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DECEMBER 2025 ■ USChess.org

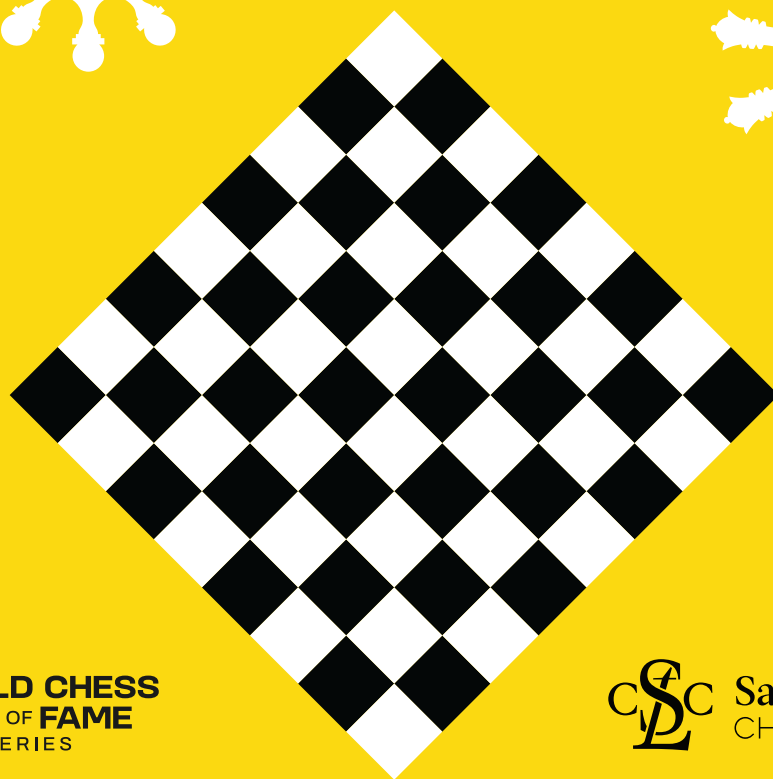
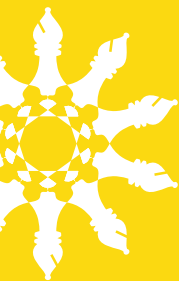
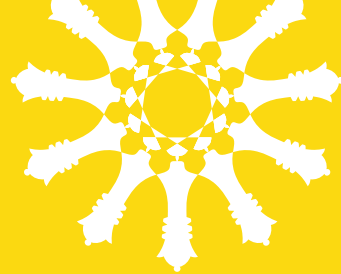
# Kids

GM Daniel  
Naroditsky  
1995-2025

2021  
USCHESS  
CHAMPIONSHIP



US CHESS



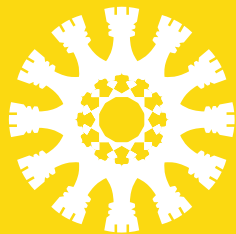
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By Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefield



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## ON THE COVER

Daniel Naroditsky was a great player and teacher. His death in October made national headlines. It's hard to think about people dying, but we can always remember what made them special. In this issue we talk about "Danya" and show two games from when he was young. If you are having big feelings about Danya's death, be sure to talk to a parent, guardian, or teacher.

PHOTO: COURTESY SLCC / LENNART OOTES

DECEMBER 2025

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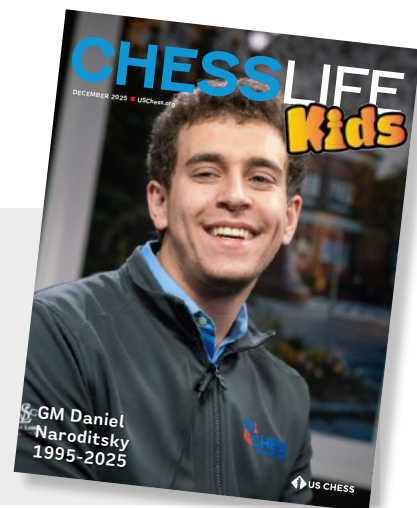
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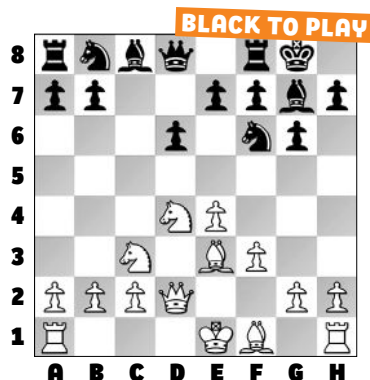
# Patterns of Attack

## Part 6

BY NM TIM MCGREW

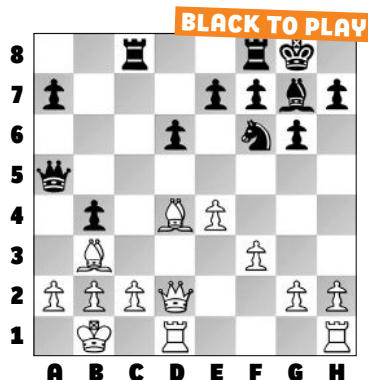
**I**N THE PREVIOUS column we began our study of the attack against a kingside fianchetto, looking at a formation I called “The Clamp” in which White’s pieces swarm over the black kingside. It’s a lovely pattern, but it is also a difficult one to reach in many openings.

Consider this line of the Sicilian Dragon: **1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 exd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 g6 6. Be3 Bg7 7. f3 0-0 8. Qd2**



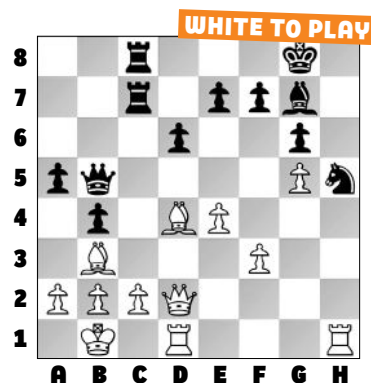
White’s position is perfectly fine, but trying to set up The Clamp here is a hopeless cause. The knight is not within reach of the g5-square, and it is unlikely that the queen will travel to h4 any time soon.

Not to worry! White’s setup, known as the Yugoslav Attack, aims at a very different attacking pattern. White wants to castle queenside and throw his pawns at the black king. And if Black plays slowly, this pawn storm will be absolutely devastating. We can see how effective it is by following the famous game Fischer – Larsen, Portoroz 1958, which continued: **8. ... Nc6 9. Bc4 Nxd4 10. Bxd4 Be6 11. Bb3 Qa5 12. 0-0-0 b5 13. Kb1 b4 14. Nd5 Bxd5 15. Bxd5 Rac8? 16. Bb3!**



Larsen missed his chance to get rid of the powerful bishop on d5. It’s worth quoting Fischer’s own notes from *My 60 Memorable*

*Games* here: “He won’t get a second chance to snap off the Bishop! Now I felt the game was in the bag if I didn’t botch it. I’d won dozens of skittles games in analogous positions and had it down to a science: pry open the KR-file, sac, sac ... mate!” The “KR-file” is, of course, the h-file, where the “king’s rook” has been sitting patiently waiting for his moment to shine. That moment has now come. **16. ... Rc7 17. h4 Qc5 18. h5 Rfc8 19. hxg6 hxg6 20. g4 a5** Larsen is trying to make his queenside attack look dangerous, and if it were his turn to move, ... a5-a4 would actually win for Black. But it is not his turn. **21. g5 Nh5**



**22. Rxh5!** Here Fischer quotes a line from Reuben Fine: “In such positions, combinations are as natural as a baby’s smile.” **22. ... gxh5?** Black had to try **22. ... Bxd4** here. **23. g6!** White’s position is now so overwhelming that he wins easily even though the computer finds some faster finishes. **23. ... e5 24. gxf7+ Kf8 25. Be3 d5 26. exd5 Rxf7 27. d6 Rf6 28. Bg5 Qb7 29. Bxf6 Bxf6 30. d7 Rd8 31. Qd6+, Black resigned.**

This game is certainly a good advertisement for Fischer’s formula of prying open the h-file and delivering mate. Just to reinforce the point, let’s have a look at another master game.

## PIRC DEFENSE (B08)

FM Mikhail Gusev (2273)

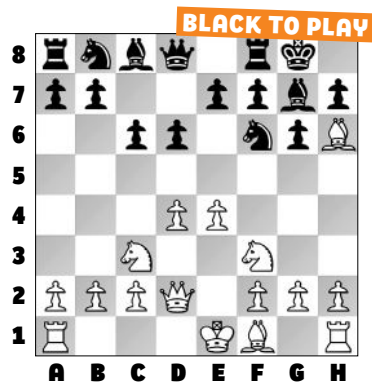
FM Daniel Centron Antuna (2325)

Chess.com Titled Tuesday, 01.21.2025

**1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 g6 4. Be3 Bg7 5. Qd2 0-0 6. Nf3 c6**

So far, this is an unremarkable Pirc Defense. Black is taking some liberties to play in the hypermodern style, but his plan is to launch his own attack on the queenside. There's a difference, though: Black has castled, and White has not. So White has the black king's permanent address.

**7. Bh6**



This important maneuver is made possible by the fact that Black has absolutely refused to bring the center pawns into contact with one another.

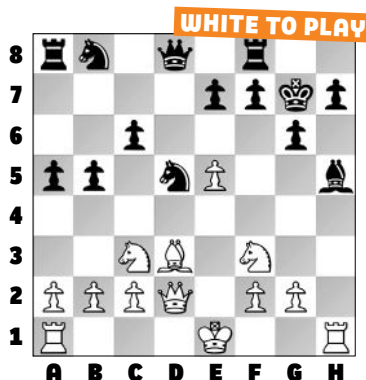
In the Fischer – Larsen game, Black dragged White's bishop off the diagonal with 9. ... Nxd4; here, that isn't a possibility. So White goes after the "Dragon" bishop on g7. I like to think of this as the "St. George Swap." (Nobody else will know what you're talking about if you say this, but you and I will understand.)

**7. ... b5 8. Bd3 a5 9. h4**

White applies the Fischer Formula right away. The computer likes 9. e5 first, but after a few swaps and the retreat of Black's knight, h4-h5

will be coming.

**9. ... Bg4 10. h5 Bxh5 11. Bxg7 Kxg7 12. e5 dxe5 13. dxe5 Nd5**



OK, remember that bit about a baby's smile?

**14. Rxh5! gxh5 15. Qg5+! Kh8 16. Qh6! f5 17. Ng5! Nf6 18. exf6, Black resigned.**

But what if Black tries to block the rush of White's h-pawn by playing ... h7-h5 himself? It turns out that stopping the Fischer Formula with this pawn move brings other problems in its wake.

## MODERN DEFENSE (B06)

GM Alexandr Fier (2549)

Vladimir Mikhalsky (2219)

Titled Tuesday, Chess.com, 01.14.2025

**1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7 3. Nc3 d6 4. h4**

Yes, this is a little early, but these days the h-pawn push is a trend.

**4. ... h5**

OK, the h-pawn has been stopped for the time being. What does White do next? First, he completes his development naturally while setting up the St. George Swap.

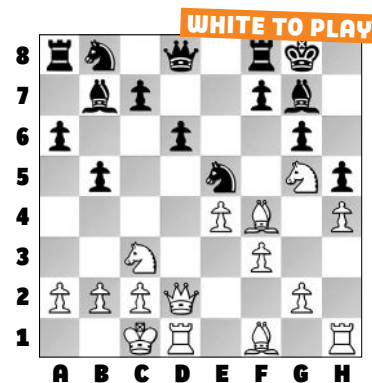
**5. Be3 a6 6. Qd2 b5 7. Nf3 Nf6**

Nothing very dramatic has happened yet, and since Black hasn't castled, the St. George Swap

loses some of its point. But now White uses the fact that the g5-square is difficult to defend with a pawn and nestles his knight in close to the black king.

**8. Ng5 Ng4 9. Bf4 Bb7 10. f3 e5 11. dxe5 Nxe5 12. 0-0-0 0-0?!**

A little development with 12. ... Nbd7 would have been more prudent. Now we get to see what White has been building up to.



**13. g4! hxg4 14. h5**

White rips away the pawn cover around the black king. The computer gives 14. Bxe5 Bxe5 15. f4 here, but that is beside the point. White can play this attack almost without calculating anything, because he can always find a move that is at least good, based simply on pattern recognition, whereas Black's defensive chances are almost never obvious. The defender is walking a tightrope, mentally speaking. And human beings are lousy tightrope walkers.

**14. ... Bf6??**

Take this move, for example. It looks like it makes sense to get rid of the powerful knight on g5, but now White crashes through without even trying. Black's only hope was 14. ... Nbd7.

**15. hxg6 Nxg6 16. Qh2, Black resigned. ♠**



# The Scotch Four Knights

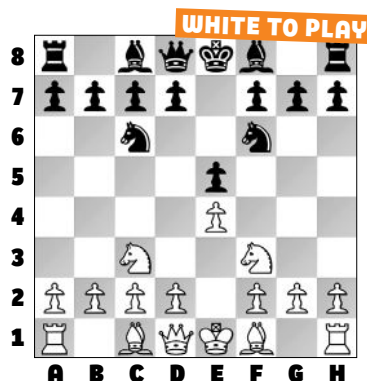
BY JOHN HARTMANN

**W**E CONTINUE BUILDING our opening repertoire with analysis of the Scotch Four Knights. I think this is one of the most underrated 1. e4 e5 openings — the resulting positions are often unbalanced and very instructive. Who knows: Maybe after you study this line you'll want to play it with both colors!

## 1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3

Remember that we can reach this position through the Scotch Game: 3. d4 exd4 4. Nxd4 and if 4. ... Nf6, which we analyzed in October, White can transpose to the Scotch Four Knights with 5. Nc3.

## 3. ... Nf6



## 4. d4

There are other moves to consider in this position, including the ancient 4. Bb5 and 4. g3, a Daniel Naroditsky favorite. We'll discuss them in February.

We have already looked at 4. Bc4 (by transposition) in the August 2025 issue, where we said to go for the "fork trick" with 4. ... Nxe4 5. Nxe4 d5.

## 4. ... exd4 5. Nxd4

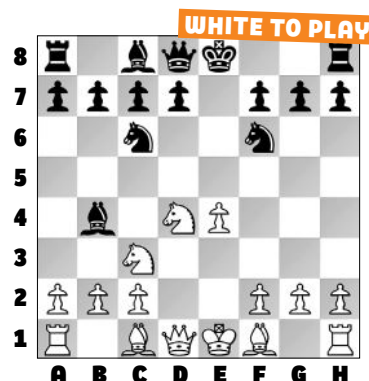
**5. Nd5** is the Belgrade Gambit, which can be dangerous for the unprepared. We won't take the e-pawn, but instead, we will just develop calmly with **5. ... Be7** when White can proceed a few ways:

(a) **6. Nxd4 0-0 7. Nb5 Nxd5 8. exd5 a6!** (meeting a threat with a threat) **9. dxc6 axb5 10. Bxb5 dxc6!?** with a pretty even game, although Black is just a bit ahead in development.

(b) **6. Bf4** (with a two-fold attack on c7) **6. ... d6 7. Nxd4 0-0 8. Nb5 Nxd5 9. exd5** and now either 9. ... a6 or 9. ... Ne5.

(c) **6. Bc4 0-0 7. 0-0 d6 8. Nxd4 Nxd4 9. Qxd4 Nxd5 10. Qxd5 Bf6** is equal.

## 5. ... Bb4!



This develops another piece, pins the c3-knight, and in doing so also threatens the e4-pawn.

Please note: 5. ... Nxd4? 6. Qxd4 is a terrible mistake, allowing the white queen to live in the center without fear of being kicked away. Don't do this!

## 6. Nxc6

Almost always played among masters, but other moves are tried at the club level.

(a) **6. f3** defends the pawn but is a little slow. Black gets a nice game with **6. ... 0-0** and then pressure along the e-file.

(b) **6. Bc4** is a gambit idea that doesn't really work. We can take the pawn with **6. ... Nxe4 7. 0-0 Nxc3 8. bxc3 Be7** or just develop with **6. ... 0-0**.

(c) **6. Bg5** looks good — it's a pin after all! It shouldn't worry us though: **6. ... 0-0** is fine, and we can also include ... h7-h6 before or afterwards.

## 6. ... bxc6!

Taking towards the center and preparing the ... d7-d5 push. Capturing with the d-pawn allows White to trade queens with an advantage. Now White has to decide how to defend the e-pawn.

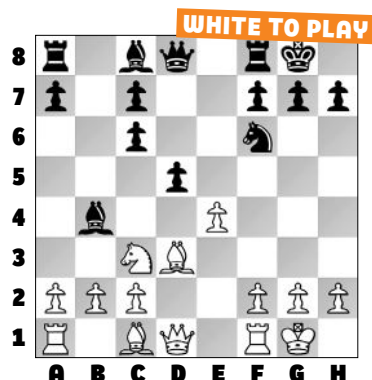
## 7. Bd3

This is the best move for White.

(a) **7. Bd2** breaks the pin, but Black gets a good game with **7. ... Qe7!**, bringing the queen to the e-file and attacking the e4-pawn again. After **8. Bd3 Bxc3 9. Bxc3 Nxe4** White will get a bit of an attack on the black king but it's not clear that they will have enough compensation for the pawn.

(b) **7. Qd4** tries to defend everything while attacking the bishop, but Black can once again increase the pressure with **7. ... Qe7!** and a slightly better position.

**7. ... 0-0 8. 0-0 d5**



**8. ... Re8** is sometimes played, trying to pressure the e-pawn, but our plan is more direct.

**9. exd5**

White is able to end any play against the e4-pawn and also free the d3-h7 diagonal. The cost is that it undoubles Black's pawns.

(a) **9. e5** attacks the knight and seems like a logical alternative, but there's one small problem: **9. ... Ng4! 10. Bf4** (10. f4?? Bc5+ wins material due to 11. Kh1 Qh4) **10. ... f6! 11. exf6 Qxf6** and Black's pieces are very active.

(b) **9. Bg5** allows **9. ... h6!** (or just 9. ... Bxc3 right away) **10. Bh4** (if 10. Bxf6 Qxf6 11. exd5 Bxc3 12. bxc3 cxd5) **10. ... Bxc3 11. bxc3 dxe4 12. Bxf6 Qxf6 13. Bxe4 Qxc3** when Black has an extra c-pawn but the position is very, very equal.

**9. ... cxd5 10. Bg5**

Now that the c3-knight isn't pinned, Black has to worry about defending the d5-pawn. Why?

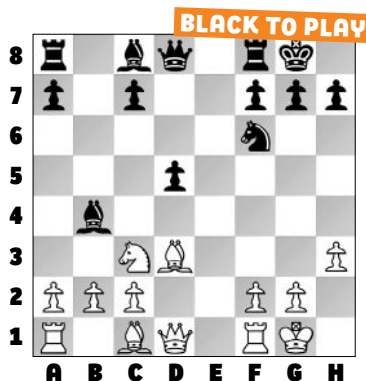
With **10. Bg5** White sets up a very obvious threat: **11. Bxf6 gxf6 12. Nxd5 Qxd5?? 13. Bxh7+** winning the queen.

Of course White can try to pressure Black in other ways, but only one is really important.

(a) First, note that **10. Qf3 c6 11. Bg5** is a transposition to our main line.

(b) More challenging is **10. h3**.

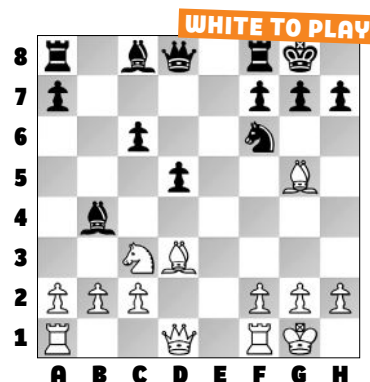
This is seen at the master level just as often as **10. Bg5**, but it's not popular in club or scholastic games.



This small pawn push seems to be a waste of time, but the idea is to prevent Black from developing their bishop to g4, where it might bother the queen. Next for White is **Qd1-f3** pressuring both d5 and f6, followed by a possible **Bc1-f4**. It's a powerful idea, but because the move isn't forcing, it gives Black a lot of freedom.

We can keep things simple with **10. ... c6 11. Qf3 Bd6** (preparing for 12. Bf4) **12. Bf4 Rb8 13. b3 Qc7!**, enticing White to exchange on d6 at the cost of a tempo. After **14. Bxd6** (or 14. Ne2 c5 15. Rfe1 Re8) **14. ... Qxd6 15. Ne2 c5** both sides have things to play for.

**10. ... c6**



Simple chess, defending the d-pawn.

**11. Qf3**

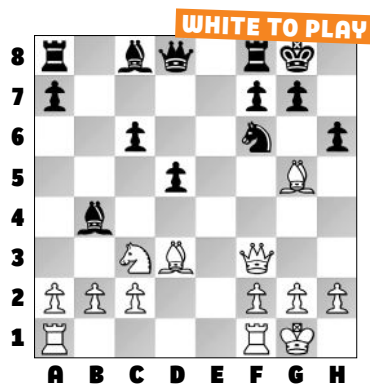
Threatening to take twice on f6 and shatter the black kingside. As always, White has other moves.

(a) **11. a3 Bd6!** (11. ... Bxc3 12. bxc3 gives up the bishop pair without good reason) **12. Qf3 h6** leads to positions that are similar to our main line.

(b) **11. Ne2** is another idea, improving the knight and looking at the f4- or d4-squares. The drawback is that there is less pressure on Black's f6-knight, so Black has time to play **11. ... h6! 12. Bh4 Bd6** (stopping Ne2-f4 for now) **13. Nd4 c5!** (13. ... Bxh2+? doesn't work due to 14. Kxh2 Ng4+ 15. Qxg4!) gaining space in the center. Now if **14. Nf5 Bxf5 15. Bxf5 Rb8!**, and if White tries to win a pawn with **16. Bxf6 Qxf6 17. Qxd5** Black gets great compensation with **17. ... Rfd8**.

(c) **11. Na4** avoids trades on c3 and looks to start moving pawns on the queenside, especially c2-c4. We begin by putting our bishop on its best square: **11. ... Bd6 12. c4** (if 12. c3 h6 13. Bh4 c5 stopping b2-b4 and controlling the center) **12. ... h6 13. Bh4 Be6 14. cxd5 cxd5 15. Nc3 Rb8** and Black has active pieces to compensate for the isolated pawns.

**11. ... h6!**



This is a key position for you to know. It looks like Black is forcing White to do what they want: take twice on f6 and leave Black with a very weak kingside. So why would we want to do this to ourselves?

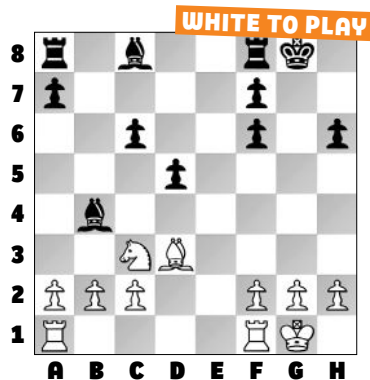
### 12. Bxf6?!

The database tells us that White usually can't resist making this move, but it isn't as good as it looks.

The alternative (a) **12. Bh4?** is a mistake. Black takes over with **12. ... g5 13. Bg3** and now **13. ... Bg4!** when the queen is really short of safe squares.

Probably better, but rare among non-masters, is (b) **12. Bf4** which prevents ... Ra8-b8 and keeps pieces on the board. **12. ... Bd6** tries to trade off White's active bishop and leave them with a poor one. Here **13. h3 Rb8** (attacking b3, possible now because of ... Bb4-d6) **14. b3 Rb4 15. Bxd6 Qxd6** is totally equal.

### 12. ... Qxf6 13. Qxf6 gxf6



First things first: there's no reason to be afraid of the broken kingside pawns when the queens have come off the board. Black won't get checkmated, and if it comes down to a king and pawn endgame, Black will have no trouble defending the broken pawns.

More important is what stays on the board. Black has two bishops and an extra central pawn, and these can be very powerful in a simplified position like this. For their part, White will usually try to put the knight somewhere on the f-file: It can't be attacked by pawns there, and it can attack a lot of squares.

So we might have a battle between a good knight on f4 or f5 against Black's bishops. Black can always exchange the knight for one of their bishops, but then the position is even more simplified. Meanwhile, Black can use the open b-file to attack the white b-pawn with a rook, gaining time to get it into the game.

This is the kind of unbalanced position that you might want to practice with a friend. Write down the moves, analyze together afterwards, and you'll be ready when it appears on the board in a tournament! Let's take a look at some sample lines:

### 14. Ne2

Avoiding any captures on c3 and rerouting the knight to a better square.

(a) **14. Na4** doesn't make as much sense to me. Where is the knight going? After **14. ... Be6 15. c3 Bd6 16. b4** White tries to create an outpost on c5, but Black can make it hard for White with **16. ... a5! 17. a3 Rfb8** and the initiative.

(b) **14. a3** asks whether Black would like to give up the bishop

pair in exchange for doubling the white c-pawn. We would not! So we play **14. ... Bd6 15. Rfe1 Rb8** and now if **16. b4? Be5** wins material.

### 14. ... Re8

This is a flexible waiting move that grabs the e-file and clears f8 for the b4-bishop if needed, where it could defend the h6-pawn.

(a) **14. ... Rb8** waits to decide where to put the b4-bishop while looking right at the b2-pawn. There is one drawback if Black wants to play for the win: **15. Nd4** (15. b3 Re8 16. Rad1 Bg4) **15. ... Bd7** (15. ... Bb7?! doesn't make sense here as it blocks the rook) **16. Bf5** will be pretty equal

(b) **14. ... Bd6 15. Nd4 c5 16. Nf5 Bxf5 17. Bxf5** is equal with the opposite-colored bishops lurking. It's not totally drawn so long as there are rooks on the board, but it will be hard to press for a win.

### 15. Nd4 Bb7

Defending the pawn without the fear of a bishop trade, although 15. ... Bd7 16. Bf5 Bxf5 17. Nxf5 Re2 isn't so bad for Black.

### 16. Nf5 Bf8 17. Rfe1 Re5

It's a battle between White's better pawn structure and Black's bishops. If White plays 18. Rxe5, the pawns are undoubled. If not, Black can double rooks on the e-file.

### 18. f4 Re6!

This keeps both of Black's ideas alive. One final note: if White insists on forcing Black to take on e1 with 19. Nd4 Rxe1+ 20. Rxe1 Black gets the central pawns rolling and the bishops active with 20. ... c5 21. Nf5 c4 22. Be2 and now either 22. ... Rb8 or 22. ... Bc8. In both cases the position is still complex and unbalanced. ♠

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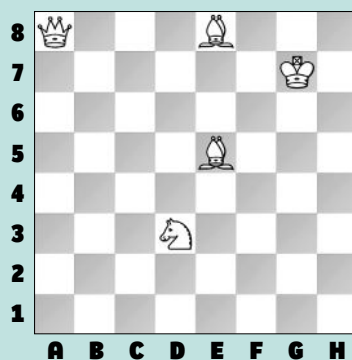
# Puzzle Me THIS Puzzle Me THAT

BY JEFF COAKLEY



Hey, kids! Are you ready to rock 'n' roll? The band is set to lay down some cool tunes and groovy puzzles. There's a little bit of this and a little bit of that. Some of the problems have special rules. Others are the standard kind of positions that might happen in your games. Good luck!

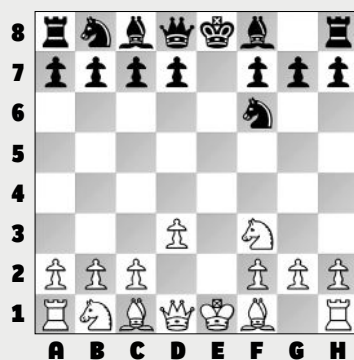
## 1. Triple Loyd



Place the black king on the board so that

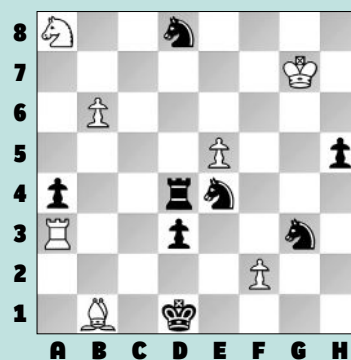
- Black is in checkmate.
- Black is in stalemate.
- White has mate in one.

## 2. Proof Game



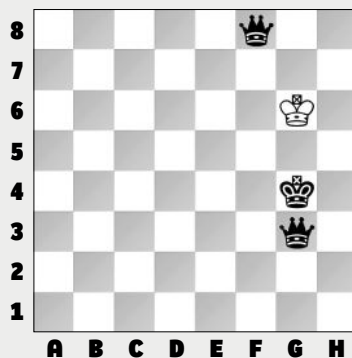
This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

## 3. Maze Race



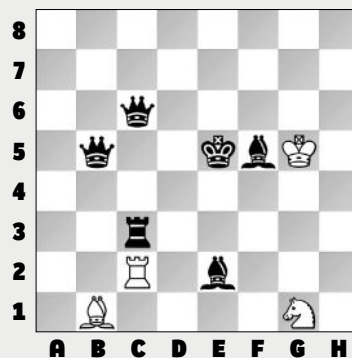
Only one white piece (rook, bishop, or knight) may move. Black does not get a turn. Capture the black king without taking any pieces or moving to a square guarded by Black. Which piece is fastest? Which is slowest?

## 4. Inverted Loyd



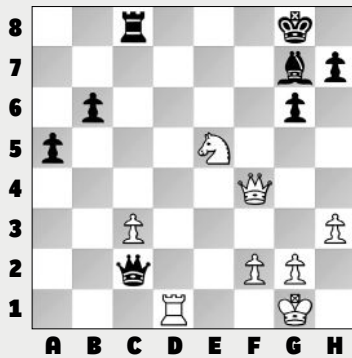
Add a white knight and two white bishops so that White has mate in one.

## 5. Series-Mate in 6



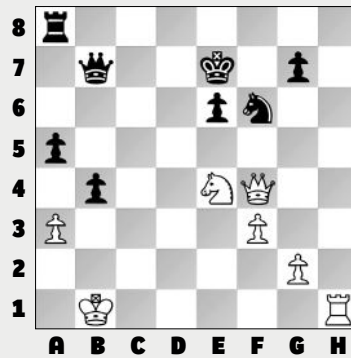
White plays six moves in a row to checkmate Black. Only the final move may give check. Captures are allowed. Black does not get a turn. White may not place their own king in check, even if they get out of check on the next move.

## 6. Mate in 6



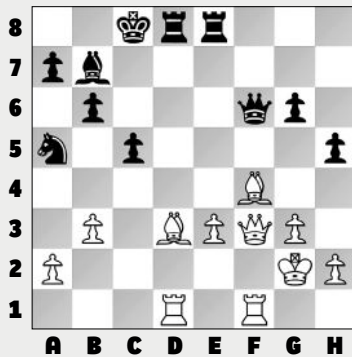
White to play. Mate in six.

## 7. Combo



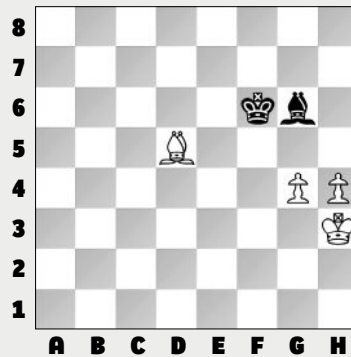
White to play and win material.

## 8. Defense



White to play and not lose.

## 9. Endgame



White to play and win.

## 10. Synthetic game

Make up a game where Black wins with the move 5. ... Kd8 mate.

## Answers:

**1)** A. Kc8 mate. B. Kb6 stalemate. C. Kb3, allowing 1. Qa4 mate. **2)** 1. d3 e5 2. d4 exd4 3. Nf3 d3 4. exd3 Nf6. Tricky tempo by white d-pawn. **3)** The knight is fastest. The rook is slowest. Here are the lines: Na8-c7-b5-a7-c8-e7-g6-h4(or f4)-g2-e3xd1 (10 moves), Bb1-a2-g8-h7-g6-e8-b5-a6-c8-h3-g2-f3xd1 (12), Ra3-a2-b2-b5-a5-a7-e7-e8-f8-f4-h4-h2-g2-g1xd1 (14). **4)** Add Bc8 Nd7 Bg5 for 1. Ne5 mate. **5)** 1. Nxe2 2. Nxc3 3. Nxb5 4. Rxc6 5. Bxf5 6. Rc5 mate. The little known *one rank mate*. **6)** 1. Rd8+ White sacrifices

the rook to *deflect* the black rook from the defense of square c4. The tempting 1. Qf7+? Kg8 2. Rd7 loses to 2. ... Qc1+! 3. Kh2 Bxe5+ 4. g3 Qh6. **1. ... Rxd8** Blocking the check by 1. ... Bf8 loses at once to 2. Qxf8 mate. **2. Qc4+ Kh8** (2. ... Kf8 3. Qf7 mate) **3. Nf7+ Kg8 4. Nh6+** Double check! **4. ... Kh8** (4. ... Kf8 5. Qf7 mate) **5. Qg8+! Rxg8**. Now, with the black king surrounded by its own pieces, the white knight delivers mate all by itself. **6. Nf7 mate**. A classic *smothered mate*. **7)** 1. Qxf6+ This sacrifice sets up an

*x-ray attack* on the black queen by deflecting the black g-pawn from the 7th rank. White is lost after 1. Nxf6? bxa3+ or 1. Qd6+? Kf7 2. Ng5+ Kg6!. **1. ... gxf6** Declining the queen is worse. 1. ... Kd7 2. Qf7+! Kc6 (2. ... Kc8 3. Rh8 mate) 3. Qxe6+ Kb5 (3. ... Kc7 4. Qd6+ Kc8 5. Rh8 mate) 4. Rh5+ Ka4 5. Nc5+ Kxa3 (5. ... Kb5 6. a4 mate) 6. Qb3 mate. **2. Rh7+ Kf8 3. Rxb7** White has won a knight. **8)** The white queen is *pinned* by the black bishop. Blocking the diagonal with the obvious 1. e4? loses to 1. ... Rxd3! 2. Rxd3 (or 2. Qxd3) 2. ... Bxe4. The saving move is to *pin the pinner* by **1. Ba6**. Black cannot take the bishop because of 1. ... Bxa6? 2. Qa8 mate. The position is equal after **1. ... Nc6** (or 1. ... Qc6) **2. Bxb7+ Kxb7. 9)** An endgame with king, bishop and rook pawn (a-file or h-file) against a lone king is a draw if the bishop cannot control the *queening square* and the defending king can reach the corner in front of the pawn. After 1. h5? Bxh5! 2. gxh5 Kg7, the game is drawn because White has a *bishop of the wrong color*. The black king cannot be forced away from h8. In that position, with the black king on g7, White would win if they had a dark-square bishop. Black also draws after 1. Bb3? Bf5! 2. Kg3 (2. gxf5 Kxf5) 2. ... Bxg4! or 1. g5+? Ke5! 2. Bb3 Kf4. The way to win is **1. Kg3** which stops Black from giving up their bishop for the g-pawn. The game might continue **1. ... Ke5** (1. ... Bh5!? 2. g5+!) **2. Bf3 Bf7 3. g5 Kf5** (3. ... Be6 4. h5 Kf5 5. Kh4) **4. Bg4+ Kg6 5. Kf4 Be8 6. h5+ Kg7 7. Ke5 Bf7 8. h6+ Kg6 9. Bf5+ Kxg5 10. h7** and the pawn promotes. **10)** **1. d4 d5 2. Kd2 e6 3. Kc3 Ke7 4. Kb4 Qd7 5. Kc5 Kd8 mate**. Black's moves can be played in different orders. The game could also begin 1. d3 e5 or Black could play 4. ... Qe8. ♠

# Player, teacher, friend

## GM Daniel Naroditsky, 1995-2025

BY RICK MASSIMO

**T**HE CHESS WORLD is still having a pretty tough time dealing with the passing of GM Daniel Naroditsky in October. He was 29 years old; we're still waiting to hear from the doctors and the police what exactly happened.

Born in the Bay Area, Naroditsky made his mark in the chess world while he was still a kid. He became a grandmaster at 17, but he did something even more unusual before that: At age 14, he became the youngest known author of a chess book. And what a book!

*Mastering Positional Chess* takes deep dives into the “quiet” kind of positions you get against an opponent who doesn’t fall for easy tactics. Many of the examples were from before Naroditsky was even born, but he explained them with words as well as moves, making the positions ... well, maybe not exactly easy to understand, but you can grasp the thinking of the masters and grandmasters and try to apply it

in your own games.

His friends say that’s the kind of guy Naroditsky was: He loved playing, but he loved writing and explaining as well. That’s probably one of the reasons why after he graduated from college, he could have chased the tournament circuit around the world but instead moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where he was the first grandmaster-in-residence at the Charlotte Chess Center. It’s one of the hubs of American chess now, but the fact that a player as strong as Naroditsky went there really helped put it on the map.

But Naroditsky — his friends called him Danya — was best known for streaming. He’d play marathon blitz sessions and online tournaments, and his trademark was the “Speedrun.” He’d play blitz games and comment on them at the same time — not just trash talk or pointing out the tactical shots, but taking time to explain the many factors in a position and how he was looking at the board. It was like getting a free lesson.

Sometimes he’d take three minutes of a 10-minute game to explain his planning process when he was only on Move 7! And then he’d win! John Hartmann, the editor of *Chess Life Kids* and *Chess Life*, said it was like someone playing basketball as

well as LeBron James can while being miked up and announcing the game as well as Kevin Harlan can.

There was one thing that really bothered Naroditsky: A couple of years ago, a few people started accusing him of cheating in his online games — using an engine on a second screen to pick his moves for him. No one ever came up with any real evidence for this; *Chess.com* says their Fair Play system never noticed any cheating, and a lot of people think his accusers were just jealous. But it ate at him; whenever he talked about it online, you could tell it really bothered him, and he wanted very much to totally clear his name with everyone.

If someone is hassling you this way, or any way, tell an adult: a parent, a teacher, a coach, a tournament director — someone. If you don’t feel good about the answer they give, tell someone else.

The people who knew Naroditsky best say even though he was really highly rated (his US Chess rating got over 2700), he never thought that meant he was special. He could explain a position for all levels of player; during a Speedrun he would point out when he’d made a mistake or his opponent had made a good move.

FM Mike Klein — you

PHOTOS: COURTESY SHORMAN (2005, 2007), MONROI (2012), SLCC (2013, 2015, 2021), WEISS (2017), CCC (2023), LLADA FOR US CHESS (2025)



might know him online as FunMasterMike — knew Naroditsky really well, and he wrote about him for *Chess Life*. Klein wrote that his friend “showed us that talent can be tied to humility. ... That even in a sport so defined by our skill level, there is dignity in all of us who play this game and who attempt to improve and grow.”

Even if you never become a grandmaster, that’s something you can take to the board with you forever. ♦

## READ NARODITSKY'S WORK

Daniel Naroditsky wrote a column on the endgame for *Chess Life* from 2014 to 2020. We’ve compiled them all into one big PDF you can download for free on the US Chess website. (Actually, any issue of *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Kids* that’s more than a year old is available there for free, but we thought it would be helpful to put all Naroditsky’s columns in one place.) The direct link is:

[https://uscf1-nyc1.aodhosting.com/CL-AND-CR-ALL/CL-ALL/naroditsky/The\\_Practical\\_Endgame\\_2014-2020.pdf](https://uscf1-nyc1.aodhosting.com/CL-AND-CR-ALL/CL-ALL/naroditsky/The_Practical_Endgame_2014-2020.pdf)

# THE WAY HE COULD PLAY

ANNOTATIONS BY **MICHAEL AIGNER**

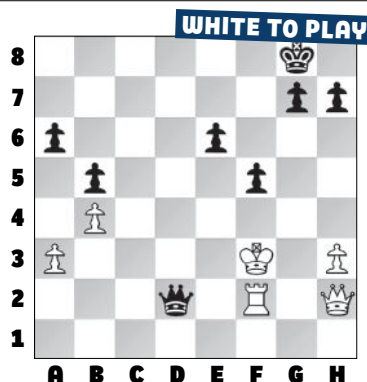
Here are two examples of Naroditsky’s play annotated by one of his first coaches, Michael Aigner.

## HOW'D HE DO THAT?!

Steven Zierk (1508)

Daniel Naroditsky (1715)

Cal North Regionals (4), San Jose, 04.17.2005



Danya often spoke of resilience, meaning fighting extra-hard in bad positions. Here, two future grandmasters squared off in the K-5 State Championship. Black misplayed his winning position

and found himself down a rook for three pawns. Can he swindle a perpetual check?

**40. ... Qd5+ 41. Kg3 Qe5+ 42. Kg2 Qe4+ 43. Kg1 Qe1+ 44. Rf1 Qe3+ 45. Kh1 Qxa3 46. Qe2 Qxh3+**

Now it’s five pawns for the rook! This got interesting.

**47. Kg1 Qg3+ 48. Qg2 Qe3+ 49. Kh1 Qh6+**

Perhaps it was time to bring the black king up: 49. ... Kf7 50. Qb7+ Kf6 51. Qxa6 Qh3+ 52. Kg1 Qg3+ with a draw.

**50. Qh2 Qe3 51. Qd6 Qe4+ 52. Kg1 Qe3+ 53. Rf2 Qe1+ 54. Kg2 Qe4+ 55. Rf3 Qe2+ 56. Kg3**

White is taking his king for a walk.

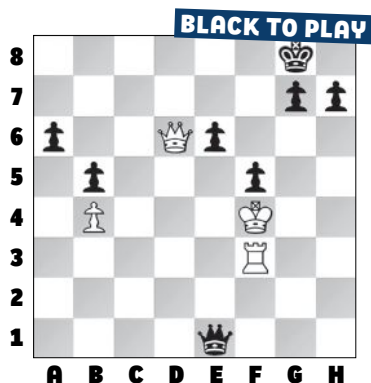
**56. ... Qe1+ 57. Kf4 Qh4+ 58. Ke3 Qe1+ 59. Kf4**



California State Championship, 2007

PHOTO: COURTESY MICHAEL AIGNER

Not 59. Kd4?? Qe4+ winning the rook.



**59. ... Qc1+**

Instead of meekly checking again on h4 for a draw, Black suddenly dreams of winning!

**60. Re3?**

Better was 60. Kg3 Qg1+ 61. Kf4 Qc1+ allowing a draw.

**60. ... g5+**

Uh oh. The white king must protect the rook.

**61. Kf3 Qf1+ 62. Kg3 f4+**

A pawn fork picks off the rook!

**63. Kg4 fxe3 64. Qxe6+ Qf7 65.**

**Qc8+ Kg7 66. Qc3+ Kg6 67. Qc6+ Kg7 68. Qc3+ Kf8 69. Qc8+ Ke7 70. Qc7+ Kf8 71. Qd8+ Qe8 72. Qd6+ Kf7 73. Qd4**

Not 73. Qd5+ Qe6+ trading queens.

**73. ... e2 74. Qf2+ Kg8 75. Qe1 h6 76. Kf5 Qf7+ 77. Kg4 Qf4+ 78. Kh5 Qh4+, White resigned.**

The queen trade is forced, followed by promotion.

## SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B90)

Ivan Bukavshin (2248 FIDE)

Daniel Naroditsky (2124 FIDE)

U12 World Ch (11), Turkey 11.28.2007

Danya needed to win this final-round showdown to take the gold medal at the World Youth Under-12 in Turkey.

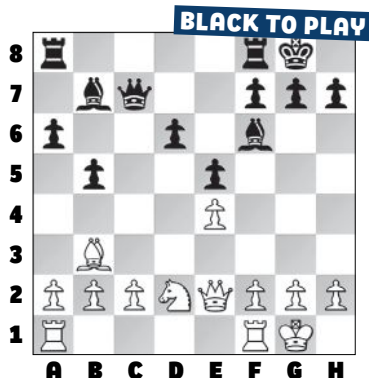
**1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6**

Many talented juniors choose the Najdorf.

**6. Be3 e5 7. Nf3 Be7 8. Bc4 0-0 9. 0-0 Qc7 10. Nd5 Nxd5 11. Bxd5 Nd7 12. Nd2 Nf6 13. Bb3**

The alternative 13. c4 Nxd5 14. exd5 f5 15. f4 Bf6 would leave Black with a pleasant game.

**13. ... b5 14. Bg5 Bb7 15. Bxf6 Bxf6 16. Qe2**



White misses the thematic move

16. a4, gaining space on the queenside.

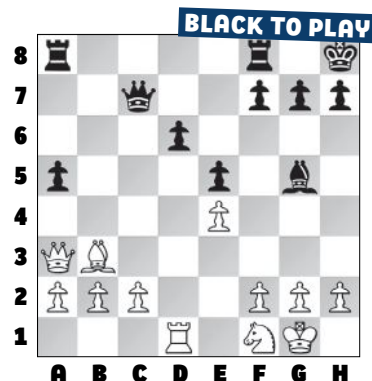
**16. ... a5!**

Now Black seizes the initiative.

**17. Qxb5 Ba6 18. Qa4 Bxf1**

Black has won the Exchange for a pawn, but White could still fight for the center with his superior minor pieces.

**19. Nxf1 Bg5 20. Rd1 Kh8 21. Qa3?**



White overlooks Black's response. Better was 21. c3, bolstering the c-pawn. Play could go 21. ... g6 22. Nd2 f5 23. exf5 gxf5 24. Nc4 Rf6 25. Qb5 and White has more counterplay against Black's center.

**21. ... a4! 22. Bxa4 Qc4 23. b4?**

Unfortunately 23. b3 Qxc2 would have lost the weak pawn. The relatively best idea was to escape the awkward pin along the a-file with 23. Qg3 Qxa4 24. Qxg5 Qxe4 25. Rxd6 f6 26. Qd2 Rxa2. White probably understood that trading minor pieces only increased the strength of Black's modest material advantage, but the game move loses on the spot.

**23. ... Qa6**

White's second mistake costs him the bishop and the game.

**24. Qg3 Bf4, White resigned. ♠**



# TEST YOUR ACTICS

## DANYA'S SPEEDRUNS

GM Daniel "Danya" Naroditsky was one of the best-known chess streamers and commentators. His Speedruns — streams where he would begin with a very low rating and work his way up, often using a specific opening — were particularly popular. They were also very educational.

Danya played more than 800 games during his Speedruns; from them, we have picked out 10 positions for you to solve. Think of this page as your own Speedrun: The positions get harder as you go, and you might have to stretch your brain a bit at the end. Solutions are on page 23. Good luck!

# 1.

BLACK TO PLAY



# 2.

BLACK TO PLAY



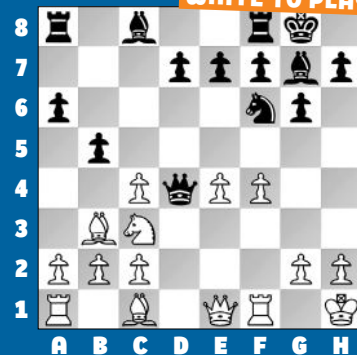
#3.

WHITE TO PLAY



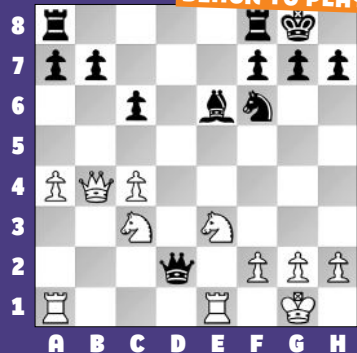
# 4.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 5.

BLACK TO PLAY



# 6.

WHITE TO PLAY



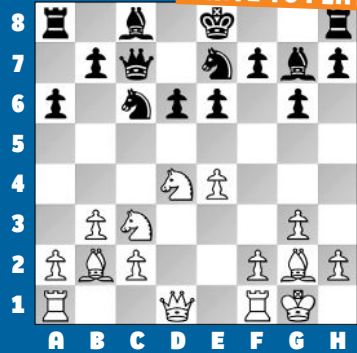
# 7.

WHITE TO PLAY



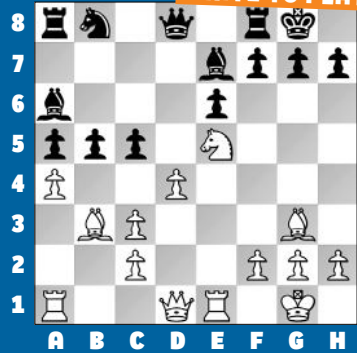
# 8.

WHITE TO PLAY



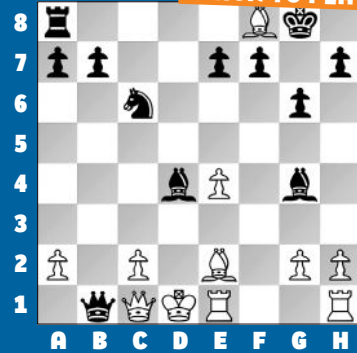
# 9.

WHITE TO PLAY



# 10.

BLACK TO PLAY



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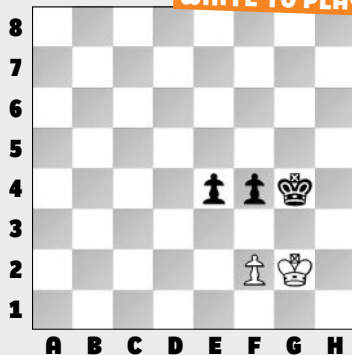
# Igor's DOUBLES

BY IM IGOR KHMELNITSKY

Below are three pairs of positions. Each pair has one key difference between them. Find that difference and figure out why it matters. Use the side of the page for notes, and find the solutions on page 23. Good luck!

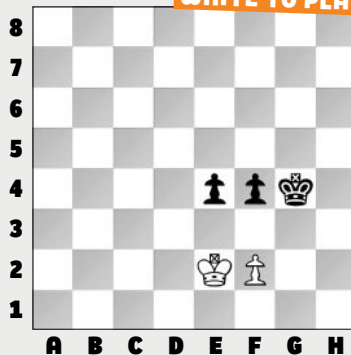
1A

WHITE TO PLAY



1B

WHITE TO PLAY




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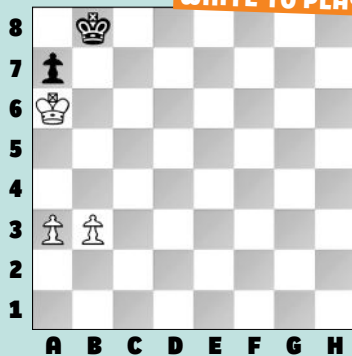
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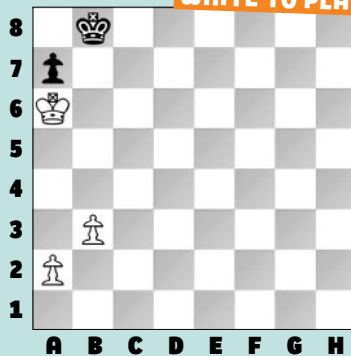
2A

WHITE TO PLAY



2B

WHITE TO PLAY




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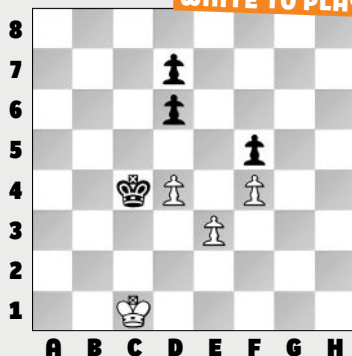
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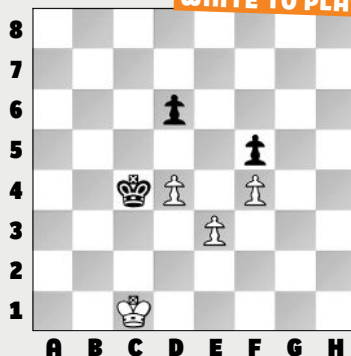
3A

WHITE TO PLAY



3B

WHITE TO PLAY




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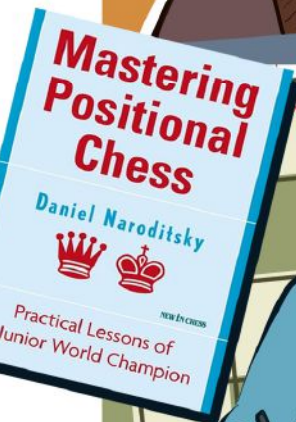
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# CHESS ADVENTURES

WITH GM DANIEL NARODITSKY

Every master starts as a learner, and Daniel was eager to learn from the start.



At 14, he became the youngest chess author.

At 17, he earned his grandmaster title — but he never stopped being a student.

As he grew, he loved teaching as much as he did winning.

Online, he turned lessons into friendship with people around the world.

His calm voice and wise words helped millions see the beauty behind every move.

Many roles. One heart.

No matter what role he played, his favorite move was giving back to the chess community — and even in such a short time, his impact was remarkable.

# 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.

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

## Nationals

### NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### 2025 National K-12 Grade Chess Championships

**DECEMBER 12-14, 2025 — WA** TLA# 53295  
Site: Spokane Convention Center Address: 334 W Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane, WA 99201 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: US Chess Federation • [nationalevents@uschess.org](mailto:nationalevents@uschess.org) • [new.uschess.org/k12-2025-championships](https://new.uschess.org/k12-2025-championships)

### NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### 2026 US Amateur Team South

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
Site: Westgate Lakes Resort & Spa Address: 9500 Turkey Lake Road, Orlando, FL 32819 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Charles W Hatherill • [kingsgambit50@earthlink.net](mailto:kingsgambit50@earthlink.net) • 7027430305 • [thevillageschessclub.org](https://thevillageschessclub.org)

### NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT

#### 2026 World Amateur Team & U.S. Team East

**FEBRUARY 14-16, 2026 — NJ** TLA# 52576  
Site: Parsippany Hilton Address: 1 Hilton Ct., Parsippany, NJ 07054 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: New Jersey Chess Federation • [esdoyle@aol.com](mailto:esdoyle@aol.com) • [njscf.org](https://njscf.org)

### NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### 21st Annual KCF All-Girls National Championships

**APRIL 10-12, 2026 — IL** TLA# 52639  
Site: Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Address: 2233 S Dr Martin Luther King Jr Dr., Chicago, IL 60616 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Renaissance Knights Chess Foundation • [david.heiser@renaissancerknights.org](mailto:david.heiser@renaissancerknights.org) • [allgirls.knights.org](https://allgirls.knights.org)

## Grand Prix

### HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### 2025 Rhode Island State Chess Championship

**DECEMBER 13, 2025 — RI** TLA# 52980  
Site: New England Institute of Technology Address: 1 New England Tech Blvd., East Greenwich, RI 02818 Overall Prize Fund: \$2,000 GP Pts: 30 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Ocean State Chess Association • [frank@oceanstatechess.com](mailto:frank@oceanstatechess.com) • (401) 212-1335 • [oceanstatechess.com](https://oceanstatechess.com)

### HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

**35th Annual North American Open**  
**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
Site: Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) Address: 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S, Las Vegas, NV 89103 Overall Prize Fund: \$130,000 GP Pts: 300 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### 50th Annual Eastern Open!

**DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50760  
Site: Hyatt Regency Crystal City Address: 2799 Richmond Highway, Arlington VA 22202 Overall Prize Fund: \$30,000 GP Pts: 150 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### 14th annual Boston Chess Congress

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA** TLA# 51000  
Site: Hyatt Regency Boston Harbor Address: 101 Harborside Dr, Boston MA 02128 Overall Prize Fund: \$12,000 GP Pts: 80 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### 9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
Site: Embassy Suites by Hilton Address: 10450 Corkscrew Commons Drive, Estero, FL 33928 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,600 GP Pts: 40 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Jon Haskel • [jon@bocachess.com](mailto:jon@bocachess.com) • 561-302-4377 • [bocachess.com](https://bocachess.com)

### HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ

#### Tim Just Winter Open XLII

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
Site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg Address: 1800 E. Golf Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,000 GP Pts: 50 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: King Registration • [info@kingregistration.com](mailto:info@kingregistration.com) • [kingregistration.com/event/timjust26](https://kingregistration.com/event/timjust26)

### GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ

#### CFCC 2026 Winter Open & Scholastic

**JANUARY 16-18, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53026  
Site: Holiday Inn Orlando Lake Buena Vista Address: 13351 State Road 535, Orlando, FL 32821 Overall Prize Fund: \$9,000 GP Pts: 40 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Central Florida Chess Club (CFCC) • [info@centralflchess.org](mailto:info@centralflchess.org) • (407) 312-6237 • [centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-winter-open-and-scholastic-week-end-tournament](https://centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-winter-open-and-scholastic-week-end-tournament)

### HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### 58th annual Liberty Bell Open

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA** TLA# 51826  
Site: Sonesta Hotel Address: 1800 Market St, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall Prize Fund: \$25,000 GP Pts: 150 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### 17th annual Golden State Open

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA** TLA# 51868  
Site: Hilton Concord Hotel Address: 1970 Diamond Blvd., Concord, CA 94520 Overall Prize Fund: \$25,000 GP Pts: 150 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### HERITAGE EVENT • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### Land of the Sky XXXVIII

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — NC** TLA# 50591  
Site: Crowne Plaza Resort Asheville Address: One Resort Dr, Asheville, NC 28806 Overall Prize Fund: \$13,800 GP Pts: 50 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Wilder Wadford • [info@landofthesky.us](mailto:info@landofthesky.us) • [landofthesky.us](https://landofthesky.us)

### AMERICAN CLASSIC • GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### 17th Annual Southwest Class Championships

**FEBRUARY 12-16, 2026 — TX** TLA# 52346  
Site: Westin Dallas Fort Worth Airport Hotel Address: 4545 W John Carpenter Freeway, Irving, TX 75063 Overall Prize Fund: \$35,000 GP Pts: 200 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### GRAND PRIZ • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

#### Texas Action Championship 2026

**FEBRUARY 21, 2026 — TX** TLA# 52786  
Site: The Houston Chess Studio Address: 250 Patton St, Suite H, Houston TX 77009 Overall Prize Fund: \$900 b/50 GP Pts: 6 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Edgar Acosta • [poisonpawnschessclub@gmail.com](mailto:poisonpawnschessclub@gmail.com) • 2818444139 • [poisonpawns.club](https://poisonpawns.club)

### GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### 10th annual George Washington Open

**FEB. 27-MAR. 1, 2026 — VA** TLA# 52348  
Site: Washington Dulles Marriott Hotel Address: 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, VA 20166 Overall Prize Fund: \$17,000 GP Pts: 120 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### 33rd annual Western Class Championships

**MARCH 6-8, 2026 — CA-S** TLA# 52914  
Site: Hilton Orange County Airport Hotel Address: 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 Overall Prize Fund: \$20,000 GP Pts: 120 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ • JUNIOR GRAND PRIZ

#### 30th annual Mid-America Open

**MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO** TLA# 52913  
Site: Clayton Plaza Hotel St. Louis-Clayton Address: 7750 Carondelet Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105 Overall Prize Fund: \$20,000 GP Pts: 120 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### GRAND PRIZ • ENHANCED GRAND PRIZ

#### Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)

**APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ** TLA# 52908  
Site: Tropicana Casino And Resort Hotel Address: 2831 Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NJ 08401 Overall Prize Fund: \$40,000 GP Pts: 200 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chessour.com](https://chessour.com)

### GRAND PRIZ

#### 2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open

**MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY** TLA# 52295  
Site: Bridges Conference Center, Bridges Campus

Address: 13 Lane Lane, Sheridan, WY 82801 Overall Prize Fund: \$9,000 GP Pts: 100 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Brian Kuehl • [admin@sheridan-chess.com](mailto:admin@sheridan-chess.com) • 202-679-6779 • [SheridanChess.com](https://SheridanChess.com)

## Regional

### ALABAMA

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open  
See Grand Prix.

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
2026 US Amateur Team South  
See Nationals.

### ARKANSAS

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
2026 US Amateur Team South  
See Nationals.

### CALIFORNIA

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — CA-N** TLA# 51868  
17th annual Golden State Open  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

**MARCH 6-8, 2026 — CA-S** TLA# 52914  
33rd annual Western Class Championships  
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](https://chessevents.us).

### CONNECTICUT

**OCT. 8, 2025-APR. 26, 2026 — NY** TLA# 51272  
11th Annual New York State Magnus High School and Junior High Chess League (Out of state welcome!)  
See New York.

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open  
See Grand Prix.

### FLORIDA

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open  
See Grand Prix.

**JANUARY 16-18, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53026  
CFCC 2026 Winter Open & Scholastic  
See Grand Prix.

**JANUARY 17, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53027  
CFCC 2026 Winter Open Saturday Night Open Blitz  
Site: Holiday Inn Orlando Lake Buena Vista Address: 13351 State Road 535, Orlando, FL 32821 Overall Prize Fund: \$500 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Central Florida Chess Club (CFCC) • [info@centralflchess.org](mailto:info@centralflchess.org) • (407) 312-6237 • [centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-winter-open-and-scholastic-week-end-tournament](https://centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-winter-open-and-scholastic-week-end-tournament)

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
2026 US Amateur Team South  
See Nationals.

**FEBRUARY 21, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52387  
2026 FSCL South Regional Tournament  
Site: Hialeah Gardens High School Address: 11700

Hialeah Gardens Blvd., Hialeah Gardens, FL 33018  
**Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Florida Scholastic Chess League • [liz@fscchess.org](mailto:liz@fscchess.org) • 786-755-FSCL (3725) • [fscchess.org](http://fscchess.org)

## GEORGIA

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Nationals.

## ILLINOIS

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
 See Grand Prix.

### STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

**MARCH 6-8, 2026 — IL** TLA# 50286  
**2026 Illinois K-8 State Championship**  
**Site:** Hyatt Regency Schaumburg **Address:** 1800 E. Golf Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Glenn Panner • [glenn@chessweekend.com](mailto:glenn@chessweekend.com) • [chessweekend.com](http://chessweekend.com)

## INDIANA

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
 See Grand Prix.

## KENTUCKY

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Nationals.

## LOUISIANA

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Nationals.

## MARYLAND

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

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

## MASSACHUSETTS

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — MA** TLA# 51000  
**14th annual Boston Chess Congress**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

## MICHIGAN

**JANUARY 9-11, 2026 — IL** TLA# 51956  
**Tim Just Winter Open XLII**  
 See Grand Prix.

## MISSISSIPPI

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Nationals.

## MISSOURI

**MARCH 20-22, 2026 — MO** TLA# 52913  
**30th annual Mid-America Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## NEVADA

**DECEMBER 26-30, 2025 — NV** TLA# 50756  
**35th annual North American Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## NEW JERSEY

**OCT. 8, 2025-APR. 26, 2026 — NY** TLA# 51272  
**11th Annual New York State Magnus High School and Junior High Chess League (Out of state welcome!)**  
 See New York.

**DECEMBER 20, 2025 — NJ** TLA# 47761  
**Hamilton Chess Club Quads**  
**Site:** Switlik Park Pavilion **Address:** Fisher Place/Joe Dimaggio Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08610 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Edward Sytnik • [edmendou@aol.com](mailto:edmendou@aol.com) • 6097582326 • [hamiltonchessclub.com](http://hamiltonchessclub.com)

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**APRIL 1-5, 2026 — NJ** TLA# 52908  
**Atlantic City Open (Replaces Continental Chess Open At Foxwoods and Princeton Open, During Easter Weekend)**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## NEW YORK

**OCT. 8, 2025-APR. 26, 2026 — NY** TLA# 51272  
**11th Annual New York State Magnus High School and Junior High Chess League (Out of state welcome!)**  
**Site:** Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School **Address:** 36 West 93rd Street, New York, NY 10025 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$7,050 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Chess Center of New York • [chesscentr@gmail.com](mailto:chesscentr@gmail.com), [director@magnusleague.org](mailto:director@magnusleague.org) • <http://www.magnusleague.org/>

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

### REGIONALS

**JANUARY 3-4, 2026 — NY** TLA# 52439  
**Official Chess 1st Annual New York Metro Area Scholastic Chess Championships**  
**Site:** New York Marriott Marquis, Times Square **Address:** 1535 Broadway, New York, NY 10036 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Official Chess • [info@officialchess.org](mailto:info@officialchess.org) • [officialchess.org/event/2026metros/](http://officialchess.org/event/2026metros/)

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

**FEB. 28-MAR. 1, 2026 — NY** TLA# 52920  
**58th annual New York State High School Championship**  
**Site:** Saratoga Hilton Hotel **Address:** 534 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$2,550 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com)

### HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

**MARCH 7-8, 2026 — NY** TLA# 52923  
**58th annual New York State Scholastic Championships, OPEN TO GRADES K-8 ONLY**  
**Site:** Saratoga Hilton Hotel and 3 other nearby locations **Address:** Hilton Hotel: 534 Broadway; Saratoga

City Center: 522 Broadway; Saratoga Courtyard Marriott: 11 Excelsior Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
**Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com)

## NORTH CAROLINA

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — NC** TLA# 50591  
**Land of the Sky XXXVIII**  
 See Grand Prix.

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Grand Prix.

## PENNSYLVANIA

**North Penn Chess Club**  
 Main & Richardson - St. John's UCC, 500 West Main St., Lansdale, PA 19446. See [www.northpennchessclub.org](http://www.northpennchessclub.org) for schedules & info or 215-699-8418

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**JANUARY 16-19, 2026 — PA** TLA# 51826  
**58th annual Liberty Bell Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## PUERTO RICO

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

## RHODE ISLAND

**DECEMBER 13, 2025 — RI** TLA# 52980  
**2025 Rhode Island State Chess Championship**  
 See Grand Prix.

## SOUTH CAROLINA

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Nationals.

## TENNESSEE

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Nationals.

## TEXAS

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Nationals.

**FEBRUARY 12-16, 2026 — TX** TLA# 52346  
**17th annual Southwest Class Championships**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**FEBRUARY 21, 2026 — TX** TLA# 52786  
**Texas Action Championship 2026**  
 See Grand Prix.

## VIRGINIA

**DECEMBER 26-29, 2025 — VA** TLA# 50760  
**50th annual Eastern Open!**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Nationals.

**FEB. 27-MAR. 1, 2026 — VA** TLA# 52348  
**10th annual George Washington Open**  
 See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

**FEBRUARY 28, 2026 — VA** TLA# 52398  
**George Washington Saturday 11 AM Satellite Octos**  
**Site:** Washington Dulles Marriott Hotel **Address:** 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, VA 20166 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) • [chesstour.com](http://chesstour.com)

### HERITAGE EVENT • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

**MARCH 6-8, 2026 — VA** TLA# 52708  
**2026 Virginia Scholastic & College Chess Championships**  
**Site:** Thomas Jefferson High School for S&T **Address:** 6560 Braddock Rd., Alexandria VA 22312 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** Y **Org:** Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA • [mhoffpauir@aol.com](mailto:mhoffpauir@aol.com) • 757-846-4805 • [vachess.org](http://vachess.org)

## WEST VIRGINIA

**JAN. 30-FEB. 1, 2026 — FL** TLA# 53017  
**2026 US Amateur Team South**  
 See Nationals.

## WISCONSIN

**JANUARY 2-4, 2026 — FL** TLA# 52938  
**9th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

## WYOMING

**MAY 1-3, 2026 — WY** TLA# 52295  
**2026 Wyoming Community Foundation Open**  
 See Grand Prix.

## 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.

Jan 30 – Feb 1, 2026

Asheville NC



**Land of the Sky**

XXXVIII

<https://landofthesky.us>



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## Solutions

### PAGE 16 TEST YOUR TACTICS

(1) **20. ... Nd2** What a fork! (Pin-Square – Naroditsky, *Chess.com*, 2021) (2) **15. ... Bf5** An x-ray attack that wins material after **16. Qh4 Bxb1**; if **17. Ng5 h5** and the black king is safe. (Arshak1958 – Naroditsky, *Chess.com*, 2021) (3) **12. Qa5+ Kb7 13. Nd8 mate.** (Naroditsky – SphairosGG, *Chess.com*, 2021) (4) **13. Be3! Qd6** The only square for the queen, but ... **14. e5** Double attack, winning material. (Naroditsky – phineasgag7, *Chess.com*, 2021) (5) **18. ... Ne4!** Piling on the pin and attacking f2. White loses material. (rad\_cliff – Naroditsky, *Chess.com*, 2021) (6) **26. Nd7!** Stopping the king from escaping. **26. Qxh7+** also wins, but is slower after **26. ... Kf8 27. Nd7+ 26. ... Bc8 27. Qxh7 mate.** (Naroditsky – Noname256473, *Chess.com*, 2024) (7) **27. Qh8+! Nxb8** If **27. ... Ke7 28. Qe8 mate.** **28. Rxh8+ Ke7** Or **28. ... Kg7 29. Rg8 mate. 29. Re8 mate.** A well-calculated mate in three. (Naroditsky – aposbapa, *Chess.com*, 2020) (8) **11. Ndb5!** **11. Ncb5** is similar. **11. ... axb5 12. Nxb5** The point — the queen and the loose bishop are both under attack. **12. ... Qd7** Or **12. ... Qb6 13. Bxg7 Qxb5 14. Bxh8. 13. Bxg7 Rg8 14. Nxd6+** and Black's position is collapsing. (Naroditsky – aquilaungula, *Chess.com*, 2021) (9) **15. Nxf7! Rxf7 16. Bxe6** The pinned rook will be a long-term liability with Black's defenses shattered. **16. ... Bb7 17. Qh5!** Piling on the pin! **17. ... Qf8 18. axb5** Black is already struggling for good moves. (Naroditsky – steka121, *Chess.com*, 2021) (10) **17. ... Be3!!** (**17. ... Bb2!** wins more slowly) Clear-

ing the d-file, but isn't the queen in danger? **18. Bxg4** Nope! If **18. Qxb1 Rd8 mate. 18. ... Qxc1+ 19. Ke2 Qd2+ 20. Kf3 Qf2 mate.** Brilliant. (willforgetthis – Naroditsky, *Chess.com*, 2021)

### PAGE 18 IGOR'S DOUBLES

#### #1 (Easy)

**Difference:** In 1a, the white king is on the g2-square; in 1b, it's on the e2-square.

**Significance:** White has a difficult position, but has an opportunity to trade pawns. After **1. f3+! exf3 2. Kf2**, Black is in *zugzwang* and can't save the f3-pawn. The endgame is a draw after **2. ... Kg5 3. Kxf3 Kf5 4. Ke2**.

Unfortunately for White, Black has a way to deal with this idea in 1b: After **1. f3+ Kg3!** (or **1. ... Kh3**) **2. fxe4 Kg2**, Black is winning. Black also wins after **2. Kf2** (or **2. Kf1**) **2. ... e3+**.

**Conclusion:** White can escape with a draw in 1a; Black is winning in 1b.

#### #2 (Intermediate)

**Difference:** In 2a, the white pawn is on the a3-square; in 2b, it's on the a2 square.

**Significance:** It is impossible for White to drive the black king out of the safety of the corner. With the white king on a6, the black king can shuttle between a8 and b8. If White moves the king, Black can stay the course or put their king on b7.

The only winning plan for White is to advance the pawns and trade on b6, hoping to get a winning position in the resulting king and pawn vs. king endgame. And the only winning position occurs if the black king is on a8 after the trade, because then the king has to go to b8 and b6-b7, Black is lost. In 1a

the black king will be on b8 after the trade is complete, so it can go to a8 gaining the opposition and White can't win. For example: **1. b4 Ka8 2. b5 Kb8 3. a4 Ka8 4. a5 Kb8 5. b6 axb6 6. axb6 Ka8 7. b7+ Kb8 8. Kb6** stalemate.

Lucky for White, one of his pawns is on the second rank in 2b, so White can lose a tempo and, eventually, gain the opposition. The play starts similarly: **1. b4 Ka8 2. b5 Kb8**. Here, however, White can take a few minutes to calculate the possibilities and determine that **3. a3** is the winning move (**3. a4?** would transpose to 1a). After **3. ... Ka8 4. a4 Kb8 5. a5 Ka8 6. b6 axb6 7. axb6 Kb8 7. b7+ Kc7 8. Ka7** White wins.

**Conclusion:** White must settle for a draw in 2a but is winning in 2b.

#### #3 (Intermediate)

**Difference:** In #3a, there's a black pawn on the d7-square; in #3b, there isn't.

**Significance:** Black has an active king here and is threatening ... **Kc4-d3**. However, the king is actually a little too active, and may be in trouble. White can capitalize on Black's king placement with the timely pawn break **1. e4!**

In 3a, Black's own pawns prevent the king from catching the passer

and Black loses due to *zugzwang*. For example, **1. e4! fxe4 2. f5 Kd5 3. Kd2 e3+** (if Black moves their king, White wins with **4. f5**) **4. Kxe3** and the Black king must step away from the f-pawn and will no longer be able to catch it. Also hopeless is **1. ... Kxd4 2. exf5 Kd5 3. Kd2** and Black is in the same predicament as in the previous variation.

Having one less pawn in 3b actually makes Black's life much easier! After **1. e4**, both **1. ... Kxd4** and **1. ... fxe4** lead to draws since the black king will eventually be able to go from d5 to c6 and then to d7 and catch the f-pawn. For example, **1. ... fxe4 2. f5 Kd5 3. Kd2 Kc6 4. f6 Kd7 5. d5 Ke8 6. Ke3 Kf7 7. Kxe4 Kxf6 8. Kf4 Kg6**. White can't simply capitalize on the extra pawn and play **1. Kd2 d5 2. Kc2**, because Black's active king and White's backward pawn on e3 makes the draw easy: **2. ... Kb4 3. Kb2 Kc4**. One word of caution — Black still needs to be accurate with their king. One tricky idea for White is to lose opposition after **1. Kc2!? d5 2. Kd2**. here, Black must show restraint and avoid **2. ... Kb3?? 3. e4!** when White wins. Instead, the simple **2. ... Kb4** maintains the draw.

**Conclusion:** White is winning in 3a, but Black has a draw in 3b.

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