play music. From apps for learning notes to piano learning websites to YouTube channels with song demonstrations, it's easier than ever to find resources to help you improve.

paper to screens? Is there some part of improvement that gets shortchanged?

I reached out to a number of America's top players and teachers, and asked them about the value of online tactics trainers compared to books. Here's what I learned.

The Kids are Online

One of the biggest reasons for the popularity of online tactics trainers is their convenience. "Kids love screens," New York chess teacher WFM Elizabeth Spiegel told me. "It's much easier to get kids to do online work than paper work."

That's why she asks her players to use Puzzle Streak on Lichess (similar to Puzzle Rush Survival on *Chess.com*) as part of their training: "I think it's the fastest way for a kid to get from 0 to 1500. You can't make a single mistake or you lose your streak. It's untimed; the positions are great, and you can get so much practice."

It's no surprise that GM Andy Woodward, the current *Chess.com* Puzzle Rush champion, also sees benefits from doing tactics online. "They're more fun, convenient, and you save time" because you don't have to set up the positions, he said. "Online tactics have large databases of positions you can tailor to your level. They give you feedback instantly and sometimes give you a feeling like you're playing a game."

But it was veteran GM and renowned coach Gregory Kaidanov who most strongly recommended the online tactics trainers. He sees three advantages to them: "One advantage is that, in most cases, there is no second

solution," or multiple ways to win. "This is a problem for some older books written in the pre-computer era. There's also usually an engine built into the trainer, so if your solution is not correct, you can see why right away.

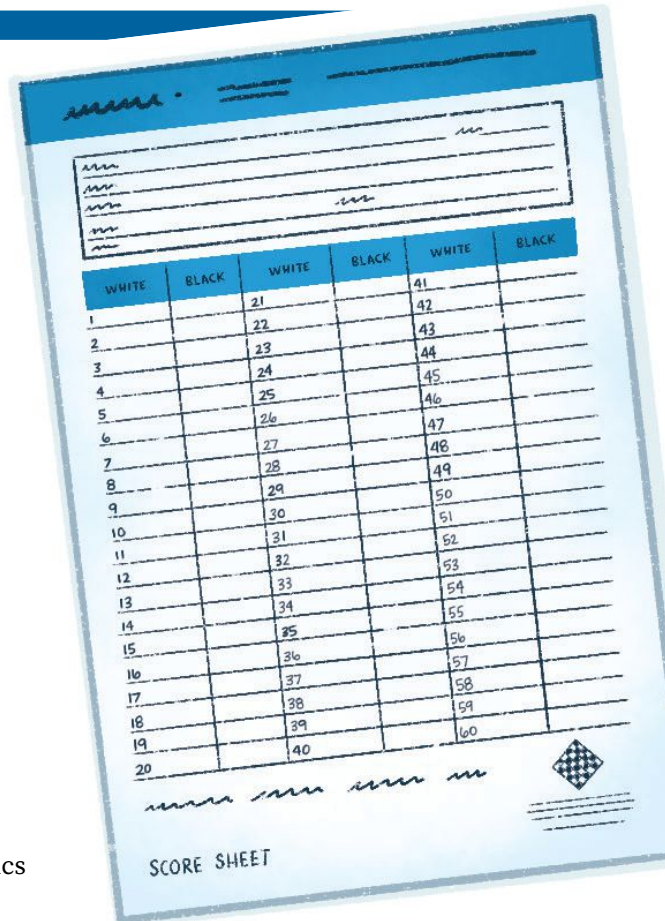
"And perhaps most importantly, the program or website usually gives you problems based on your current puzzle rating. This means you get positions which are doable but also challenging. If you can't solve the position right away, I suggest you set it up on the chessboard."

That doesn't mean that Kaidanov is against using tactics books. "You just need to find one," he says, "that is suitable for your level."

If You Know, You Know

So if tactics trainers have all of these benefits, what's the downside? Why would anyone spend time doing anything else?

NM Matan Prilleltensky pointed out a strange phenomenon, and maybe you've noticed it too: Plenty of people get really high online puzzle ratings but don't see improvement in their over-the-board results. "Students who struggle with the most elementary tactics or calculation in games can amass shockingly high ratings on these platforms," he wrote. "Sometimes I think, 'What do you mean you're X puzzle rating? I've

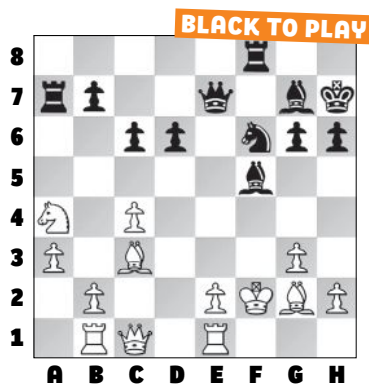


seen your games, and you can't calculate!"

Perhaps it's something about the nature of puzzle solving itself. One difficulty, according to GM Joel Benjamin, "is that you know there is a possible tactic in each position, and you know that it works! That's great for pattern recognition, but not so good for decision making."

What we call "tactics" is not one single thing, but multiple skills used at the same time. To find the right move in a game you have to see the tactical pattern in play, calculate moves accurately, and visualize key positions in the solution. Not all these skills are trained equally well on screens.

Here's an example from a recent one-minute game I played to help make this clear.



I reached this position with about 33 seconds on my clock, and immediately I saw the possibility for a "Philidor's mate" with queen and knight smothering the king. The problem was the queen defending the e3-square. Fortunately, I had a natural move to nudge it away.

25. ... Ng4+ 26. Kg1 Bxb1 27. Qxb1 Qe3+ 28. Kh1 Nf2+ 29. Kg1 Nh3+! 30. Kh1 Qg1+! 31. Rxg1 Nf2 mate.

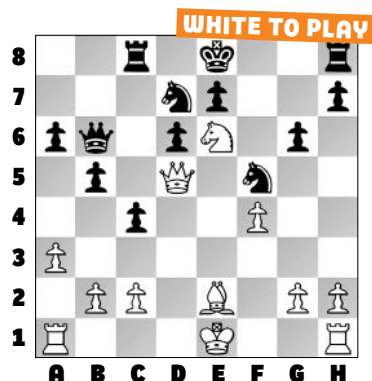
It's always fun to sacrifice one's queen for mate, especially in bullet chess, but what's interesting is that I didn't really calculate anything after 25. ... Ng4+. I was able to play the moves almost immediately because I knew the pattern from books and from Puzzle Storm. All I had to do was recognize the pattern on the board and check to make sure I wasn't missing any of White's possibilities.

But not every position has such an obvious solution, and in a real game there's no one to tell you there's a tactic on the board. Here I'm reminded of how the early 20th-century great Rudolf Spielmann sadly compared himself to then-World Champion Alexander Alekhine: "I can comprehend Alekhine's



combinations well enough, but where he gets his attacking chances from and how he infuses such life into the very opening — that is beyond me.”

Consider this position. Would you find the right move if I didn’t tell you there was a crusher?



In the game White played **18. Ng5**, threatening mate in two beginning with **19. Qf7+**. Black prevented this with **18. ... Rf8 19. Nxh7 Ne3 20. Qe4 Rf5** and went on to win without difficulty.

But if this position appeared in a tactics trainer, White might well have found the stunning **18. Qxf5!!** with the idea that **18. ... gxf5** is met by **19. Bh5 mate**. Once you see the idea, it’s easy to visualize — the black king lacks escape squares and the check can’t be blocked — but *seeing* it is the tough part. The pattern isn’t automatic like the smothered mate, and without knowing there’s a tactic, good luck finding this in a real game!

So how does one learn to sense tactics at the board, and how to get to positions where the tactics flow? That’s where coaches and books might come in. The famous New York teacher NM Bruce Pandolfini thinks online trainers are great for sharpening pattern recognition, but they don’t yet “elucidate how things work or come about. Teachers and instructive books can explain

the critical circumstances leading to positions with exploitable tactical patterns.” And Benjamin tries in his books to “help readers recognize tactical possibilities without such obvious cues.” I also would add that annotated games, especially with notes from the players themselves, can be of great use in building one’s intuition.

Going Deeper

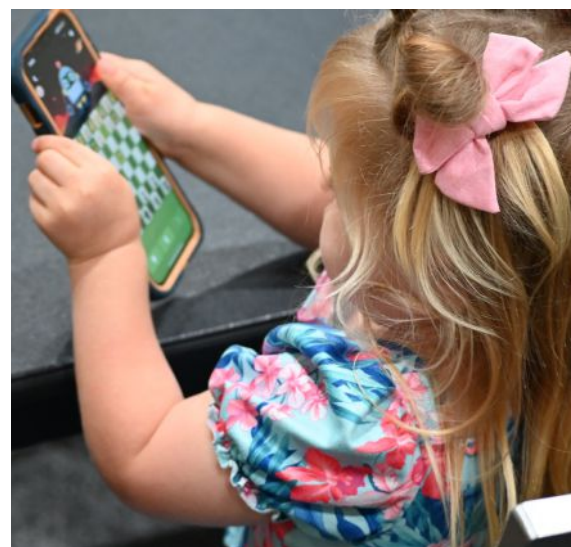
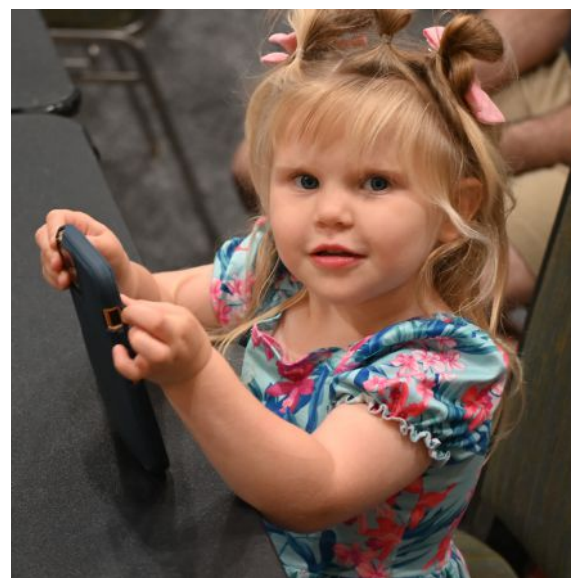
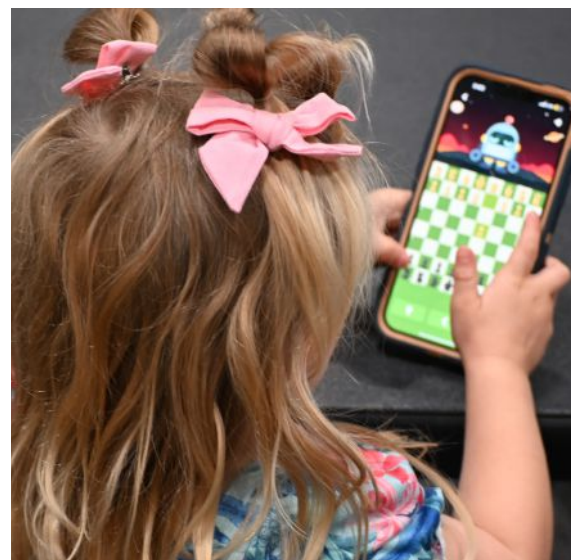
Simple tactics are mostly about pattern recognition. A position pops up on the screen; you realize you know how to deliver mate, and you put in the right move. Easy-peasy.

But what happens when you don’t know the pattern? This is where you have to calculate. And here’s where online trainers have a few drawbacks that we have to account for.

One of the biggest challenges in solving tactics online comes with how we input the moves. We might have to calculate multiple lines a few moves into the position to solve the problem, but as soon as we click the first move, we know whether we are “right” — even if the key move is two moves away. Solving positions on paper or on the board doesn’t give us the same hint.

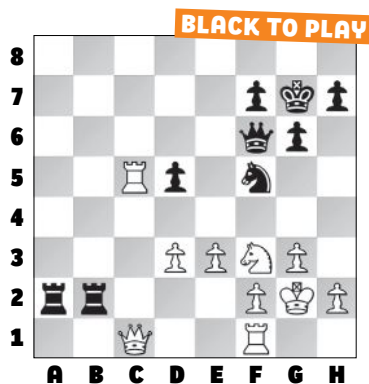
Multiple respondents pointed to this issue with online trainers. WGM Tatev Abrahamyan, for example, wrote that solving online “can create some bad habits, because the user gets immediate feedback on their first move without having to do the full

Right: She doesn’t know all the moves yet, but this girl at SNVIII is on her way to being a champion!



calculation. ... If doing online puzzles, make sure you calculate the full line, [like you would in a] tournament game, before making your first move.” This ensures that you visualize deeply and calculate enough to verify your answer before moving.

There’s another potential problem with solving online, and that has to do with the way the puzzles are generated. Sites like *Chess.com* and *Lichess* have such large puzzle databases because they automatically mine games for interesting positions. Most of the time this is OK, but the algorithm



This is problem #96518 in the Chess Tempo puzzle database (Bouwmeester – Botvinnik, Wageningen 1958). The game was drawn after 27. ... d4 28. exd4 Nxd4 29. Qe3 Ne6 30. Re5.

from a practical perspective is (f) 28. Qxb1 Nxe3+ and it’s mate in three; the problem is that because engines will give up all their pieces before allowing mate, solvers are asked to respond to moves they’d never face at the board.

This is an example of why Aagaard recommends “curated material” — positions chosen by human experts. A good teacher can find positions that require more than simple pattern recognition, or that stretch our calculation powers in instructive ways.

Here’s a final example that would fit well into one of Aagaard’s calculation books, and that would probably frustrate you if you got it in Puzzle Rush. I suggest you set the position up on a board and write down all of your analysis before looking at the answer. This is a common training suggestion from many teachers, including Aagaard — the idea is that by forcing yourself to write down each variation when solving complicated problems, you can check whether you “really” saw every important line.

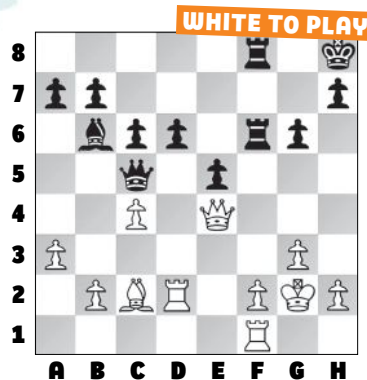


tends to choose very similar positions with limited depth and clear solutions.

The result, as GM Jacob Aagaard told me, is that quite often the “challenging line” we would have to see at the board is not the line that Stockfish and the algorithm want us to find. Here’s an position I saw in a *Chess Steps* teaching manual that illustrates this concern.

But Botvinnik missed the nice shot 27. ... Rb1!. If you look at the top engine lines on the trainer, they are all nonsensical: (a) 28. Rc2 Rxc1 29. Rfxc1, (b) 28. Nd4 Rxc1 29. Nxf5+ Qxf5 30. Rxc1, (c) 28. Kh1 Rxc1, (d) 28. Qd2 Rxd2, and (e) 28. Nh4 Nxh4+ 29. gxh4 Rxc1. All of them give up material in ways that human players would never consider.

The only move that matters



Black has just played 24. ... Bb6, and now White is faced with a decision. There are four attackers targeting the f2-pawn and just three defenders, one of which is the king. And the king, as we

know, is not a good defender!

In the game White played the natural **25. Qe2** and found himself worse after **25. ... Qa5 26. b4?! Qxa3 27. c5 dxc5 28. f4 cxb4** in Ravinsky – Simagin, Moscow 1949.

The right move is **25. b4!! Rxf2+ 26. Rxf2!** (26. *Rdxf2?* lets Black off the hook with 26. ... *Rxf2+* 27. *Kh3 Qd4*) **26. ... Rxf2+** and now comes the move that is nearly impossible to see without examining all the candidate moves on move 25: **27. Kg1!!** puts the king in the crosshairs of a discovered check, but it turns out there aren't any good ones! Black's best move is likely **27. ... Qxc4** (27. ... *Rf1+* 28. *Kxf1 Qg1+* 29. *Ke2* leaves White ahead at least a piece, while 27. ... *Rxd2+* 28. *bxc5 Bxc5+* 29. *Kh1!* gives White a queen for a rook) **28. Qxc4 Rf4+** and now the only move that keeps White ahead is **29. Rd4! Rxd4**

(29. ... *Bxd4+* 30. *Kg2 Rf2+* 31. *Kh3*) **30. Qe6** (30. *Qa2 Rd2+* 31. *Kh1* saves the bishop, but Black's central pawns get moving) **30. ... Rd2+ 31. Kh1 Rxc2 32. Qxd6** and White is winning.

This position is an example of what has come to be known as the “Shankland rule.” When you find a problem with an idea in your calculation, you should try to see a bit deeper and check whether the problem is real.

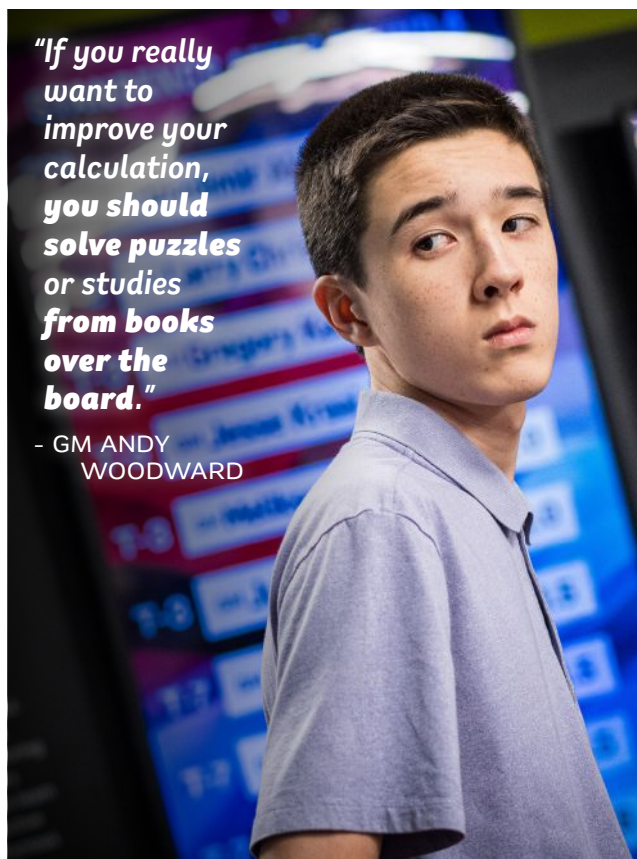
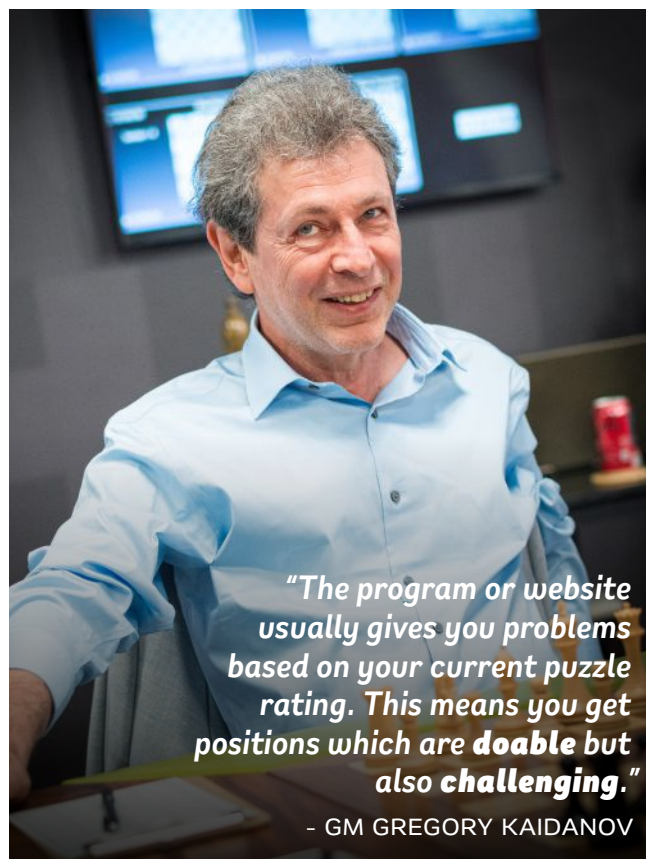
Here, it's clear that White wants to trap the queen with 25. *b4*, but it looks like Black just takes on *f2* and wins. Shankland's famous question is, “What if we play it anyway?” The point of resistance is putting the king into a battery with the black rook and queen — it looks wrong! But careful calculation lets us push past our faulty intuition and discover White's road to victory.

Both, and

By now it might seem like I'm arguing that books are better than online trainers for improvement. I'm not, and neither did any of my respondents. What they did say, almost to a person, is that both online tactics trainers and tactics books can help you improve, and we need to know how to use both of these tools.

Online tactics trainers are clearly excellent for growing your pattern recognition and sharpening your short calculation. You can solve a lot of puzzles in a very short time, and the ability to solve positions by theme can be very useful for building tactical intuition.

But there are also a few drawbacks as well. The computer-generated puzzles sometimes feel strange, and it's easy to “guess” the





first move and not really calculate variations like you would in a game. There are a couple of ways to get around both limitations.

Most young players solve puzzles on *ChessKid.com*, *Chess.com*, and *Lichess*, but there are other options. Websites like Chess Tempo (*chesstempo.com*) and Chessity (*chessity.com*) have a lot of the same features as ChessKid, *Chess.com* and *Lichess*, but Prilleltensky says that “students who spend time seriously solving on these websites seem to move their results and tactical skill in a different way.”

I’d also recommend CT-ART.

It’s an app for phones and tablets that tries to merge the best of the human and online worlds, using exercises from Maxim Blokh’s book *Combinative Motifs* and presenting them to young players for solving on their screens. The positions are chosen by a human teacher, and if you get stuck, there are simplified positions that work as hints.

Still, online trainers aren’t perfect. You can try to overcome some of the limitations by setting the hard puzzles up on a board to work on visualization and

calculation. But let’s be real — nobody does that!

All my respondents thought that books were important for improvement, but I was surprised that it was my youngest respondent, GM Andy Woodward, who most strongly argued for their value. While he has gained immensely from online trainers — he’s the Puzzle Rush champ after all! — he was very clear about how books helped him get stronger:

“I think if you really want to improve your calculation, you should solve puzzles or studies from books over the board. Solving puzzles from books requires you to calculate variations widely and deeply. ... It forces you to consider your opponent’s response and resources as well as your own. I would say that solving puzzles from books helped me a lot before became a grandmaster.”

I was also struck by something his mom, Wendy, wrote in a separate email: “I noticed that Andy’s over-the-board calculation got rusty after he became a GM because he didn’t do much calculation from the books anymore — he said he hadn’t found a book for his level. ... He mainly



Left and below: Scenes from the ChessKid Puzzle Championship.



PHOTOS: DAVID LLADA FOR US CHESS (L), JOHN HARTMANN (R)

relied on the online puzzles, and he could feel the difference in his calculation strength.”

So which books should you use? That depends on your rating. Among the recommendations for beginners were *Winning Chess Exercises* by Chess Life Kids columnist Jeff Coakley, *Practical Chess Exercises* by Ray Cheng, *The Manual of Chess Combinations* by Sergey Ivashchenko, and the *1001 Chess Exercises* series from FM Frank Erwich.

Abrahamyan also mentioned two newer books by Erwich: *100 Tactical Patterns You Must Know* and *The 100 Tactical Patterns You Must Know Workbook*. Both are excellent, and both find their roots in the Dutch *Chess Steps* workbooks aimed at players up to 2200. I think the *Steps* are the single best series for improving players, and while they’re best studied with a coach, they are also useful for solo improvers so long as you study the “reminders” (teaching notes) for each book. They are available at stappenmethode.nl.

Stronger players might look to *Combinative Motifs* by Blokh, *Invisible Chess Moves* by FM Emmanuel Neiman and IM Yochanan Afek, both volumes of IM Axel Smith’s *The Woodpecker Method*, and *Perfect Your Chess* by Volokitin and Grabinsky. The books of Dvoretsky and Aagaard were mentioned more than once, as was Aagaard’s online academy Killer Chess Training (www.killerchesstraining.com) and its weekly sets of paper homework puzzles.

In the end, of course, Prilleltensky is right: “The best tactics book is the one you will read and solve!” The same is true of online trainers: Putting in the work is the best way to succeed! ♠

PHOTO: JOHN HARTMANN

THE SPIEGEL METHOD

You might have seen WFM Elizabeth Spiegel in the 2012 documentary *Brooklyn Castle*. She works at I.S. 318 in Brooklyn, New York, where she runs a chess program that is part of the daily school curriculum.

Spiegel’s students do extremely well at national scholastics – at the 2025 SuperNationals, in May, they took team firsts in the K-8 U1700, U900, and U700 sections; individual firsts in the U1700 and U900, and a handful of team and individual place prizes. What’s the secret to their success?

A big part of it has to do with exposure. Because chess is an elective at 318, kids can take in-school classes five days a week, along with optional practice at lunch, sessions before and after school, and tournaments on weekends. Sounds like a dream for an improving player!

Spiegel also asks every student to do weekly homework: three G/10 games on Lichess and 20 tactics in their trainer. It might not sound like a lot, but it adds up over time, especially if you analyze the games after you play them. Maybe you can try the “Spiegel Method” and see whether it helps you improve too!



TEST YOUR ACTICS

TAKING ON THE ITALIAN

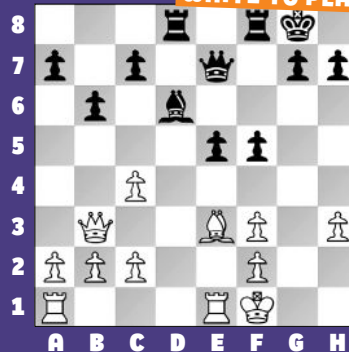
The Italian Game (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3) is one of the hardest lines to prepare for with Black, because White has so many options and move orders.

This is why we recommend 4. ... d5 in this month's "In Session" column. It does a good job of limiting what you need to know, but the trade-off is that the positions get sharp very quickly.

Try your hand at these positions, all of which come from Lichess games in the variations discussed in "In Session." They get harder as you go, and solutions are on page 23.

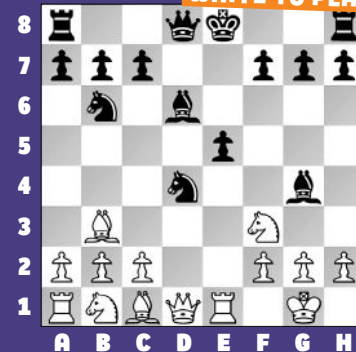
1.

WHITE TO PLAY



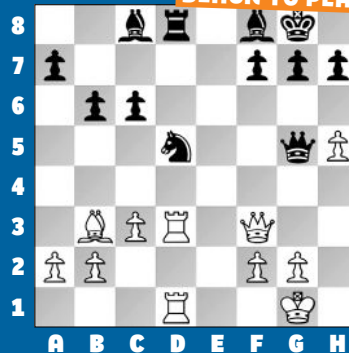
2.

WHITE TO PLAY



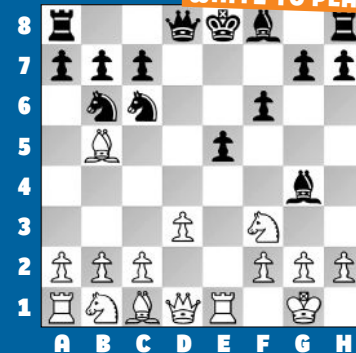
#3.

BLACK TO PLAY



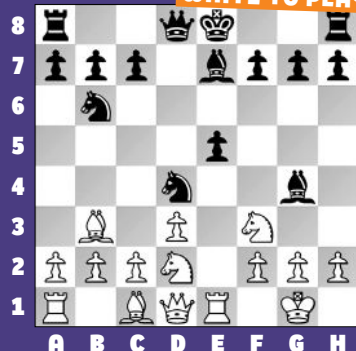
4.

WHITE TO PLAY



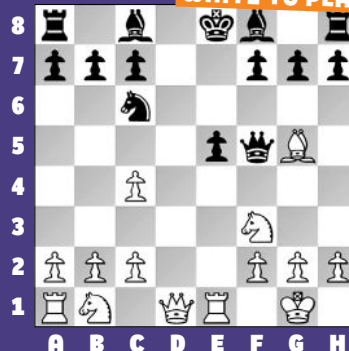
5.

WHITE TO PLAY



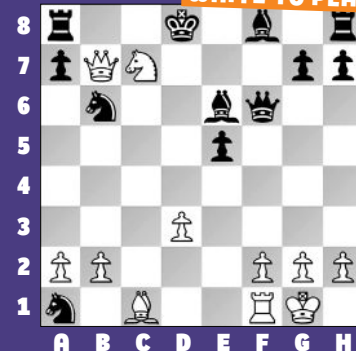
6.

WHITE TO PLAY



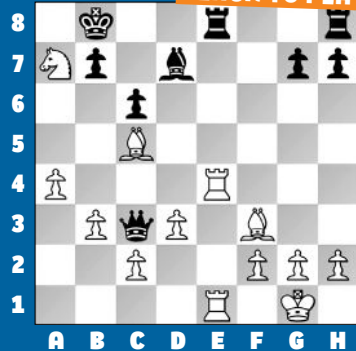
7.

WHITE TO PLAY



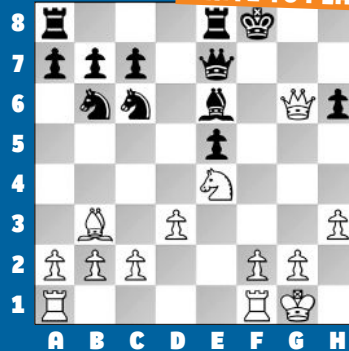
8.

BLACK TO PLAY



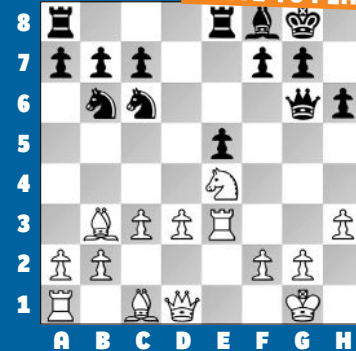
9.

WHITE TO PLAY



10.

WHITE TO PLAY



TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Effective April 30, 2024, the Executive Board moved to remove the temporary change to US Chess Grand Prix rules implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and to return to previous Grand Prix requirements. The Executive Board also moved to allow tournaments limited to seniors, juniors, women, or college students to be eligible for the US Chess Federation Grand Prix, provided they satisfy the other Grand Prix requirements, effective immediately. Please refer to the Tournament Life Announcement section in *Chess Life* for more information.

Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

US Blind Open Championship

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL **TLA# 49554**
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook **Address:** 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$5,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@caveman-chess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

HERITAGE EVENT • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

US Junior Open Championship

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL **TLA# 49553**
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook **Address:** 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@caveman-chess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

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

125th Annual U.S. Open Championship

JULY 28-AUGUST 3, 2025 — WI **TLA# 49051**
Site: Madison Marriott West **Address:** 1313 John Q. Hammons Drive, Middleton, WI 53562 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$60,000 **GP Pts:** 300 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** US Chess Federation • nationalevents@uschess.org • www.uschess.org/tournaments/2025/usopen

Grand Prix

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

33rd Annual Eastern Class Championships

JUNE 6-8, 2025 — CT **TLA# 47565**
Site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel At Bradley International Airport **Address:** 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th Continental Chess Cleveland Open

JUNE 13-15, 2025 — OH **TLA# 48167**
Site: Crowne Plaza Cleveland Airport Hotel **Address:** 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2025 Chicago Summer Open

JUNE 20-22, 2025 — IL **TLA# 48866**
Site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg **Address:** 1800 E Golf Rd, Schaumburg, IL 60173 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** King Registration And Wilson Chess • info@kingregistration.com • www.kingregistration.com/event/Chisummeropen25

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

29th Annual New York State Open and Senior Amateur

JUNE 20-22, 2025 — NY **TLA# 48665**

Site: Tiki Resort **Address:** 2 Canada Street, Lake George, NY 12845 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,300 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2nd Annual Chess For Cure Open

JUNE 21-22, 2025 — OH **TLA# 49364**
Site: Holiday Inn Express Akron NW - Fairlawn **Address:** 3150 West Market Street, Akron, OH 44333 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 190 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kalanithi Bagley • kalanithi@discoverychess.org • 330 475 2964 • discoverychess.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

12th Summer Solstice Open

JUNE 27-29, 2025 — FL **TLA# 49367**
Site: Embassy Suites Hotel **Address:** 10450 Corkscrew Commons Drive, Estero, FL 33928 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$9,000.00 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Jon Haskel • jon@bocachess.com • 561-302-4377 • www.bocachess.com

AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

19th Annual Philadelphia Open

JUNE 27-29, 2025 — PA **TLA# 47567**
Site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

48th Annual Green Bay Open

JUNE 28-29, 2025 — WI **TLA# 49226**
Site: Oneida Hotel (Formerly Radisson Hotel) **Address:** 2040 Airport Drive, Green Bay, WI 54313 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3000 **GP Pts:** 15 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Luke A. Ludwig • lukeludwig@aol.com • 9204659859 • <https://www.greenbaychess.net>

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

14th Annual World Open Women's Championship

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 — PA **TLA# 49121**
Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,000 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

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

53rd Annual World Open, Top 6 Sections (Open Through Under 1400 Sections)

JULY 2-6, 2025 — PA **TLA# 46655**
Site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$208,000 **GP Pts:** 300 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship

JULY 4-6, 2025 — CA **TLA# 49355**
Site: Holiday Inn Express And Suites **Address:** 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$12,500 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y

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

Y Residency: N **Org:** John Mccumiskey • sactochess@sbcglobal.net •

GRAND PRIX

Texas Chess Open

JULY 4-6, 2025 — TX **TLA# 49732**
Site: Sheraton DFW Airport Hotel **Address:** 4440 West John Carpenter Frwy, Irving, TX 75063 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$4,050 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Coppell Chess Club • scopell.chessclub@gmail.com • 2145346730 • coppellchessclub.com/tournaments/texas-state-open-chess-tournament%E2%80%9993july-4-2025

GRAND PRIX

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open

JULY 12, 2025 — MA **TLA# 49155**
Site: Auburn/ Webster Elks Lodge **Address:** 754 Southbridge Street, Auburn, MA 01501 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **B/O 60 Rated Paid Entries GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Greater Baystate Chess • greater.baystate.chess@gmail.com • 4133560303 • www.greaterbaystatechess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th Annual Chicago Class Championships

JULY 18-20, 2025 — IL **TLA# 48868**
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 N Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

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

26th Annual Pittsburgh Open

JULY 18-20, 2025 — PA **TLA# 48870**
Site: Doubletree Green Tree **Address:** 500 Mansfield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15205 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$13,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

Caveman Chess Festival

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL **TLA# 49558**
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook **Address:** 2855

Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$40,000 **GP Pts:** 370 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@caveman-chess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

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

30th Annual Bradley Open

JULY 25-27, 2025 — CT **TLA# 48871**
Site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel At Bradley Airport **Address:** 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

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

33rd Annual Southern Open

JULY 25-27, 2025 — FL **TLA# 48867**
Site: Delta Hotels Orlando Celebration **Address:** 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

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

30th Annual Pacific Coast Open

AUGUST 8-10, 2025 — CA **TLA# 48968**
Site: Hilton Orange County Airport Hotel **Address:** 18800 MacArthur Blvd., Irvine, CA 92612 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

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

55th Annual Continental Open

AUGUST 14-17, 2025 — MA **TLA# 48969**
Site: Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel **Address:** 181 Boston Post Road W, Marlborough, MA 01752 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chesstour.com • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

20th Annual Indianapolis Open

AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — IN **TLA# 49375**

PLEASE NOTE

DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

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

Site: Hilton Garden Inn Indianapolis Airport Address: 8910 Hatfield Drive, Indianapolis, IN 42641
Overall Prize Fund: \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y
Accessible: Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess
 • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

4th Nashville Summer Classic
AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — TN TLA# 50205
Site: Millennium Maxwell House Hotel Address: 2025 Rosa L Parks Blvd, Nashville, TN 37228 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 60 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Nashville Chess Center
 • director@nashvillechess.org • 6292544737 • ncc.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?page_id=4091&club_id=164844&item_id=2562865

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

15th Annual Central California Open
AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — CA TLA# 49352
Site: Doubletree Hotel Address: 2233 Ventura St, Fresno, CA 93710 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

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

57th Annual Atlantic Open
AUGUST 22-24, 2025 — DC TLA# 49021
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel Address: 2500 Calvert St. NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — FL TLA# 49841
Site: Holiday Inn Resort Address: 3011 Maingate Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$11,500 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Boca Raton Chess Club • jon@bocachess.com • 561-302-4377 • www.bocachess.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

147th Annual New York State Championship—America's Oldest Annual Tournament!
AUG. 29-SEPT. 1, 2025 — NY TLA# 49022
Site: Albany Marriott Address: 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$18,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2025 Peter P. Lahde Tennessee Open & Blitz Championship
SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2025 — TN TLA# 49640
Site: The Center at Fairfield Glade Address: 128 Stonehenge Dr, Crossville, TN 38558 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 50 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** Y **Org:** Cumberland County Chess Club • cumberland-countychessclub@gmail.com • (931) 200-0875

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

33rd Annual Midwest Class Championships
OCTOBER 10-12, 2025 — NY TLA# 50084
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 1601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling, IL 60090 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$20,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

Regional

ALABAMA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

JULY 4-6, 2025 — CA TLA# 49355
27th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

CONNECTICUT

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

FLORIDA

JUNE 14, 2025 — FL TLA# 49814
The 40+
Site: Veteran's Park of Delray Beach (Indoor) Address: 802 NE 1st St, Delray Beach, FL 33483 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** 954Chess INC • 954chess@gmail.com • www.954chess.com

JULY 10-13, 2025 — FL TLA# 50020
2025 World Chess Festival (Orlando)
Site: Hilton Garden Inn at Sea World Hotel Address: 6850 Westwood Blvd, Orlando, FL 32821 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Joe Hanley • hanleychessacademy@gmail.com • [hanleychessacademy.com/2025WCF\(East\).html](http://hanleychessacademy.com/2025WCF(East).html)

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

GEORGIA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

ILLINOIS

JUNE 20-22, 2025 — IL TLA# 48866
2025 Chicago Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 26, 2025 — IL TLA# 49555

Junior Open Blitz
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook Address: 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@caveman-chess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

JULY 26, 2025 — IL TLA# 49548
Caveman Beginner Open #1
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook Address: 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@caveman-chess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

JULY 27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49549
Caveman Beginner Open #2
Site: Hilton, Chicago Northbrook Address: 2855 Milwaukee Ave, Northbrook, IL 60062 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Kevin Bachler • Contact@caveman-chess.com • 224-985-5245 • www.cavemanchess.com

INDIANA

JUNE 20-22, 2025 — IL TLA# 48866
2025 Chicago Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558

Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553

US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 26, 2025 — IL TLA# 49548

Caveman Beginner Open #1
 See Illinois.

JULY 27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49549

Caveman Beginner Open #2
 See Illinois.

IOWA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553

US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

KENTUCKY

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553

US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

MAINE

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND

MARYLAND CHESS TOURNAMENTS (NORTH PENN CHESS CLUB)
 Maryland Chess runs 21+ annual K-12 tournaments every other Saturday from September through June & 12+ annual 1-day or multi-day open tournaments for adults & K-12 players on weekends. See www.MDChess.org for tournament announcements, registration for tournaments, updated wallcharts, live standings, sign up for K-12 & open e-newsletters, lists of coaches & clubs, camp announcements, & news. K-12 MD players who compete in the Varsity section (for players rated 1600+) of 1 of 8+ annual MD-Sweet-16 Qualifiers can qualify for the \$48,000+ scholarship to the University of Maryland, Baltimore County awarded annually. UMB is a perennial top-10 contender for the collegiate national chess championship.

MASSACHUSETTS

WEEKLY-SUN., TUES., SAT. — MA TLA# 47199

FMCA

Site: Clock Tower Center, Future Masters Chess Academy Address: 200 Homer Avenue, Mezzanine Level, Suite 200, Ashland, MA 01721-1716 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Future Masters Chess Academy • Info@FutureChessMasters.com • (508)622-5388 • futurechessmasters.com

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

MICHIGAN

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553

US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

MINNESOTA

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

NEBRASKA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558

Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155

1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

JUNE 28, 2025 — NJ TLA# 47751

Hamilton Chess Club Quads

Site: Switlik Park Pavilion Address: Fisher Place/Joe Dimaggio Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08610 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$25 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Edward Sytnik • edmendou@aol.com • 6097582326 • hamiltonchessclub.com

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558

Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 26, 2025 — NJ TLA# 47752

Hamilton Chess Club Quads

Site: Switlik Park Pavilion Address: Fisher Place/Joe Dimaggio Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08610 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$25 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Edward Sytnik • edmendou@aol.com • 6097582326 • hamiltonchessclub.com

NEW YORK

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558

Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553

US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

NORTH CAROLINA

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558

Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

OHIO

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558

Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553

US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

PENNSYLVANIA

North Penn Chess Club

Main & Richardson - St. John's UCC, 500 West Main St., Lansdale, PA 19446. See www.northpennchessclub.org for schedules & info or 215-699-8418

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 27-29, 2025 — PA TLA# 46653

53rd Annual World Open, Under 1200 And Under 1000 Sections

Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel Address: 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$17,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 — PA TLA# 49120

4th Annual World Open Amateur Championship

Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel Address: 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 30-JULY 1, 2025 — PA TLA# 49119

17th Annual World Open Under 13 Championship

Site: Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel **Address:** 201 N 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103
Overall Prize Fund: n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • www.chesstour.com

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

RHODE ISLAND
JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

SOUTH CAROLINA
JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

SOUTH DAKOTA
JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

TENNESSEE
JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2025 — TN TLA# 49640
2025 Peter P. Lahde Tennessee Open & Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix.

TEXAS
JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

VERMONT
JULY 12, 2025 — MA TLA# 49155
1st Greater Baystate Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

WASHINGTON
JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN
JUNE 20-22, 2025 — IL TLA# 48866
2025 Chicago Summer Open
 See Grand Prix.

JUNE 28-29, 2025 — WI TLA# 49226
48th Annual Green Bay Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 20-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49558
Caveman Chess Festival
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49553
US Junior Open Championship
 See National Events.

JULY 26, 2025 — IL TLA# 49548
Caveman Beginner Open #1
 See Illinois.

JULY 27, 2025 — IL TLA# 49549
Caveman Beginner Open #2
 See Illinois.

Solutions

PAGE 20 TACTICS TUNE-UP

(1) **19. c5+** The discovered check wins a piece. (rosstheboss – Hah1mat, Lichess 2025) (2) Did you notice the pin on the e-pawn? **10. Qxd4!** and White went on to win. (froy2403 – kingdave75, Lichess 2025) (3) **24. ... Bg4!** A skewer or X-ray attack, hitting the queen and rook. Black is winning but flagged on the next move! (sanek123 – gambitbeczkowski, Lichess 2025) (4) Here's another trap to avoid. Black's last move was 8. ... f6 when they should have played 8. ... Bd6. **9. d4** was played in the game, when 9. ... Be7 blocks the e-file, but White can take advantage with **9. Nxe5! Bxd1** (9. ... fxe5 **10. Qxg4** leaves White up a pawn and on the attack) **10. Nxc6+** winning back the queen. The best Black can do is **10. ... Kf7** **11. Nxd8+ Rxd8** **12. Rxd1** and White is up a piece. (anka0618 – nikOld, Lichess 2025) (5) **10. Bxf7+** is a standard tactical idea: 10. ... Kf8 11. Bb3 is a clean pawn for White, and **10. ... Kxf7** **11. Nxe5+ Ke8** **12. Nxe4** wins two pawns. (aguilanegra – Locutus22, Lichess 2025) (6) **10. Rxe5+!** Because 10. ... Qxe5 11. Nxe5 is obviously winning for White, and the idea is that if **10. ... Nxe5?** White has **11. Qd8 mate**. (lazrail5323 – SirWilliamFB, Lichess 2025) (7) **17. Bg5!**

Pinning the queen to the king with the idea that **17. ... Qxg5** lures the queen to a bad square: **18. Nxe6+ Ke8** **19. Nxe5** and White is winning. In the game Black lost after 17. ... Bc8 18. Bxf6+ gxf6 19. Qc6 Bd7 20. Qxf6+ Be7 21. Qxh8+. (AndalRamirez22 – Sanjay77003, Lichess 2025) (8) Black mates in two with the sharp **25. ... Qxe1!!** **26. Rxe1 Rxe1 mate**. In the game, Black played **25. ... Rxe4!**; the idea is similar (26. Bxe4? Qxe1 mate), but Black doesn't have to take the rook: 26. Rf1 keeps the game alive. (Raulla-fuente – Redm4n, Lichess 2025) (9) **17. f4!** Opening the f-file to get at the king, bringing the f1-rook into play; 17. Qxh6+ Qg7 18. Qh4 is good, but the text is better. Black lost after **17. ... Bxb3** **18. fxe5+ Bf7** **19. Qxh6+ Kg8** **20. Nf6+ Qxf6** **21. exf6 Nd5** **22. Qg7 mate**. (ourson37 – Baku_Madaram01, Lichess 2025) (10) **18. Rg3!** Bringing the rook to the same file as the black king and queen creates plenty of tactical chances. The queen lacks safe squares as well. Black slipped immediately in the game with **18. ... Qh7?** **19. Nf6+, Black resigned**. (barcs88 – Abdullahisau, Lichess 2025) The alternative was 18. ... Qf5 which is met by 19. Bxh6! (or 19. Rf3!) when Rg3-g5 looms; the problem is that the queen has to defend f6 to stop Ne4-f6+. For example, if 19. ... Red8 (19. ... g6 20. Rf3) 20. Rg5 Qd7? 21. Nf6+! Kh8 22. Bxg7+ Bxg7 23. Qh5+ Bh6 24. Qxh6 mate.

LOOKING AHEAD

SuperNationals VIII was amazing! With over 4,500 kids coming to Orlando, Florida, from around the country, it was a tremendous success. Look for extensive coverage of SuperNationals in our August issue. We'll have all the results, annotated games, and plenty of photos!



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