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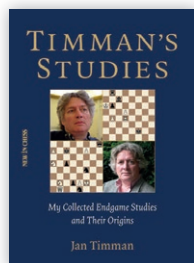
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Max Euwe World Champion!

Paul van der Sterren & Erwin l'Ami

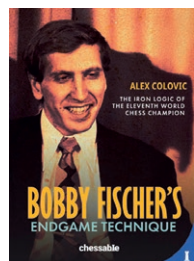
Max Euwe's tenure as World Chess Champion has often been dismissed as a brief intermezzo. This book sets the record straight. Drawing on contemporary sources and modern game analysis, it shows that Euwe truly belonged at the very top – and that for a while he was the strongest player in the world.



Timman's Studies

Jan Timman

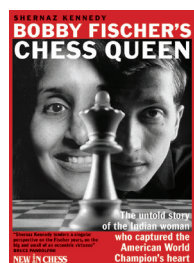
In *Timman's Studies*, Jan Timman presents 160 of his finest endgame compositions, revealing their origins and creative process. A unique glimpse into the mind of a grandmaster who found artistry and inspiration in endgame studies.



Bobby Fischer's Endgame Technique

Alex Colovic

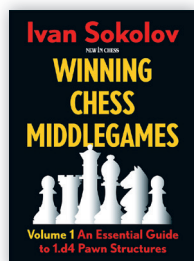
Discover Bobby Fischer's endgame secrets. Alex Colovic reveals how the 11th World Champion applied relentless pressure with engine-like precision. Learn through clear explanations and exercises to improve your chess at every level.



Bobby Fischer's Chess Queen

Shernaz Kennedy

When a young woman from India moves to America and reaches out to Bobby Fischer, it sparks a lifelong bond few ever knew existed. *Bobby Fischer's Chess Queen* is a true story of friendship, resilience, and the hidden heart of a genius. Discover the love that defied distance and fame.



Winning Chess Middlegames – Revised Edition

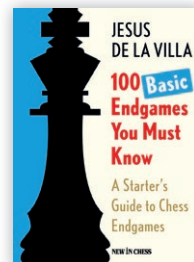
Ivan Sokolov

Ever wondered why grandmasters take only seconds to see what's really going on in a chess position? It's all about structures, as Ivan Sokolov explains in this groundbreaking book. It addresses the often ignored but extremely important topic of pawn structures, divided into four main types: doubled pawns, isolated pawns, hanging pawns and pawn majorities.

100 Basic Endgames You Must Know

Jesus de la Villa

Build an unshakeable endgame foundation and enjoy the confidence that stems from knowing the basics inside out. With clear explanations and a structured, step-by-step approach, these 100 lessons form a complete endgame survival kit.



The Grandmaster

Axel Smith

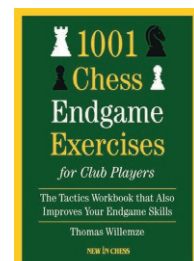
From bestselling chess grandmaster Axel Smith comes *The Grandmaster* – a powerful novel of obsession, ambition, and sacrifice that reveals the human cost of brilliance. Perfect for fans of *The Queen's Gambit*.



1001 Chess Endgame Exercises for Club Players

Thomas Willemze

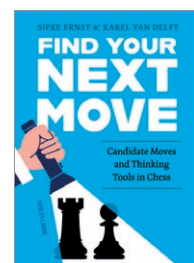
Chess Master Thomas Willemze takes club players beyond the basics with 1001 endgame puzzles. Train advanced tactical patterns, sharpen calculation, and build the intuition and practical skills to win more games in club and tournament play.



Find Your Next Move

Sipke Ernst and Karel van Delft

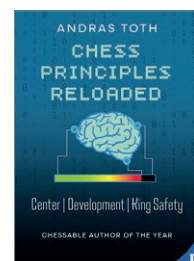
The candidate move is perhaps the most elusive concept in chess theory. It seems straightforward and methodical enough: when considering a move, you make a list of 'candidates' in your mind, compare their merits, and make your choice. But how do you determine what a candidate move is, and how do you proceed from there?



Chess Principles Reloaded

Andras Toth

IM Andras Toth's coaching experience has taught him that a common weakness among ambitious improvers, club players, and even seasoned experts is their failure to fully grasp some basic chess principles or their tendency to neglect them. This book will help make you more confident in your decision-making by reviving the most essential principles of the game.



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The U.S. Senior Women's Team
wins gold and enters a new age.

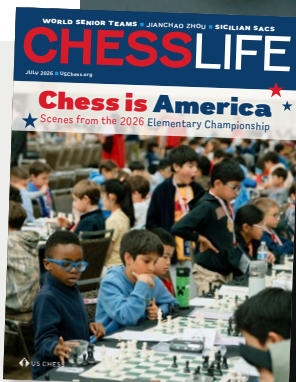
BY JJ LANG



ON THE COVER

This July marks the 250th anniversary of American independence, and one of the things that makes the U.S. unique is its history as a nation of immigrants. We honor this great "melting pot" with a shot of the main playing hall at the 2026 NES, where kids of all creeds and colors came together to enjoy chess.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE KING





CAIRNS CUP

AUGUST 10 - 20

SAINTLOUISCHESSCLUB | YOUTUBE | TWITCH

GM ANNA MUZYCHUK | **GM** HUMPY KONERU | **GM** BIBISARA ASSAUBAYEVA | **IM** DESHMUKH DIVYA

GM ALEXANDRA KOSTENIUK | **IM** CARISSA YIP | **IM** STAVROULA TSOLAKIDOU

IM ALICE LEE | **GM** ZHONGYI TAN | **GM** VAISHALI RAMESHBABU

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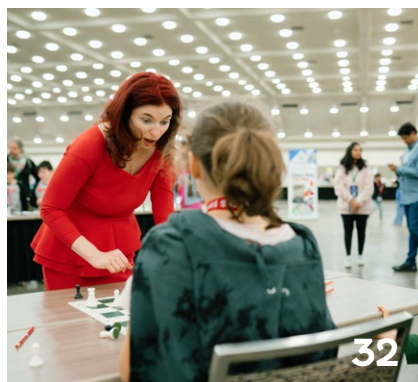
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(Cover Story) is the editor of *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Kids*. He still hopes to drop a new podcast series for US Chess “when things slow down,” whenever that may be. In

his “free time” he is learning to play the piano, including this one at the Baltimore Convention Center.



RICK MASSIMO

(Jianchao Zhou) is the assistant editor for US Chess publications. He's the author of two books; he's

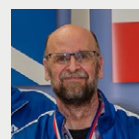
also working on a novel about a fictional ex-Soviet master, and he lives in Washington, D.C.



GM VLADIMIR SIMAGIN

(Exchange Sacrifices) was a Soviet grandmaster, trainer, and author. Three times

champion of Moscow, Simagin worked with leading players of his day, including Kotov and Smyslov, and was widely respected by his peers for his ingenuity and creativity. Also a chess journalist and editor, he penned a number of interesting articles for the Soviet chess press.



IM STUART RACHELS

(Senior Team) is a retired philosophy professor. He capped a glittering career

in junior chess with shared first place in the 1989 U.S. Championship and a mid-table finish at the 1990 Manila Interzonal. His 2020 book *The Best I Saw in Chess* was lauded by the Chess Journalists of America.



JJ LANG

(Women's Senior Team) is the current US Chess Digital editor; if it's on our website, it's usually his doing.

He is also a US Chess-rated expert and a sometimes podcaster — check out the ChessFeels podcast (co-hosted with Julia Rios) for the occasional *bon mot*.



**AUGUST 2-6 | WATCH LIVE
GRANDCHESSTOUR | YOUTUBE | TWITCH**

Fabiano
CARUANA

Vincent
KEYMER

Anish
GIRI

Wesley
SO

Javokhir
SINDAROV

Praggnanandhaa
RAMESHBABU

Jorden
VAN FOREEST

Levon
ARONIAN

Lenier
DOMINGUEZ

Awonder
LIANG



**SINQUEFIELD
CUP**

**AUGUST 10 - 20 | WATCH LIVE
GRANDCHESSTOUR | YOUTUBE | TWITCH**

Fabiano
CARUANA

Vincent
KEYMER

Alireza
FIROUZJA

Anish
GIRI

Wesley
SO

Javokhir
SINDAROV

Praggnanandhaa
RAMESHBABU

Jorden
VAN FOREEST

Maxime
VACHIER-LAGRAVE

Levon
ARONIAN



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**Youngest-Ever USA
Female to Earn the IM Title!**

Alice Lee

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



The Trust is a separate 501(c)(3) organization operating independently of US Chess.

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, AMERICA!

We didn't set out to create a Semiquincentennial-themed issue, but as the pieces fell into place it became clear that we'd done so. I'd like to talk to you about why.

In this issue we meet 2025 Grand Prix winner GM Jianchao Zhou, who told us that America was a land of opportunity for him. We also check in with some of our top youth at the National Elementary Championship. Our scholastic players aren't just the future of chess; they're the future of our country. The lessons they learn at the board will guide them for years to come.

I'm increasingly convinced that chess bears valuable civic lessons. One of the things that I like about chess is that it is communal. You play with someone else, in a room full of folks with whom you might not share anything except a love of the game. It's easy to succumb to tribalism, but no one checks party identity — or any identity — at the chess club door.

Polls show that many Americans are sour on the current state of affairs. But I'm reminded of what Shirley Chisholm wrote in *The Good Fight*: "I love America not for what she is, but what she can become." Chess might be "just a game," but it's a game where people learn to think and plan. It's where they learn to win with dignity and lose with grace. It's where they make new friends and cherish old ones. It's *our* game, and it's important for individuals and the nation. Thanks for being part of it.

Chess Life and Chess Life Kids

Included with your US Chess membership!

All US Chess members have **free access** to digital editions of US Chess' award-winning magazines, **Chess Life** and **Chess Life Kids**.

Printed copies of **Chess Life** or **Chess Life Kids** can be added on to any membership for a nominal fee, currently \$12/year (12 issues) for *Chess Life* and \$6/year (6 issues) for *Chess Life Kids*.



2026 Samford Fellowship Winners Announced

The winners of the 40th Frank P. Samford Jr. Chess Fellowship are:

Grandmasters Andy Woodward, of McKinney, Texas; Abhimanyu Mishra, of English town, New Jersey; Andrew Hong, of Saratoga, California; Brewington Hardaway, of New York City, and Kirk Ghazarian, of Trabuco Canyon, California; International Masters Carissa Yip, of St. Louis; Alice Lee, of North Oaks, Minnesota, and Rose Atwell, of Valencia, California; Woman Grandmaster Zoey Tang, of Portland, Oregon, and FIDE Master Megan Paragua, of New York City.

Created by the late Frank P. Samford Jr., the Samford is the most important chess fellowship in the United States, having awarded more than \$2.5 million to promising young chessplayers since 1987.

The total value of the Fellowships has been increased several times over the years and is now \$70,000 annually. Woodward will receive \$15,000; Yip, \$10,000; Mishra, \$9,000; Hong, \$6,000, and Ghazarian, Hardaway, Lee, Atwell, Tang and Paragua \$5,000 each. Fellows are eligible to receive up to a maximum of \$84,000 in total support. The winners' terms began June 1, 2026.

For more on the Samford, visit www.uschesstrust.org/frank-p-samford-jr-chess-fellowship. ♦

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2026 ANDREW HONG
2026 KIRK GHAZARIAN
2026 BREWINGTON HARDAWAY
2026 CARISSA YIP
2026 ROSE ATWELL
2026 ALICE LEE
2026 ZOXY TANG
2026 MEGAN PARAGUA

NATIONAL CHESSDAY

National Chess Day is Saturday, Oct. 10.
For any event that includes “National Chess Day” in the event title and is held that day, US Chess is offering:

- ▶ A free email blast. Make sure that “National Chess Day” is part of your subject line. On the payment screen, select “No charge.” Also, make sure the demographic you are sending this to is reasonable; generally, this will be local or regional. Do not send to the entire membership.
- ▶ Free rating fees. Use the payment code NCD2026FREE. This is case-sensitive. Be sure to rate the event by 11:59 p.m. Central on Wednesday, Oct. 14, to ensure the waiver of fees.
- ▶ Free online TLA. Online TLAs are always free, of course, not just for National Chess Day. But we want to make sure you are aware of this option too as you promote your event. See “How to Create a TLA” at new.uschess.org/information-new-members.

Here's to a successful National Chess Day for all!

Another way to celebrate National Chess Day is by making a gift to US Chess! What better way to celebrate National Chess Day than by sharing your passion and love for the game? Your donation will help ensure that the chess programs and events that you care so much about will continue for years to come and advance our mission to “empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess.”

To make a tax-deductible gift to US Chess, just click on DONATE at uschess.org, and choose the program or fund that you would like to support. Thank you for the impact you are making on so many lives, and for your commitment to US Chess!

Please direct any questions to John Hartmann at john.hartmann@uschess.org, and feel free to send him your best photos for possible use in *Chess Life*, *Chess Life Kids*, and Chess Life Online. On social media, use the hashtag #NationalChessDay. ♠

2026 Samford Winners: Andy Woodward, Abhimanyu Mishra, Andrew Hong, Kirk Ghazarian, Brewington Hardaway, Alice Lee, Zoey Tang, Megan Paragua, Carissa Yip, Rose Atwell



Move by Move

Breaking down a brilliancy

BY **GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMENEZ**



entered Round 8 of the 2026 Cherry Blossom Classic with a half-point lead on a 6/7 score.

Because Titas was the top seed, my hope for the game was not to win but just to draw and maintain my lead going into the final round.

FRENCH DEFENSE, CLASSICAL VARIATION (C14)

GM Fidel Corrales Jimenez (2558)

GM Titas Stremavicius (2616)

Cherry Blossom Classic (8), Sterling, 05.24.2026

1. e4 e6

I had thought I was going to play with the black pieces, but when I got to the board I was pleasantly surprised to have white. The drawback was that my preparation was zero. I had looked at some of his games in the past, and I didn't remember him playing the French, so I guessed this might have been him trying to surprise me.

2. d4 d5 3. Nc3

Given my surprise, I tried to think about what he might be expecting. I usually play the Advance against the French, so I decided to go back to my old ways and surprise him.

3. ... Nf6

Exchanging pawns with 4. exd5 is a good way to keep a slight edge and drift towards a draw, but I am an aggressive player and aiming to draw isn't in my nature. So I decided that the best way to play for a draw was to play for a win. This was especially true since my opponent was a half-point behind me in the standings, so he needed the win more than I did.

4. Bg5

I thought this was a good choice to keep the initiative and a solid position.

4. ... Be7

A little bit of a surprise — I was expecting 4. ... dxe4.

5. e5

To protect the pawn and gain space.

5. ... Nfd7 6. Bxe7

Solid and good! This trades the bad dark-squared bishop.

I knew 6. h4! was the best move, with the main line being 6. ... Bxg5 7. hxg5 Qxg5 8. Nh3. But why give up a pawn and potentially push too hard in a game where my goal was to avoid excess risk?

6. ... Qxe7 7. f4

Reinforcing the center and keeping an eye on e5. Space is key in many openings, including this one.

7. ... a6

The standard counter for Black is to expand on the queenside with ... b7-b5 and ... c7-c5.

8. Nf3

Natural development, getting ready to develop the bishop and castle.

8. ... c5

A typical break in the center for Black to fight back, but it allows White a stronghold on the d4-square.

9. dxc5

The simplest move, taking control of d4, speeding up development, and avoiding a possible closure of the center and queenside storm with ... c5-c4, ... b7-b5, etc.

9. ... Nc6

Developing first, as the pawn on c5 isn't going anywhere.

10. Bd3

Ready to castle short, keeping some initiative but also staying very solid.

10. ... Nxc5

Sooner or later, Black has to capture this pawn.

11. 0-0

White has completed development, and so has a slight advantage.

11. ... b5

Expanding on the queenside and ready to go ... Bc8-b7.

12. a3

A standard way to complicate Black's intended pawn avalanche with ... b5-b4 and ... a6-a5. We keep Black's pawns on light squares and increase our hold of the dark squares.

12. ... f5

Black fights for the center by trying to plant a knight on e4. We cannot let that happen.

13. exf6 e.p. Qxf6

A key moment in the game. Black is ready to castle and attack the f4-pawn, and I don't want to give them time to do so.

14. Ne5!

I just couldn't resist — I saw this beautiful pawn sacrifice for initiative and I went for it.

14. ... Nxe5

Black is forced to accept the pawn sacrifice.

15. fxe5 Qxe5 16. Qf3

The wrong square. White would have a huge advantage after the immediate 16. Qg4. Fortunately I realized my mistake later and fixed it.

16. ... Kd8

Black steps away from the check on f7 and is ready to manually castle on the queenside.

17. Rae1

Rooks should be on open or semi-open files. This move also gains a tempo.

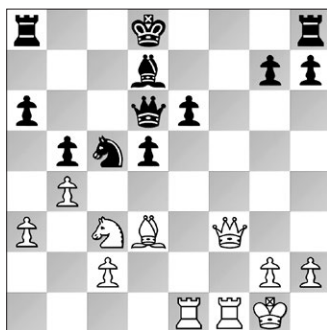
17. ... Qd6

Black's position is still very solid and they are up a pawn, so there is pressure on my end to prove compensation.

18. b4

Enough is enough! Black's centralized knight helps defend the position very well, so I'm trying to eliminate it.

18. ... Bd7

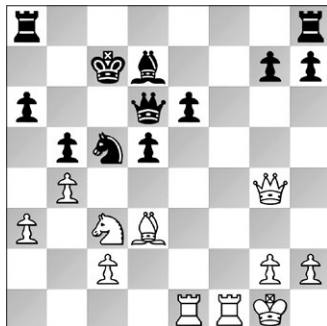


A surprise! If White takes on c5, Black will be able to play ... Qd6xc5+ and regain the material. It was here that I understood that my queen was misplaced on f3!

19. Qg4!!

Targeting g7 and getting the rook on f1 ready to go to the seventh rank.

19. ... Kc7



Black tries to coordinate the rooks at the cost of the g7-pawn.

20. Rf7!

I knew I couldn't take the knight on c5 yet, and I didn't want to take on g7 because it would open the g-file with tempo. The initiative was more important than getting the pawn back.

20. ... Rhf8

Smart! Titus aims to remove my active f7-rook in exchange for returning the pawn, but I want to continue with the attack.

21. Rxc7

Grabbing the pawn and keeping the monster rook on the seventh rank.

21. ... Rf4

The only move. Black needs to speed up coordination as I was ready to take on c5, hit the e6-pawn, and then attack with gusto.

22. Qg3

A useful and practical move. The queen does it all from the g3-square: It protects the g7-rook and it indirectly attacks the king on c7, the queen on d6 and the rook on f4.

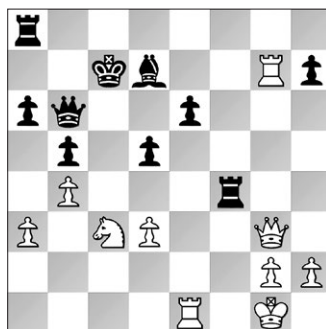
22. ... Nxd3

Finally, Black has to take the bishop on d3.

23. cxd3

Still, this opens the c-file!

23. ... Qb6+



And now Black finds this simple defensive idea, threatening to play ... Qb6-f2 and offer a queen trade to release White's attacking pressure. White would still be better, but I knew my position was too active to have to allow this, so ...

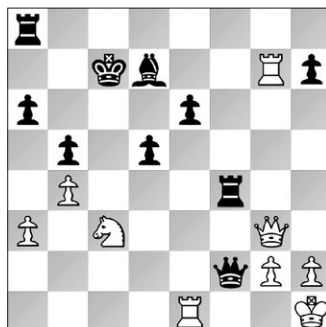
24. d4!!

Incredible! This clears the path for the Qg3-c3 check, which later becomes the final blow to Black's king.

24. ... Qxd4+ 25. Kh1

Stepping aside and now ready for the double attack with 26. Ne2.

25. ... Qf2



Black is up a pawn now, so he tries to get rid

of the queens. And if they do, the endgame is completely winning for Black, but of course I was prepared for this move ahead of time.

25. ... Raf8 doesn't help Black: After 26. Ne2! Qxg7 it almost looks like I blundered, but I have a way out with 27. Qxg7 Rf1+ 28. Rxf1 Rxf1+ 29. Ng1! when the knight comes to the rescue.

26. Nxd5+!!

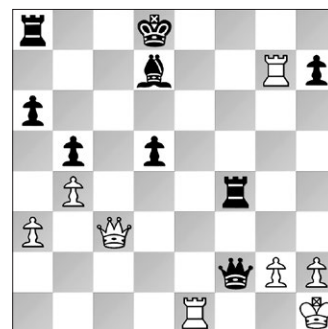
Boom! This was the point of the variation.

26. ... exd5 27. Qc3+

And now we finally see the point of the pawn sacrifice with 24. d4.

Here my opponent looked completely shocked. I imagined him thinking, "What is this? I have no idea what you are doing. Why aren't you just lost?"

27. ... Kd8



I was hoping for this, as I suspected it might have been what my opponent saw and thought was winning for him. But he missed my next move.

Note that 27. ... Kd6? looks like an escape for Black but doesn't work: 28. Qe5+ Kc6 29. Qe6+!! (Oh no my queen!) 29. ... Bxe6 30. Rxe6 mate. I think this was my favorite variation.

27. ... Rc4 was the only move that let Black survive, but the price is a lost endgame: 28. Qe5+ Kb6 29. Rxd7.

28. Re8+

Beautiful geometry.

28. ... Bxe8

Titus generously let me play it out to mate. 28. ... Kxe8 would just have dragged it out: 29. Qe5+ Kd8 (29. ... Kf8 30. Qe7 mate) 30. Qe7+ Kc7 31. Qxd7+ Kb6 32. Qc7 mate.

29. Qc7 mate.

This was the most beautiful game I have ever played, and I'm proud to have calculated well and found some really tricky moves. I hope you enjoyed it, and thanks for letting me tell you its story! ♠

GCT Super Chess Classic Romania

BUCHAREST
MAY 14-23, 2026

1st: GM Vincent Keymer, 6/9. 2nd: GM Fabiano Caruana, 5½. 3rd-4th: GMs Javokhir Sindarov and Wesley So, 5. 5th-9th: GMs Jorden van Foreest, Bogdan-Daniel Deac, Anish Giri, Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu, and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, 4½. 10th: GM Alireza Firouzja, 1.

The early rounds were dominated by the story of GM Alireza Firouzja — after he lost in rounds 2 and 3, it emerged that overnight he'd badly hurt his ankle. He had to postpone his Round 4 game against GM Fabiano Caruana, then played his Round 5 game against Sindarov from a bed with his foot elevated. After just holding a draw, Firouzja lost his postponed game against Caruana and finally withdrew. Because he'd played more than half the games, his remaining opponents, including Keymer, were all awarded default wins.

Keymer was defeated by Sindarov in Round 7, who also beat GM Jorden van Foreest in Round 8. In the final round Keymer beat Van Foreest whilst Caruana could only draw against MVL.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, RAGOZIN VARIATION (D38)

GM Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu (2733)
GM Fabiano Caruana (2788)
GCT Super Classic (7), Bucharest, 05.21.2026

1. d4 d5 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. Nc3 Bb4 5. Qa4+ Nc6 6. Bd2 dxc4 7. e3 0-0 8. Bxc4 Bd6 9. Qc2 e5 10. dxe5 Nxe5 11. Nxe5 Bxe5 12. 0-0-0 Qe7 13. Bd3 Rd8 14. e4 c5 15. f4 Bxc3 16. Bxc3



16. ... Bg4 17. Rde1 c4 18. Bxc4 Rac8 19. Bb3 b5 20. Kb1 a5 21. h3 Be6 22. Bxe6 Qxe6 23. f5 Qc6 24. e5 Nd5 25. Qe2 Nf4 26. Qg4 b4 27. Qxf4 bxc3 28. Rc1 Rb8 29. b3 a4 30. b4 a3 31. e6 Qc5 32. Ka1 Rxb4 33. Qg3 c2, White resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B51)

GM Vincent Keymer (2759)
GM Jorden van Foreest (2735)
GCT Super Classic (9), Bucharest, 05.23.2026

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bb5+ Nd7 4. Ba4 Ngf6 5. 0-0 a6 6. c4 g6 7. Nc3 Bg7 8. h3 0-0 9. d3 Ne5 10. Nxe5 dxe5 11. a3 Nh5 12. Be3 Nf4 13. Qd2 Ne6 14. b4 Nd4 15. bxc5



15. ... Qa5 16. Nd5 Qxa4 17. Bxd4 exd4 18. Nb6 Qc6 19. Nxa8 Qxc5 20. Qb4 Qh5 21. Qxe7 Bxh3 22. gxh3 Qxh3 23. Qg5 Rxa8 24. Qg3 Qd7 25. a4 Rc8 26. f4 Rc5 27. e5 Qf5 28. Kg2 Qd7 29. Qh3 Qc7 30. Qf3 Bf8 31. Qe4 Qd7 32. Qf3 Rc6 33. Ra2 Rb6 34. Rff2 a5 35. f5 gxf5 36. Qxf5 Qe8 37. Rae2 Bh6 38. e6 fxe6 39. Qg4+ Qg6 40. Qxg6+ hxg6 41. Rb2 Rb4 42. Rxb4 axb4 43. c5 Bf8 44. c6 bxc6 45. a5 Bc5 46. Rb2, Black resigned.



Firouzja channeled his inner Tony Miles and tried to play on.



WFM Anastasiia Hnatyshyn



GM Vincent Keymer

Niemann – Nepomniachtchi Match

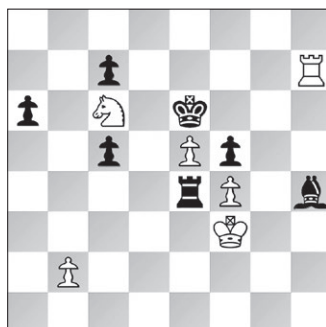
American GM Hans Niemann drew an eight-game match with Ian Nepomniachtchi held in Belgrade (May 29-June 1). Nepomniachtchi won the first game after Niemann went wrong in a tricky endgame, and had chances in games 2 and 7 to extend his lead. Niemann was better out of the opening in the final game and ground out the win he needed. They played two games a day with a time control of G/60+30.

RUY LOPEZ, BERLIN DEFENSE (C67)

GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (2729)
GM Hans Niemann (2728)
Match (1), Belgrade, 05.29.2026

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. 0-0 Nxe4 5. d4 Nd6 6. Bxc6 dxc6 7. dxe5 Nf5 8. Qxd8+ Kxd8 9. Nc3 Ke8 10. Bf4 h5 11. Ne4 Be7 12. Rfe1 Be6 13. Nfg5 Nd4 14. Nxe6 Nxe6 15. Be3 Rd8 16. f4 Nd4 17. Bxd4 Rxd4 18. Kf2 Rh6 19. c3 Rd5 20. Rad1 Kd7 21. c4 Rxd1 22. Rxd1+ Ke6 23. Kf3 g6 24. Ng3 Rh8 25. Ne2 f5 26. Nd4+ Kf7 27. Nb3 Ke6 28. Rd3 Rb8 29. a3 c5 30. Na5 g5 31. g3 g4+ 32. Kg2 h4 33. h3 a6 34. a4 gxh3+ 35. Kxh3 hxg3 36. Rxg3 Rh8+ 37. Kg2 Rd8 38. Nxb7 Rd2+ 39. Kf3 Rd3+ 40. Kf2 Rd4 41. Ke3 Rxc4 42. Rg6+ Kd5 43. Rg7 Ke6 44. Na5 Rxa4 45. Nc6 Bh4 46. Rh7 Re4+

47. Kf3



47. ... Be1? 48. Rxc7 a5 49. Nd8+ Kd5 50. Rd7+ Kc4 51. Nb7 Rd4 52. e6 Bh4 53. Nd6+ Kb3 54. Rb7+ Rb4 55. Rh7 Bf6 56. Rf7 Bd8 57. Nb7 Bh4 58. Nxc5+ Kc4 59. Rxf5 Rxb2 60. Ne4 a4 61. Kg4 Be7 62. Rf7 Bb4 63. e7 Bxe7 64. Rxe7 a3 65. Ra7 a2 66. f5 Kb3 67. f6 Rc2 68. f7 Rc8 69. Nc3 Rc7 70. Nxa2 Rxa7 71. Nc1+ Kc2 72. f8=Q Ra4+ 73. Kf3 Kxc1 74. Qc8+ Kb2 75. Ke3 Rb4 76. Kd3 Kb3 77. Qc6 Ka3 78. Qd5 Kb2 79. Qe5+ Kb3 80. Qa5, Black resigned.

26th European Women's Championship

BATUMI | MAY 25-JUNE 6, 2026

1st: WFM Anastasiia Hnatyshyn, 9/11. **2nd-4th:** IMs Sabrina Vega Gutierrez, Olga Badelka, and Nurgul Salimova, 8½. **5th-6th:** GM Anna Ushenina and IM Klaudia Kulon, 8. 165 players.

The 15-year-old Ukrainian WFM Hnatyshyn was rated 2207 and was the 76th seed. Hnatyshyn won her first six games, including against Vega Gutierrez in Round 3. Her Round 10 win against IM Eline Roebers gave her the lead going into the final round, and when she held a draw against IM Klaudia Kulon, Hnatyshyn gained the WGM title, an IM norm, more than 200 rating points, and one of the 10 places in the Women's World Cup.

Hnatyshyn's victory comes just after her fellow Ukrainian, 17-year-old Roman Dehtiarov, won the Open championship in April.

FRENCH DEFENSE, STEINITZ VARIATION (C11)

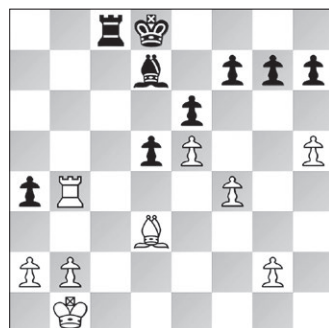
WFM Anastasiia Hnatyshyn (2207)
IM Eline Roebers (2389)
European Women's Ch (10), Batumi, 06.04.2026

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. f4 c5 6. Nf3 Nc6 7. Be3 a6 8. Ne2 Qb6 9. Qc1 cxd4 10. Nxd4 Nxd4 11. Bxd4 Bc5 12. c3 Nb8 13. Qd2 Nc6 14. Bxc5 Qxc5 15. 0-0-0 b5 16. Kb1 Rb8 17. Nd4 a5 18. h4 Bd7 19. h5 b4 20. Rh3 bxc3 21. Rxc3 Qxd4 22. Qxd4



GM Sam Sevia
(center)

Nxd4 23. Rxd4 Ke7 24. Rc5 a4 25. Rc7 Rxc8
26. Rxc8 Rxc8 27. Rb4 Kd8 28. Bd3



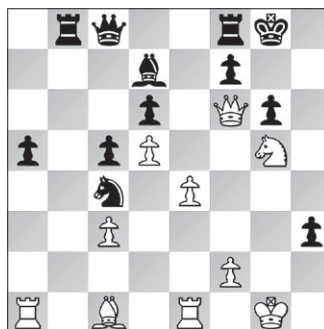
28. ... g6? 29. h6 Kc7 30. Kc2 Ra8 31. a3
Rf8 32. Kd2 Bc6 33. Ke3 Ra8 34. g4 Bd7
35. Kf3 Kd8 36. Kg3 Be8 37. Kh4 Ra7 38.
Kg5 Ke7 39. f5 exf5 40. gxf5 Rc7 41. Rb8
gxf5 42. Bxf5 Rc1 43. Bxh7 Rg1+ 44. Kf4
Rf1+ 45. Ke3 f6 46. Bd3 Re1+ 47. Kd2 Rxe5
48. h7 Rh5 49. Rxe8+, Black resigned.

BENONI DEFENSE (A64)

WGM Aleksandra Dimitrijevic (2059)
Mane Gharibyan (1776)
European Women's Ch (7), Batumi,
06.01.2026

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. g3 c5 4. d5 exd5 5.
cxd5 d6 6. Nc3 g6 7. Bg2 Bg7 8. Nf3 0-0
9. 0-0 Re8 10. Nd2 Nbd7 11. a4 a6 12. h3
Nh5 13. Kh2 Rb8 14. a5 b5 15. axb6 Nxb6
16. e4 a5 17. Re1 Bd7 18. Bf1 Bd4 19. Kg2
Qc8 20. g4 Nf4+ 21. Kg1 h5 22. Nf3 Bxc3
23. bxc3 Nxb3+ 24. Bxb3 h5 25. Ng5

gxh3 26. Qf3 Rf8?! 27. Qf6 Nc4?



28. Ne6! fxe6 29. Qxg6+ Kh8 30. Qh5+ Kg8
31. Bh6 Rf7 32. Kh1! e5 33. Rg1+ Bg4 34.
Rxc4+ Qxc4 35. Qxc4+ Kh8 36. Rg1 h2 37.
Bg7+ Kg8 38. Bf6+, Black resigned.

Stepan Avagyan Memorial

JERMUK | MAY 29-JUNE
6, 2026

1st-2nd: GMs Samuel Sevia and
Vladislav Artemiev, 5½/9. **3rd-**
4th: GMs Sarin Nihal and Ray Robson,
5. **5th-6th:** GMs Shant Sargsyan and
Aram Hakobyan, 4½. **7th-8th:** GMs
Robert Hovhannisyan and Alexander
Donchenko, 4. **9th-10th:** GMs Aravindh
Chithambaram and Szymon Gumularz,
3½. 10 players.

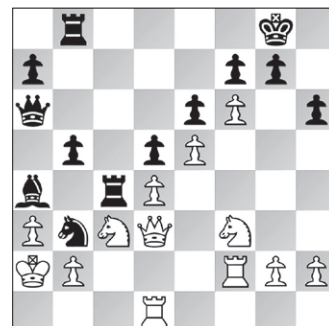
American GM Sam Sevia has played this
memorial event regularly, winning the fourth
edition in 2023. He won this year on tie-
break over GM Vladislav Artemiev after both
scored two wins and seven draws.

Sevia's wins came in Round 7 against
fellow American GM Ray Robson and in
the final round against last year's winner,
GM Aravindh Chithambaram, who wrongly
avoided a draw by perpetual check and was
immediately lost. Robson finished his first
Stepan Avagyan Memorial appearance in
shared third place.

FRENCH DEFENSE, STEINITZ VARIATION (C11)

GM Samuel Sevia (2696)
GM Aravindh Chithambaram (2692)
Stepan Avagyan Memorial (9), Jermuk,
06.06.2026

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5.
f4 c5 6. Nf3 Nc6 7. Be3 Be7 8. Bd3 Qb6 9.
dxc5 Bxc5 10. Bxc5 Nxc5 11. Qd2 Bd7 12.
0-0-0 Rc8 13. Kb1 Nb4 14. Qe3 Qa5 15.
a3 Nbx3 16. cxd3 Nb3 17. Ka2 Ba4 18.
d4 b5 19. f5 Qa6 20. Qd3 Rc4 21. Rhf1 h6
22. Rf2 0-0 23. f6 Rb8



24. fxg7 b4 25. Ng5 hxg5 26. Qh3 Kxg7 27.
Rdf1 Nc1+ 28. Ka1 Be8?



Turning down the draw by repetition is a
bad mistake.

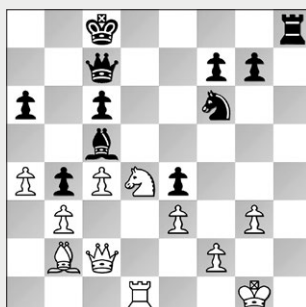
29. Rf6 Kf8 30. Nxd5, Black resigned. ♠

Practical TASKS

BY **IM ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO** AND **MATAN PRILLELTENSKY**

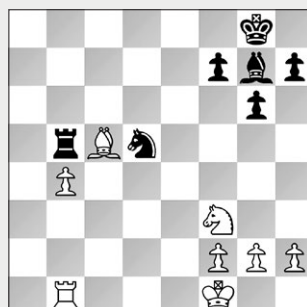
▶ **RAY CHENG'S PRACTICAL CHESS EXERCISES** IS ONE OF THE MOST UNDERRATED BOOKS for amateur players, and with his blessing trainers Matan Prilleltensky and IM Robert Shlyakhtenko are bringing his concept to *Chess Life*. (Look for a book from them with these kinds of problems in the near future.) No hints, no one to tell you you're winning. Just find the best move, whether it's a shot, a defense, or a finesse. Just like at the board. Solutions are on page 63. ♠

POSITION 1.



BLACK TO MOVE

POSITION 2.



WHITE TO MOVE

POSITION 3.



BLACK TO MOVE

POSITION 4.



WHITE TO MOVE

POSITION 5.



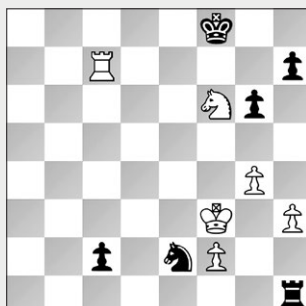
WHITE TO MOVE

POSITION 6.



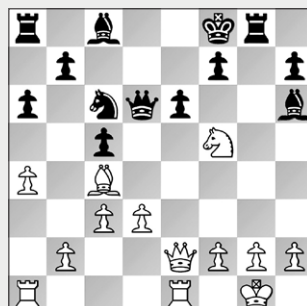
WHITE TO MOVE

POSITION 7.



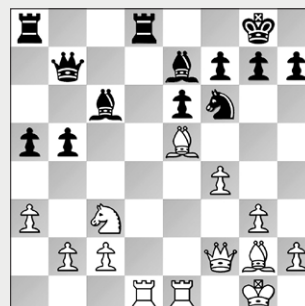
WHITE TO MOVE

POSITION 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

POSITION 9.



BLACK TO MOVE

All of the Above?

Sport, science, art – the under-the-radar annotator debate

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

T

HERE'S AN AGE-OLD DEBATE about whether chess is a sport, a science, or an art. Hardly anyone argues about it nowadays, but you can find hints of it when a master annotates a game.

When they tell you “This was a must-win game” or “White had 40 seconds left,” they’re in chess-is-a-sport annotation mode: providing context, the way a TV sportscaster tries to make a game more interesting to viewers. The unstated message is, “Here’s another reason why this is exciting.”

But when an annotator writes, “This innovation improves on 17. ... Rac8,” they’re in chess-is-science mode. They’re like a researcher who explains why his lab experiment breaks new ground.

And if the annotator analyzes a move that would have had sparkling consequences, they’re in chess-is-art mode: “Let me show you the beauty hidden in this game” is the message.

Annotators may use all three modes in a single game, without thinking about it. But often the remnants of the debate prompt them to take sides. For example, on the issue of long variations.

A century ago, World Champion Jose Capablanca would say very little about alternative moves in a game he was annotating. “Better is Nc6” was a typical Capa comment.

His great successor, Alexander Alekhine, wrote longer. But even in his “immortal” game (versus Yefim Bogolyubov, Hastings 1922), Alekhine gave no variations that ran beyond four moves, even when commenting on his two queen sacrifices.

Today, science-mode annotators say computer-backed 10-move lines show we are closer than ever to the truth of chess.

But art-mode annotators have always looked at them suspiciously. “Long analysis, wrong analysis,” sniffed GM Bent Larsen. His

world-class colleague David Bronstein didn’t dispute the accuracy of long variations, but he attacked them in a different way: “Variations are interesting if they reveal the beauty of chess,” he said. But long variations “are useless if they cross the boundary of what an individual can reasonably calculate.”

Yet Bronstein was willing to cross that boundary.

KING’S INDIAN DEFENSE, SÄMISCH VARIATION (E80)

GM Boris Spassky

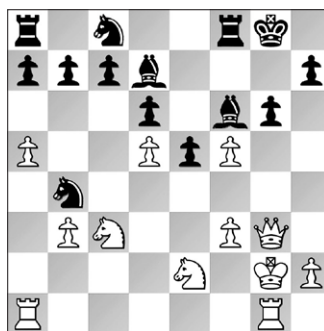
GM David Bronstein

Candidates Tournament, Amsterdam, 1956

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. f3 e5 6. d5 Nh5 7. Be3 Na6 8. Qd2 Qh4+ 9. g3 Nxc3

In his memoir, *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*, Bronstein gave this coming queen sacrifice as “9. ... Nxc3!!!.”

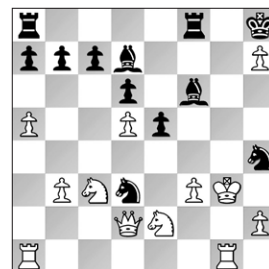
10. Qf2 Nxf1! 11. Qxh4 Nxe3 12. Kf2 Nxc4 13. b3 Nb6 14. Nge2 f5 15. Rhg1 O-O 16. Kg2 Bd7 17. a4 Bf6 18. Qg3 Nb4 19. a5 Nc8 20. exf5?



Bronstein lost slowly after 20. ... Bxf5. In his book he analyzed 20. ... Ne7!, so that the

knight joins the attack after 21. fxg6 Nf5!.

Bronstein claimed (correctly) that Black had “at least a draw.” He analyzed 22. gxh7+ Kh8 23. Qe1 Nd3 and couldn’t resist adding 24. Qd2 Nh4+ 25. Kg3.



POSITION AFTER 25. Kg3

Now 25. ... Rg8+!! 26. hxcg8=Q+ Rxcg8+ delivers mate after 27. Qg5 Rxcg5+! 28. Kxh4 Rg2+ 29. Kh5 Be8+ 30. Kh6 Rxh2.

Did Bronstein see all of this at Move 20? Of course not. But he was willing to indulge in a long variation in the service of a pretty finish.

Bronstein was a chess-is-art absolutist. He argued that chess should not have titles like “champion.” They made chess seem like it’s a sport, he said in 1995. He also accused Siegbert Tarrasch, the most famous annotator of his era, of chess-is-science propaganda by signing his annotations “Dr. Tarrasch.” This made it seem his notes were clinically tested, he said. (Tarrasch was a physician.)

In Tarrasch’s day, and much later, masters would comment on their own moves in an impersonal way: for example, “Black initially intended 22. ... Bc3,” not “I initially intended 22. ... Bc3.”

Today’s masters slip into sport-mode when they use the first-person pronoun to give readers an insider’s view, e.g., “I was still in my opening preparation.”

Each mode has drawbacks. In science-mode, an annotator risks bewildering

QUIZ FOR JULY

▶ HOW MUCH CAN A MASTER see in a speed game? Quite a lot, as the most recent World Rapid Championship showed.

In some of these positions from the massive Doha tournament, players spotted patterns that allowed three- and four-move mating combinations. In others they saw much further.

Your task is to find the line of play that gets you quickest to a winning advantage. It won't necessarily lead to mate but to the win of a decisive amount of material, like an extra minor piece. For solutions see page 63.

PROBLEM 1

GM Alexander Grischuk
FM Augustin Droin



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2

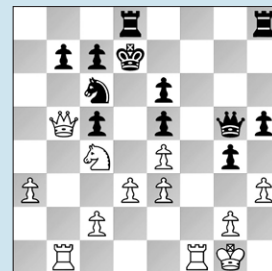
GM Rinat Jumabayev
GM Mihail Nikitenko



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3

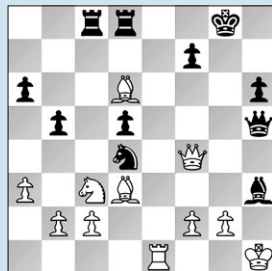
GM Javokhir Sindarov
GM Alan Pichot



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4

GM Aram Hakobyan
GM Arjun Erigaisi



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5

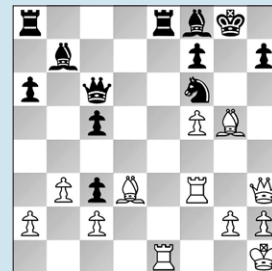
GM Guja Mitrabha
Tarik Anwar



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6

GM Eiz Gurel
GM Maxim Matlakov



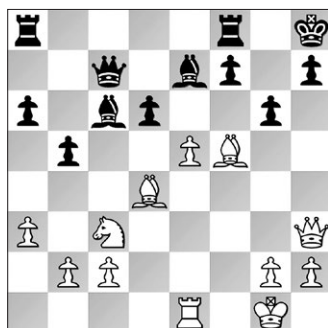
WHITE TO MOVE

readers with 15-move computer-checked variations. In sport-mode, they risk making the clock, the tournament situation, or other factors sound more important than the position. In art-mode, they risk losing credibility if they make the unsound appear profound.

Mikhail Tal sought risky, artistic moves in his games and looked for art in his notes. Here's an example.

AN ARTIST OF NOTE

GM Mikhail Tal
GM Fridrik Olafsson
Bled, 1961



BLACK TO MOVE

Tal had sacrificed the Exchange and now threatened 21. exd6+. As so often happened during his glory years, he was rewarded: Black allowed 20. ... Kg8 21. e6!. Olafsson resigned soon after 21. ... Bg5 22. exf7+ Rxf7 23. Bxg6!.

In his memoirs Tal pointed out the stronger 20. ... Qd8!.

Like an objective annotator, he showed how he would have been losing after 21. e6+ Bf6 or 21. Qh6 dxe5.

But Tal found a dazzling alternative after 21. exd6+ Bf6 22. Qh4 Kg7:



POSITION AFTER 22. ... Kg7

He wanted to play 23. Re7. But this would fail to 23. ... Qxd6.

However, Tal gave "23. Bd7!!" This threatens to win with either 24. Bxc6 or 24. Re7.

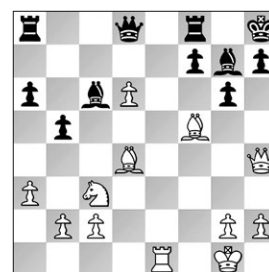
He permitted himself a long variation

to explain further: Black loses after 23. ... Bxd7 24. Nd5 Bxd4 25. Qxd4+ Kh6 26. Re4, he claimed.

"Unfortunately," he added, Black's 20th move "left all these variations behind the scenes."

This is classic art-mode messaging: Black's error not only lost the game; it cheated fans of a spectacular finish, Tal was saying.

But it was a fantasy finish. Well after the game it was discovered that 21. exd6+ Bf6 22. Qh4 would have been refuted by 22. ... Bg7!.



POSITION AFTER 22. ... Bg7

Tal knew how often a flashy move could turn out to be faulty. Earlier in the book he refuted one of them and added, in science-mode:

"Chess would be too beautiful a game if such moves were to work." ♦

Women's Wins

The Women's Candidates was full of instructive chess.

BY IM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN

G

RANDMASTER VAISHALI
Rameshbabu's path to victory in the Women's Candidates Tournament wasn't smooth

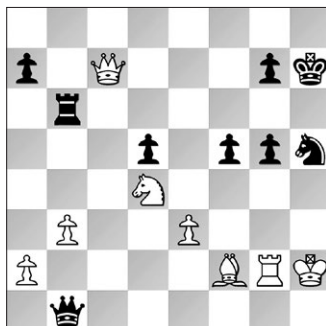
sailing like GM Javokhir Sindarov's in the Open. The 24-year-old climbed to the top after a slow start, and there was a possibility of a six-way tie going into the final round before Vaishali won with a clutch victory over GM Kateryna Lagno. As with the Open Section, the Women's Candidates had many memorable and instructive moments.

Always a Resource

The Round 3 game between GM Tan Zhongyi and Lagno features one of the prettiest checkmate constructions. Earlier in the game, Lagno had a great position but blundered in time trouble, only to make a comeback in a spectacular manner.

COUNTERPLAY

GM Tan Zhongyi (2535)
GM Kateryna Lagno (2508)
Women's Candidates Tournament (3),
Cyprus, 03.31.2026



WHITE TO MOVE

41. Qf7?!

The curse of the 41st move strikes again! White had better paths to victory but wanted to force a queen trade. After 41. Rxf5 Rh6 42. Nxf5 the rook is under attack, so there is no funny business with discovered checks. If 42. ... Qb2 the simple 43. Kg2 (not 43. Nxf6 Qxf2+ with a perpetual after 44. Rg2 Qh4+ 45. Kg1 Qe1+) forces Black to either drop another piece or trade queens with 43. ... Qf6 44. Qe7!.

41. ... Rf6!

The knight does not have to move! Tan's time usage strongly suggests that she missed this resource. Not 41. ... Nf6 42. Rxf5 Ng4+ 43. Kg3 with checkmate on g7 to follow.

42. Qxd5??

This harmless-looking move walks into Black's idea. 42. Qxh5+ was necessary, even though the game starts all over again after 42. ... Rh6 43. Rxf5 when Black has the nuance 43. ... g6! hanging onto the f5-pawn. Now comes 44. Qxh6+ Kxh6 45. Rg2 and White will try to convert here, but White's exposed king and Black's passed g-pawn give Lagno good counterplay.

42. ... Nf4!! 43. exf4 Rh6+ 44. Kg3 Qd3+ 45. Qf3 g4!!

What a beauty! The white king is surrounded by his own pieces and is the reason why he's getting checkmated. White has no choice but to give up the queen and, soon, the game.

46. Rh2

Not 46. Qxd3 Rh3 mate.

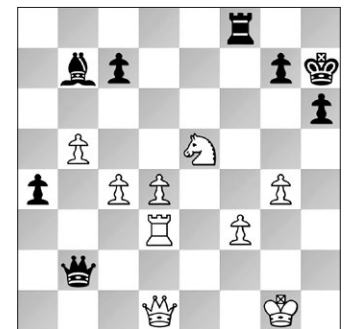
46. ... gxf3 47. Rxh6+ gxh6 48. Nxf3 a6 49. Bd4 Qc2 50. b4 Qxa2 51. Bc3 Qb3 52. Be1 Kg6 53. Kg2 Kf7 54. Nh4 Qe3, White resigned.

Pull the Brakes

Going into the penultimate round, GM Zhu Jiner was tied with Vaishali, half a point ahead of the field, and was certainly feeling the pressure. Against GM Aleksandra Goryachkina, Zhu was up a pawn but Goryachkina had compensation. Zhu declined a repetition and got the advantage, but as she tried to press, things started to get out of hand.

NO DRAW? NO PROBLEM

GM Zhu Jiner (2578)
GM Aleksandra Goryachkina (2534)
Women's Candidates Tournament (13),
Cyprus, 04.14.2026



WHITE TO MOVE

42. Rd2 Qb4 43. g5?!

Attacking the king makes sense, as White has the strong knight on e5, but the pawn on g4 was both helping to keep her king safe and restricting Black's light-squared bishop. White could have kept her big advantage with 43. Ra2 Ra8 44. Kf2 followed by maneuvering the queen to d3 and a3.

43. ... Bc8

Goryachkina brings back some reinforce-

ments. It is not easy to move a piece back almost immediately — Black had just played 41. ... Bb7, the bishop's first move of the game! — but it now has the f5-square.

44. Qc2+ Bf5 45. g6+ Kg8 46. Qa2

Zhu has set up some kind of mating net around the black king. Unfortunately, that came at the cost of weakening her own king, so most of White's advantage is now gone. Things have really gotten out of control for White and, given the tournament situation, a draw would have been a good result.

46. ... Be6 47. Kf2 a3 48. Re2 Qe7 49. Re4 Qb4 50. Nc6 Qd6 51. Re5??

This was the second time in the game Zhu refused a repetition. After 51. Ne5 Black would most likely have repeated with 51. ... Qb4 and the game would have ended in a draw. But she could have also kept the game going with other moves, such as 51. ... Ra8.

51. ... Kh8

A simple move, and suddenly White is lost. It is surprising that the evaluation of the position could change so drastically, but besides the extra pawn, White doesn't really have anything good going: The king is weak; the a3-pawn is dangerous; the g6-pawn will soon be hanging, and her pieces are uncoordinated.

52. Ke3 Bd7!

Black is threatening to win a pawn on g6 or c6.

53. Re4 Bxc6 54. bxc6 Qg3

White's position is now collapsing.

55. Qf2 Qxg6 56. d5 Qf6 57. Qe2 a2, White resigned.

If 58. Qxa2 Qc3+ 59. Ke2 Qxf3+ and the rook falls next move.



WHITE TO MOVE

14. Ng3

The knight is headed to f5, which is pretty typical for these structures.

14. ... g6 15. e4 Nf6

Black would like to play 15. ... Nf4, but the knight isn't stable there: After 16. Nxe5 Qxe5 17. Rxf4 Qxb2 18. Raf1 all White's pieces have turned towards the kingside. Black has to find quick counterplay with 18. ... a5! but it's understandable why this looks scary.

16. Kh1 Nd7

To bring the knight to d4 via c5 and e6.

17. Ne2

In turn, Zhu's knight is headed to d5; with the pawn on g6, it was not useful on g3.

17. ... Rad8 18. Rf2 Nc5 19. Nc3 Nb4!

Stopping its counterpart from going to d5 and also eyeing the c2-pawn.

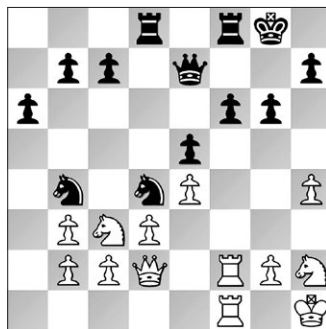
20. Raf1 f6 21. h4 Ne6

Finally, the knight is headed to d4.

22. Nh2?

Too slow, allowing Black to get what she wants. 22. h5 is a more logical continuation.

22. ... Nd4!



Finally, the knight gets to its desired square. Now the c2 pawn is under attack and Black is ready to play ... f6-f5, attacking the h4 pawn.

23. Qd1 f5 24. g3?

This weakens the kingside even more. 24. h5 really should have been played. Muzychuk strikes immediately.

24. ... f4! 25. gxf4 Rxf4! 26. h5

Black already has a winning advantage after 26. Rxf4 exf4 27. Rxf4 Ndx2 — the d3-pawn will fall soon and the black king is the safer of the two.

26. ... Ndx2!

The knight dance comes to an end. Muzychuk assesses the resulting position correctly.

27. Rxc2 Rxf1+ 28. Nxf1 Nxc2 29. Qxc2 Qh4+ 30. Nh2 Rf8 31. Nd1 Qxh5

Black has two pawns and a rook for the two knights. Materially, that's already quite good. With the queens on the board, we shouldn't forget about the weakness of the white king.

32. Ne3 c6?

A big mistake that lets go of the advantage. Black can try causing more problems for the white pieces with 32. ... Qh3 33. Qe2 (33. Nd5?? Rf1 mate) 33. ... Qg3 34. Nef1 Qf2, when White has to either trade queens and lose the queenside pawns or play with the tied-down knights. After 35. Qg4 Kg7 36. Ng3 Qe1+ 37. Kg2 Rf2+ 38. Kh3 Qe3 it's very hard for White to move or to avoid more material loss.

33. Qc4+ Kg7 34. Neg4?

White returns the favor. Black cannot afford to lose the e5-pawn as it will likely lead to a perpetual, so White should play 34. Qc5! keeping an eye on it. Then after 34. ... Qg5 35. Nc4 Qc1+ 36. Kg2 Qc2+ 37. Kh1! it turns out that the white king is perfectly safe, as the black rook has no entry squares. Play could continue 37. ... h5 38. Qxe5+ Kh6 when the position is quite complicated, but it does still look a lot scarier for White, whose king looks like it's on the brink of getting checkmated.

34. ... Qh3!

This time Muzychuk doesn't let go of the advantage and brings the full point home.

35. Qc1 Qxd3 36. Qe1 Rf4 37. Nf2 Qg3, White resigned.

She will lose even more material: 38. Nhg4 Rxf4 and the rook cannot be captured back due to the pin. At the end, the rook overpowered the two knights.

Next month I will cover some must-know endings that were featured in the Candidates. ♠

The Knight Dance

GM Anna Muzychuk, a last-minute replacement for GM Humpy Koneru, shined in the first half of the tournament. Her Round 6 game again Zhu featured a really nice dynamic among the four knights.

KNIGHTS OUT

GM Zhu Jiner (2578)

GM Anna Muzychuk (2522)

Women's Candidates Tournament (6), Cyprus, 04.04.2026

Traveling Man

Hitting the road with GM Jianchao Zhou

BY RICK MASSIMO



Want to win the Grand Prix? It takes more than you might think.

GM Jianchao Zhou has won it three years in a row, and he's got a sizable lead in this year's standings.

And as long as he's in the running, it's going to take a lot to unseat him.

You have to be a great chessplayer, of course: Zhou has been a full-time player since age 14 in his native China, a grandmaster at 17. He moved to Medford, Mass., in 2019, and in addition to his tournament successes he recently broke the record for most FIDE-rated games in a row without a loss — 158 games in 26 tournaments from May 2025 to February of this year.

But the Grand Prix isn't about one tournament, or even a few: Tournament organizers offer Grand Prix points to high finishers based on the size of the prize fund, and it's a year-long contest. So Zhou criss-crosses the country in search of points virtually every weekend.

That means a lot of red-eye flights, a lot of bus rides (some of which are cancelled), and a lot of games against amateur players looking for an upset, Zhou says through his partner, Jocelyn, who acts as an interpreter. Even though organizers sometimes give him conditions to play, it still means a lot of hotel rooms, sometimes an hour's walk away if the room rates are too expensive.

It also means seeing a lot of American chess from a grass-roots perspective. Zhou's

first choice is the larger tournaments where the most points are, such as the World Open, National Open, and U.S. Masters. "I don't care [whether] I can win," he says; "I prefer the strongest tournament. ... I like to play with the strong, strong players, to play some interesting games."

But sometimes he's in Nebraska for the 50th anniversary celebration of the 1975 U.S. Open, Georgia for the Phillip O'Neal Taylor State Championship, Wyoming for the Community Foundation Open, or Rhode Island for the Lou Giarrusso Memorial, which didn't even offer any Grand Prix points. ("He was a very inspiring and passionate person," Zhou says of the 1300-player who passed away in 2024 at the age of 101.)

'He goes'

"As long as the schedule permits, and he's available, he goes to the tournament," Jocelyn says. "He is very adaptive to the environment. During traveling time, he does a lot of the most difficult puzzles, and if he feels tired, he just takes naps on the airplane — just a couple hours' sleep will recharge him. He has a passion for chess, so a difficulty, like the logistics, is not a big issue for him."

Zhou coaches a few strong young players in Massachusetts, as well as some online coaching, and is sometimes engaged to give a formal lecture or do analysis at tournaments he's playing in. But there are a lot of informal conversations too.

While there are generally at least a few GMs in the field at any tournament he plays in, he often ends up playing untitled players, even non-masters, and says it's a mutual learning experience — he learns a lot about openings (especially obscure ones) and is usually quick to go over a game with an opponent. "It benefits the whole community."

First prize for the Grand Prix is \$5,000.

That's a nice pot of money, but it wouldn't seem worth chasing all over the country for. But Zhou says he wins 70 to 80% of the tournaments he plays in, and the first prize is important, given all the costs of his travel. First place can generally cover costs, while anything less could present a problem. "That kind of motivates you — you're gonna go for the best."

'Very difficult'

Zhou moved to Massachusetts when he came to the States to join up with a chess-playing friend, and says the U.S. and China are roughly equal in chess strength as far as the top 10 or so. But with so many more strong open tournaments in the States, "the entire level is stronger here," Jocelyn says. "Everyone has more chances."

His own training consists mostly of deep analysis of puzzles and other positions. Jocelyn says he will play a 10-round blitz tournament at the Boylston Chess Club, come home at midnight, and stay up until 3 a.m. analyzing the games.

Zhou often returns to the same tournaments and communities year after year, and he's heartened when he sees local club and tournament scenes getting stronger — the establishment and growth of the Charlotte Chess Center, the Space Coast Chess Foundation, and the Ocean State Chess Association are three examples he cited.

"In Ohio," he says, "the parents, the kids, they're very committed, and they put a lot of effort on the chess, growing the chess community."

An opponent looking to knock Zhou off has a tough task, but his own advice is to find a new move in the opening and catch him unaware in an unclear position with a lot of pieces still on the board.

"Want to beat me? Very difficult."



PHOTO: DAVID LLADA



In the Arena

FIVE GAMES ANNOTATED BY
GM JIANCHAO ZHOU

ENGLISH OPENING, SYMMETRICAL VARIATION (A39)

GM Emilio Cordova (2598)
GM Jianchao Zhou (2652)
National Open (9), Las Vegas,
06.08.2025

1. Nf3 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2 c5 5.
d4 cxd4 6. Nxd4 0-0 7. 0-0 Nc6 8. Nc3 Qa5
9. e3 d6 10. Nxc6
10. Bd2!? is another idea.

10. ... bxc6 11. Bxc6 Rb8 12. Bg2 Be6
13. Nd5



13. ... Bxd5!!

If 13. ... Nxd5 14. cxd5 Bd7 15. Bd2 Qa6
16. Bc3 Bxc3 17. bxc3 Rb2 18. Qd4 Rxa2
19. Rxa2 Qxa2 20. c4 a5 White can play
for c4-c5.

14. cxd5 Nd7 15. Bd2 Qa6 16. Bc3 Bxc3 17.
bxc3 Rb2 18. a4 Nc5 19. Qg4 Qd3 20. Qd4
Rfb8 21. e4 Qxd4 22. cxd4 Nb3 23. Ra3 a5!
24. Rd1 Rb4 25. Bf1 Nxd4 26. Bb5 Nxb5!
27. axb5 Rxe4 28. Rxa5 Ree2 29. Rf1 Kg7
30. h4 Kf6 31. Kg2 Red2 32. b6 Rxb6 33.
g4 h6 34. Ra7 Rxd5 35. Re1 Re5 36. Rxe5
dxe5 37. Ra8 Rb4 38. Kg3 h5 39. gxh5
gxh5 40. Rh8 Rg4+ 41. Kh3 Rf4 42. Kg3
Kg7 43. Re8

If 43. Rxh5 f6 and Black wins.

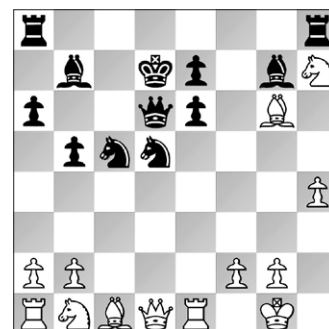
43. ... Rg4+ 44. Kh3 e6 45. f3 Ra4 46. Rb8
e4 47. fxe4 Rxe4, White resigned.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, MOSCOW VARIATION (B51)

FM Daniel Tabuenca
Mendataurigoitia (2390)
GM Jianchao Zhou (2654)
Cardinal Open (5), Akron, 02.01.2026

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. Bb5+ Nd7 4. 0-0 a6 5.
Bd3 Ngf6 6. c3 b5 7. Re1 Bb7 8. Bc2 g6 9.
d4 cxd4 10. cxd4 Bg7 11. e5 dxe5 12. dxe5

Nd5 13. e6 fxe6 14. Ng5 Nc5 15. Nxh7 Qd6
16. Bxg6+ Kd7 17. h4??



White needed to play 17. Nd2 or 17. g3.

17. ... Rxh7!! 18. Bxh7 Rh8 19. Qc2 Bd4!!

I spent about 20 minutes to find this only
move.

20. Rd1 Nb4 21. Rxd4 Qxd4 22. Qd2 Nbd3
23. Bxd3 Nxd3 24. Qe3 Qxh4 25. Qxd3+ Bd5
26. Kf1 Qh1+ 27. Ke2 Qxc1 28. Qd2 Qc4+
29. Qd3 Qg4+ 30. Kd2 Rh1, White resigned.

SLAV DEFENSE (D10)

GM Jianchao Zhou (2584)
GM Matthew J. Wadsworth (2522)
Reykjavik Open (9), 03.31.2026

JIANCHAO ZHOU - YEAR BY YEAR

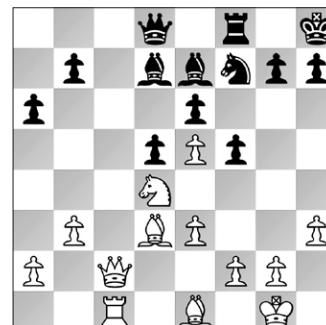
1988	Born in China
2004	Wins the Board 2 gold medal at the U16 Olympiad
2005	Places second in the Chinese championship; wins a team silver at the World Team Championship
2006	Becomes a grandmaster after the Aeroflot Open
2008	Wins team and board gold at the Asian Team Championship
2009	Breaks into the world top 100
2010	Reaches peak FIDE rating (2669) and world rank (67th)
2011	Wins the Chinese Rapid Championship in a playoff over future World Champion Ding Liren
2019	Moves to the U.S., settling in Medford, Massachusetts
2022	Ties for first at the Chicago Open, World Open and Foxwoods Open
2023	Wins the US Chess Grand Prix
2024	Ties for first at the U.S. Open; switches his federation to the U.S.; wins the US Chess Grand Prix
2025	Wins the US Chess Grand Prix
2025/ 2026	Plays 158 FIDE-rated classical games without a loss

Zhou has played in 24 states!

1. Nf3 d5 2. e3 Nf6 3. c4 c6 4. Nc3 Bf5 5. cxd5 cxd5 6. Qb3 Bc8 7. d4 e6 8. Bd3 Nc6 9. 0-0 Be7 10. Bd2 0-0 11. Rfc1 Bd7 12. h3! White cannot play 12. Qxb7 due to 12. ... Rb8 13. Qa6 Nb4! winning.

12. ... Be8 13. Be1 Na5 14. Qd1 Nc4 15. Qe2 Nd6 16. Rc2 Rc8 17. Rac1 a6 18. Ne5 Nd7 19. b3 f5? White is only a little better after 19. ... g6.

20. Qd1 Kh8 21. Ne2 Rxc2 22. Qxc2 Nxe5 23. dxe5 Nf7 24. Nd4 Bd7



25. Bxf5! exf5 26. e6 Nd6 27. exd7 Qxd7 28. Qc7 Rd8 29. Qxd7 Rxd7 30. Rc5! g6 31. Rxd5 Rc7 32. Bb4 Ne4 33. Bxe7 Rxe7 34. Ne2! Rc7 35. f3 Rc2 36. Nd4 Rc1+ 37. Kh2 Nf6 38. Rd6 Kg7 39. Ne6+ Kf7 40. Ng5+ Kg7 41. Rb6 Rc2 42. Rxb7+ Kg8 43. Ne6, Black resigned.

TWO KNIGHTS TANGO (A53)

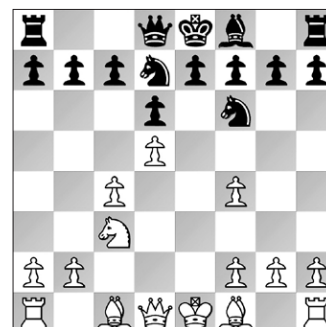
GM Jianchao Zhou (2683)

Thomas Petenyi (2332)

Chicago Open (1), 05.22.2026

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 Nc6 3. Nf3 d6?!
3. ... e6 is interesting here.

4. Nc3 Bg4 5. d5 Bxf3 6. exf3 Ne5 7. f4 Ned7



8. g4!! g6 9. h4 h6 10. Rh3

10. Bh3 might be better, but the game continuation is also strong.

10. ... Bg7 11. g5 hxg5 12. hxg5 Nh5 13. f5 c6 14. fxg6 fxg6 15. Qc2 Nf8 16. dxc6 bxc6 17. Bd2 Qd7 18. 0-0-0 0-0-0 19. c5 Ne6 20. Rh4 Nxc5 21. Qxg6 Rdg8 22. Qc2 Be5 23. Be3 Ne6 24. Ba6+ Kd8 25. Rb4 Ke8 26. Rb7

Perhaps 26. Rb8+! Nd8 27. Nd5! improves.

26. ... Qd8 27. Qb3 d5 28. Qa4 Bxc3 29. Qxc6+ Kf7 30. Rxd5 Qe8 31. Qxc3 Nhg7 32. Qf6 mate.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, CLASSICAL VARIATION (E32)

GM Jianchao Zhou (2683)

IM Sam Schmackel (2551)

Chicago Open (3), 05.23.2026

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Qc2 d6 5. Nf3 c5?!

I like 5. ... 0-0; now if 6. e3 Black can play 6. ... e5!. The position in the game is a little better for White.

6. dxc5 Bxc5 7. a3 d5 8. cxd5 exd5 9. Bg5 Be6 10. Bxf6

10. e4! is strong.

10. ... gxf6 11. e3 Nc6 12. Rd1 Bb6



13. Bc4! d4 14. Bxe6 fxe6 15. exd4 Ne7 16. 0-0 Nd5 17. Rfe1 Kf7 18. Ne4 Qc7 19. Nc5 19. Neg5+ is good too, but my move in the game works as well.

19. ... Rae8 20. b4 Re7 21. Re4 Qc8 22. g3 Qc6 23. Rde1 Bxc5 24. dxc5 e5 25. Qc4 b5 26. Qb3 Ke8 27. Nh4 Qe6 28. Qf3 Rd7 29. Nf5 Rg8 30. Nd6+ Rxd6 31. cxd6 Kd7 32. Rh4 Rg7 33. Qd3, Black resigned. ♠

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ЛАДЬЯ берет КОНЯ Rook Takes Knight

BY GM VLADIMIR SIMAGIN TRANSLATED BY DOUGLAS GRIFFIN

T

HE EXCHANGE SACRIFICE ON c3 is a thematic shot in Sicilian structures, but it wasn't always so. One of the key moments in its theory was a 1959 article by GM Vladimir Simagin, reprinted here in a fine translation by Douglas Griffin.

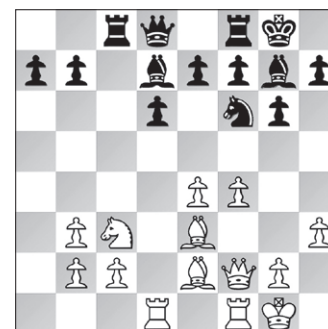
"Rook Takes Knight" was an important article in the history of chess theory, helping to codify the place of this sacrifice in the Sicilian toolbox. "Simagin," writes GM Mihail Marin, "played an essential part in the process of developing the abstract theory behind

this thematic operation." And the famed trainer IM Mark Dvoretsky devoted an entire *ChessCafe* column to "Simagin's Exchange Sacrifices," concluding that "the depths of Simagin's ideas and the rich creativity of his play stood out, even compared to players who achieved considerably greater success."

Originally published in *Shakhmaty v SSSR* (1959:4), "Ladya берет konya" — or "Rook Takes Knight" — systematically analyzes the Exchange sacrifice on c3 with reference to the position of the white king and White's kingside pawns. Simagin scrutinized games by the top players of the day along with a few of his own efforts, and today's readers will learn as much about this key sacrificial idea as they did nearly 70 years ago. Interested readers may also want to check out IM Tatev Abrahamyan's January 2024 and June 2026 columns for contemporary takes on the Exchange sacrifice on c3.

"Rook Takes Knight" is the second piece by Simagin to appear in our pages. The first, "Attack With Opposite-Colored Bishops," can be found in the April 2023 issue. Here, as there, we have left Simagin's analysis largely as it was, with the exception of a few important corrections given as red endnotes. — John Hartmann

The Exchange sacrifice on the c3-square, examined in this article, has become typical for many variations of the Sicilian Defense. In the *Chess Yearbook* (volume 1) the end of the game Spielmann – Cherta (1934) was published.



BLACK TO MOVE

Before telling the reader about the events in this game, the commentator wrote: "Black unexpectedly forced a draw in an amusing way." There followed **15. ... Rxc3! 16. bxc3 Nxe4 17. Qh4 Bf6 18. Qe1 Bxc3 19. Qh4**, and a draw.

Running ahead, we can say that such a sacrifice has now become a typical stratagem, with the help of which Black achieves serious positional benefits. In the above example Black was wrong to force the draw. Instead of 18. ... Bxc3 he should play 18. ... Nxc3 and on 19. Rd2 comes 19. ... d5 with an overwhelming advantage. Of course, matters do not always unfold so successfully as in this game. All the same, sacrifices on a similar theme have many times permitted Black to seize the initiative, and to then achieve a decisive advantage.

We shall try to systematize the assembled material, dividing it into three groups depending on White's plan of play.

- I. After castling short White carries out a pawn attack on the kingside.
- II. White castles short.
- III. White castles long.





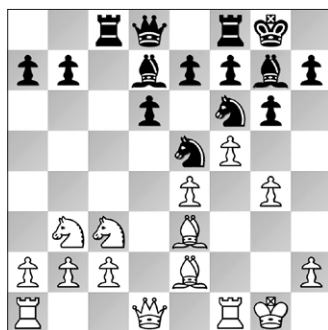
BLACK TO MOVE

This position was encountered in the game Padevsky – Botvinnik, Moscow, 1956. The young Bulgarian master had undertaken a bold attack on the kingside. Let us examine the resultant situation in more detail. It is Black's turn to move. The retreat of the f6-knight would have led to the strengthening of White's attack. He could continue the pawn storm by means of f4-f5, h2-h4-h5 and g5-g6. Rich combinational possibilities are also opened up in connection with a bishop sacrifice on e6. However, the precipitous pawn attack has led to the creation of weaknesses in White's position. The e4-pawn is weak, and with its elimination prospects of a decisive counter-attack along the ... a8-h1 diagonal are opened up for Black. These considerations speak of the necessity of a decisive counterblow.

13. ... Rxc3! 14. bxc3?

Regarding this move, Botvinnik notes: "Now White loses the important central pawn; the diagonal h1-a8 is opened and his position becomes critical. Unquestionably, better was 14. gxf6 Rxe3 15. Qxe3 Bxf6, although here too the insecure position of the white king makes Black's game preferable, since his two bishops are very dangerous." After 14. ... Nxe4 Black obtained an irresistible attack against White's weakened kingside.

In the game Ravinsky – Simagin, Moscow, 1958, a different variation of the Sicilian Defense was played.

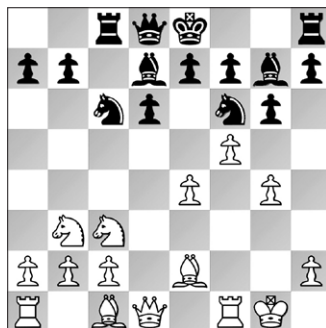


WHITE TO MOVE

White continued 13. Bd4?, and after 13. ... Rxc3! 14. bxc3 Nxe4 15. Nd2 Nxd2 16. Qxd2 Black had successfully destroyed White's center, taking a firm hold of the initiative. Instead of 13. Bd4 White was obliged to play 13. Nd2 (Nei – Ragozin, 20th USSR Championship Semifinal, 1952), reinforcing the central e4-pawn. (1)

If in the position in the previous diagram the white knight is repositioned from b3 to d4, there arises a situation from one of the games played in the All-Union youth training camp in 1957. The difference in the positioning of the knight is highly significant. There followed 12. g5 Rxc3! 13. bxc3 Nxe4 14. fxe6 hxe6, and White had to go over to a prospectless defense.

The following example is taken from the game Gusev – Auerbakh, Moscow, 1946.



BLACK TO MOVE

Black continued 11. ... Ne5?, and after 12. g5! Ng8 (12. ... Rxc3 is impossible on account of 13. gxf6) 13. Nd5 f6 (2) 14. Be3 White obtained the advantage. Meanwhile, instead of 11. ... Ne5? Black should have played 11. ... gxf5!. For instance, 12. gxf5 Ne5! 13. Bg5 Rxc3 14. Bxf6 Rc8 15. Bxg7 Rg8 16. f6 exf6 17. Qxd6 Rg7+ 18. Kh1 Bc6! (3),



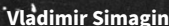
Mikhail Botvinnik



Issac Boleslavsky



Tigran Petrosian



or 12. exf5 Qb6+ 13. Rf2 Ne5! 14. g5 Rxc3
15. gxf6 Bxf6 16. bxc3 Rg8+ 17. Kf1 Bxf5, in
both cases with a very strong attack for the
sacrificed material.

The position after 1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 g6 6. Be2 Bg7 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Nb3 Nc6 9. Be3 Be6 10. f4 Na5 11. f5 Bc4 12. Nxa5 Bxe2 13. Qxe2 Qxa5 14. g4 is examined by seemingly all of the opening handbooks on the Sicilian Defense.



The move **14. ... Rac8** for Black is considered to be one of the most unpromising continuations in view of **15. g5 Nd7 16. Nd5**. But as it seems to me, it is this very continuation which most simply of all solves the problems of the defense. The point is that here too at Black's disposition there is the sacrifice of interest to us: **15. ... Rxc3 16. gxf6 Rxe3 17. Qxe3 Bxf6**, and Black, at the cost of an insignificant material loss, achieves serious positional gain. The few training games played with this variation have shown that White can count on no more than equalizing the chances.

We conclude:

(a) The Exchange sacrifice is as a rule accompanied by the destruction of White's center or the seizing of the initiative, while this opens up the possibility of an effective counterattack on the position of the white king, weakened by the pawn advance. Consequently White, when beginning the pawn storm on the kingside, should forestall the strategic sacrifice on c3.

(b) Since in the above variations of the Sicilian Defense the struggle takes on a sharp character, while the positions are asymmetrical, a minor piece and a pawn usually represents a sufficient material equivalent for the sacrificed Exchange — of course, on condition that the initiative is securely held.

Response	Percentage
Appropriate	60%
Excessive	30%
Insufficient	10%

In the examples in this category Black is faced with a more difficult task, since the

position of the white king has not been weakened by the advance of the pawns.



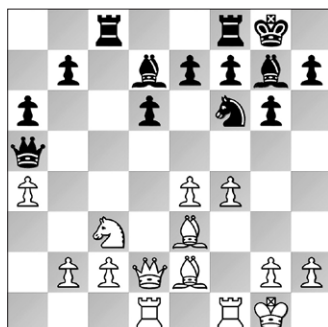
This is a position from the game Khasin – Boleslavsky, 23rd USSR Championship, 1956. There followed **17. ... Rxc3! 18. bxc3?**. After a surprising development of events, obvious mistakes can be committed even by experienced masters. In closing the c-file, White deprives himself of his last chances. As Boleslavsky pointed out, White should have played 18. Rxc3 Nxe4 19. Rc2 e5 (**4**) 20. Rfc1 Bd8 21. Nc6 with a double-edged struggle. The game continued **18. ... Nxe4 19. Be1 f5**, and subsequently the active black knight, placed in the center, proved to be stronger than the rook.

Another example: the game Gipslis – Simagin, 25th USSR Championship Semi-final, 1957.



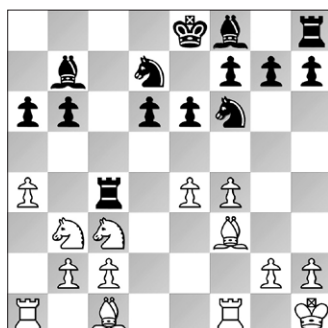
In this encounter the struggle unfolded in very original fashion after the Exchange sacrifice: Despite the material advantage, White aimed at an attack on the king, whereas Black had no objection to exchanges: **16. ... Rxc3! 17. bxc3! (5) 17. ... Bxe4 18. Qe2 Qc8 19. c4 bxc4 20. Bxc4 Bb7 21. Bb3 d5 22. Bc1 Bd6 23. Bb2 Bb8 24. Rd3 d4 25. Rg3 Rd8 26. Bc1 e4 27. Bf4 Bxf4 28. Rxf4 Bd5**, and the position was favorable for Black.

Often the Exchange sacrifice turns out to be justified in those cases when it is associated with an exchange of queens.



BLACK TO MOVE

Here in Kolyakov – Simagin, 1939, there followed **14. ... Rxc3!**. After **15. Qxc3 Qxc3 16. bxc3 Nxe4 17. Bd4 Nxc3 18. Bxc3 Bxc3** Black had two pawns for the Exchange. At the same time White's queenside pawns are weak, and the endgame is clearly favorable for Black.



BLACK TO MOVE

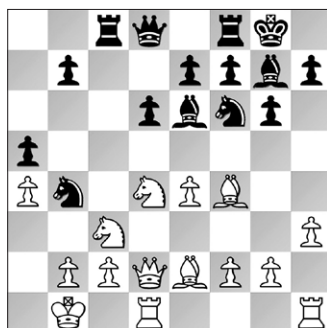
Before us is a position from the game Ufimtsev – Kan, 14th USSR Championship Semifinal, 1945. Black carried out the sacrifice with the queens off the board: **14. ... Nxe4 15. Bxe4 Bxe4 16. Nd2 Rxc3 17. bxc3 Bxc2 18. Ra2 Bg6 19. Ba3 Kd8 20. Rd1 Kc7 21. c4 Nc5**, and achieved an obvious advantage.

As we can see, the Exchange sacrifice in the examples of this category prove to be not such an effective weapon in comparison with the examples in category I. Usually the sacrifice proves justified, if in so doing Black wins the central pawn and seizes the initiative. If Black can obtain two pawns for the Exchange, the exchange of queens is also to his advantage. It must be emphasized that the Exchange sacrifice rarely pursues a concrete tactical goal. Much more often it is of a strategic character. Therefore one ought not to force events, but to continue the struggle in positional style.

III.

Perhaps the greatest number of sacrifices fall into this category. Very often the Ex-

change sacrifice completes a successful attack on the position of the white king. Since after castling on opposite sides operations are mainly conducted on the flanks, the time factor takes on decisive significance; loss of tempo usually leads to catastrophe.



BLACK TO MOVE

The position in the diagram occurred in the game Grechkin – Saigin, 16th USSR Championship Semifinal, 1947. Black's overwhelming advantage in development is obvious. White has still not taken a single step towards the preparation of an attack on the kingside, whereas Black has everything ready for a decisive blow. There followed:

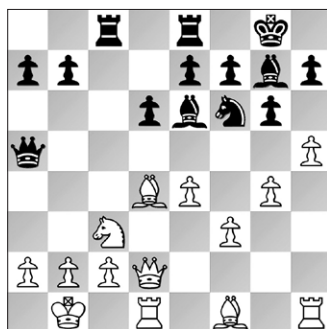
15. ... Rxc3 16. Qxc3

Also bad is **16. Nxe6 fxe6 17. Qxc3 Nh5**, or **16. bxc3 Nxe4 17. Qe3 Nd5!**.

16. ... Ba2+ 17. Kc1 e5

And Black won.

Somewhat more difficult to assess is the position from the game Bibikov – Balshin, Moscow, 1954.



BLACK TO MOVE

At Black's disposition are two effective methods of achieving victory. Black chose one of them.

14. ... Rxc3! 15. Qxc3 Qxa2+ 16. Kc1 Rc8

Another way to win consisted of **16. ... Bxg4**, examined in the following example. **(6)**

17. Qe3 Bb3 18. Bd3 Qa4

With two threats: **19. ... Bxc2** and **19. ... Nxg4**.

19. Bc3 Rxc3!!

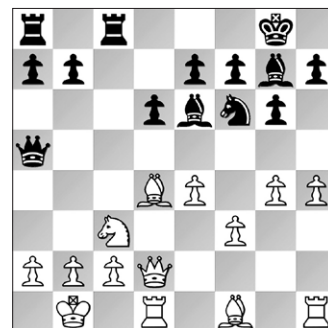
Two typical Exchange sacrifices on the

c3-square in one game!

20. bxc3 Nd5!

And Black won, since on **21. exd5** there follows **21. ... Bxc3** with inevitable mate.

If in the position in the last diagram one repositions the white pawn from h5 to h4 and the black rook from e8 to a8, there is obtained a position from the game Altgausen – Simagin, Moscow Championship, 1940.



BLACK TO MOVE

Black won in the following way:

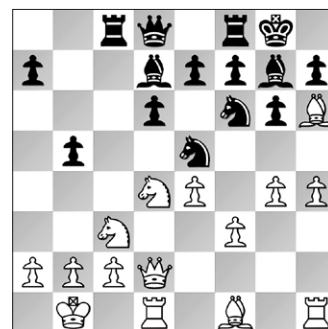
13. ... Rxc3 14. Qxc3 Qxa2+ 15. Kc1 Bxg4!

15. ... Rc8 16. Qa3 Bh6+ will not do in view of **17. g5**.

16. fxe4 Qa1+ 17. Kd2 Nxe4+ 18. Ke1 Nxc3 19. Rxa1 Bxd4 20. Bg2 Nb5 21. c3 Nxc3 22. bxc3 Bxc3+ 23. Kf2 Bxa1 24. Rxa1 a5 25. Bxb7 Ra7, White resigned.

He ought to have parried Black's dangerous threats in good time by means of **a2-a3**. **(7)**

Black was faced with a similar task in the game Boleslavsky – Geller, Zürich, 1953.



BLACK TO MOVE

White has seemingly outstripped Black in the development of the attack. However, Black seizes the initiative by sacrificing the Exchange.

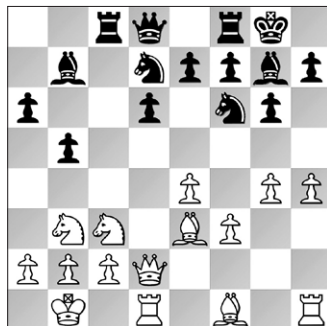
14. ... Bxh6 15. Qxh6 Rxc3 16. bxc3 Qa5 17. Qe3 Qa3 18. h5 b4 19. Qc1! Qxc3 20. Qb2 Rc8 21. hxg6 Qxb2+ 22. Kxb2 hxg6

And Black has obtained an approximately level game.

Interesting is Bronstein's comment to Black's 14th move in this game: "In such po-

sitions the move ... Bh8 is sometimes possible. For the time being the rook is of less value than the bishop. The long diagonal, which is currently loaded with pieces, can in some cases quickly be cleared, for instance, 14. ... Bh8 15. Bxf8 Rxc3 16. bxc3 Nxf3 17. Nxf3 Nxe4.” (8)

As Bronstein correctly noted, the Exchange sacrifice with ... Bg7-h8 can be associated with a second sacrifice — the capture on c3. This is precisely what occurred in the game An. Nikitin – Chistiakov, Moscow, 1953.



BLACK TO MOVE

13. ... Rxc3! 14. bxc3 Bxe4 15. Be2 Bb7 16. Bh6 Bh8!? 17. Bxf8 Qxf8 18. Rh3

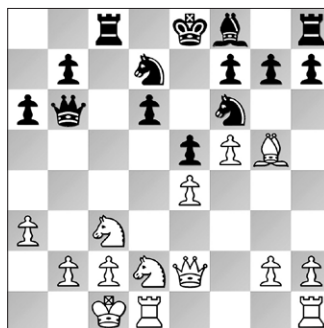
Defending the c3-square. However, in the subsequent struggle Black's minor pieces prove to be stronger than White's rooks.

18. ... Nd5 19. f4 N7b6 20. Rg1 Qc8 21. Rgg3 Na4

And Black won.

In the game Szabó – Petrosian, Stockholm, 1952, Black carried out the Exchange sacrifice when he had still not completed piece development.

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. f4 Qc7 7. Be2 e5 8. Nf3 Be6 9. f5 Bc4 10. Bg5 Nbd7 11. Nd2 Bxe2 12. Qxe2 Rxc8 13. a3 Qb6 14. 0-0-0



BLACK TO MOVE

14. ... Rxc3 15. bxc3 d5! 16. Nb1

Now, as Petrosian pointed out, 16. ... dxe4 retained the advantage for Black.

In conclusion it should be noted that along with the Exchange sacrifice in the Sicilian Defense (... Rxc3), similar Exchange sacrifices are also possible in other openings; for instance, on the part of White in the English Opening (Rxc6) and on the part of Black in the French Defense (... Rxf3). ♠

ENDNOTES

(1) Black is much better after 13. Nd2, but the play is less straightforward.

(2) 13. Nd5 is a mistake after the correct 13. ... gxf5! 14. exf5 h6!, opening lines toward the white king.

(3) In this variation, 14. ... Qb6+! is stronger, giving Black a nearly winning game. With 16. f6? White gives up rough equality; better is 16. Kh1 Rxc7 17. Qd4.

(4) Better is 19. ... Bd8 immediately, deploying the bishop to b6.

(5) Today's engines prefer 17. Qxc3 Bxe4 18. Qd2, although Black is still for choice.

(6) This actually does not work here due to 17. hxg6 hxg6 18. Bc4 Qa1+ 19. Kd2 Qa4 with an unclear position. Black's best move is likely 16. ... Bh6+ 17. Be3 (taking e3 from the queen) and now 17. ... Rc8 with a serious attack.

(7) The same moves were played in Alatortsev – Simagin, Moscow Championship, 1943. In both cases White should not have resigned! Modern engine analysis shows that the final position is equal.

(8) Black has impressive compensation for the material deficit at the end of this variation, but if White plays 16. Bxe7! Qxe7 17. Qxc3 or (to a lesser degree) 16. bxc3 Nxf3 17. Qg2 or 17. Qf4 Black is struggling.



Vladimir
Simagin



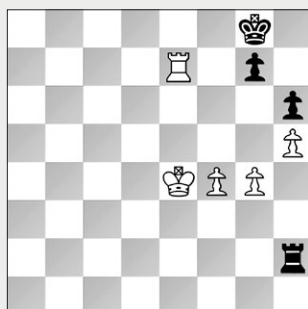
László Szabó

Tactical TESTS

BY **JOHN HARTMANN**

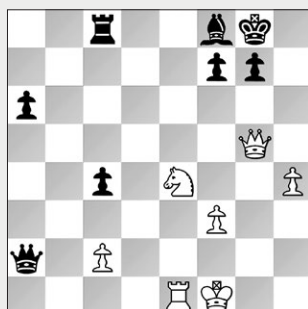
► TRY YOUR HAND AT THESE 12 TACTICS PUZZLES, ALL DRAWN FROM RECENT GAMES. The positions generally increase in difficulty, and you may be faced with a range of tasks including mates, winning material, and defending. Let us know what you think about them with an email to letters@uschess.org. Solutions are on page 63. ♡

TACTIC 1.



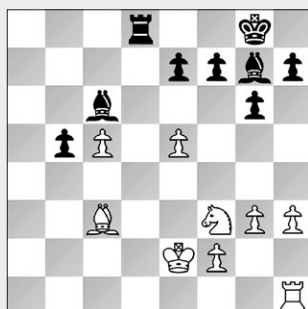
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TACTIC 2.



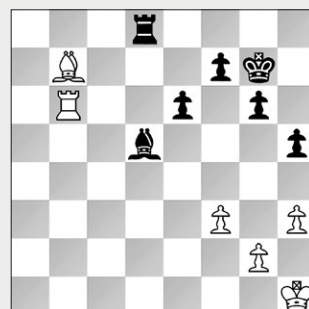
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



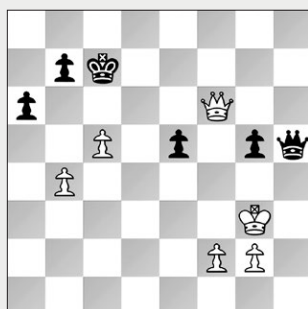
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TACTIC 4.



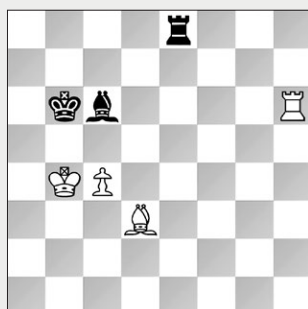
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TACTIC 5.



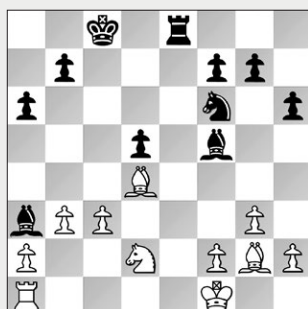
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TACTIC 6.



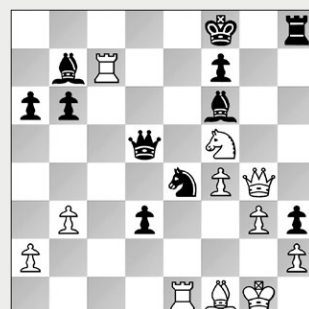
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



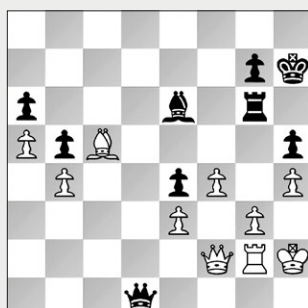
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TACTIC 8.



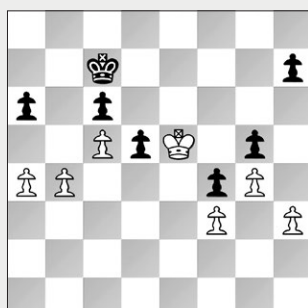
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



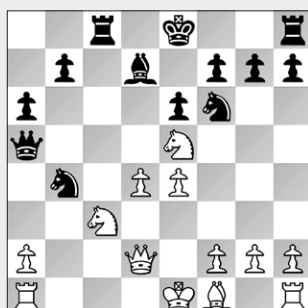
WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 10.



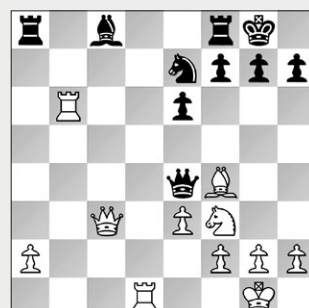
BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 11.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 12.



BLACK TO MOVE

Senior Shots

Key moves and moments from the World Senior (50+) Champs

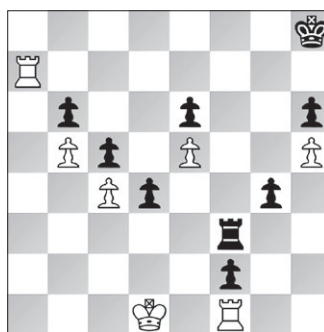
BY IM STUART RACHELS

F

FOR THE THIRD STRAIGHT year, the U.S. won the World Senior (50+) Team Championship, held this time in Durres,

Albania. GMs Jaan Ehvest, Gregory Kaidanov, Alex Shabalov, and Igor Novikov, along with your author, together played 36 games without a loss. Meanwhile, the American women's team took the women's title. Kudos to WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia, WIM Beatriz Marinello, WFM Natalia Tsodikova, Olga Sagalchik and Ivona Jezierska, and Olga Marinello.

Why must a player's memory be so cruel? Despite our good result, I remember my game with GM Peter Horvath best. After Black's 42nd move, I mulled over this position:



WHITE TO MOVE

An extra rook is nice, but how can I stop Black's g-pawn? My king is in range, but 43. Ke2 d3+! stops nothing. Nor is there time to prepare Kd1-e2; after 43. Rd7 g3 44. Ke2? Rf8!, Black is actually winning! My problem is that I can't get my rook on a7 behind Black's g-pawn. And so I simply made some checks: 43. Ra8+ Kg7 44. Ra7+ Kh8 45. Ra8+. Black can't try to win by moving his king towards my rook, because then the rook will

land on g7 or g8. So we agreed to a draw.

Aren't things simple once you see them? With 43. Re7! g3 44. Rxe6! g2 45. Rxh6+ Kg7 46. Rg6+, my rook reaches the g-file and devours Black's pawn. Sigh.

After the round, GM Vladimir Akopian texted our team captain, Alex Shabalov, and said, "If your team can afford to agree to a draw with an extra rook, then the tournament must be very easy for you!" When Shabba told me about this message, I replied, "Tell him I was getting hungry."

In the same round, Shabalov made up for my draw by beating the Hungarian IM Csaba Csiszar. Csiszar, as Black, had just made his 40th move.

SWING AND A MISS

IM Stuart Rachels (2446)

GM Peter Horvath (2342)

World Senior Teams 50+ (6), Durres, 04.25.2026

CLEANUP TIME

GM Alexander Shabalov (2433)

IM Csaba Csiszar (2352)

World Senior Teams 50+ (6), Durres, 04.25.2026

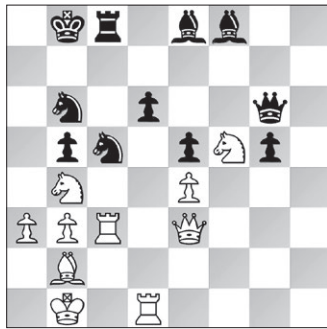


Bringing home gold!



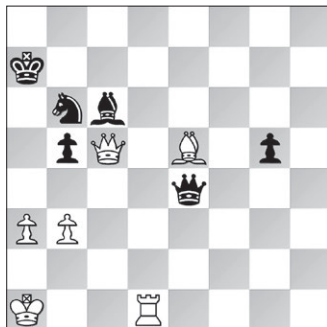
GM Alexander Shabalov

PHOTOS: VALERIA K Aidanov (TEAM), COURTESY SLCC / OOTES (SHABALOV)



WHITE TO MOVE

White is up the Exchange, but things aren't so clear. Black has an extra pawn, two bishops, and a strong knight on c5, which is poking at White's slightly loose pawns on b3 and e4. However, Shaba played **41. Nxd6! Bxd6 42. Na6+! Ka7** (not 42. ... Nxa6?? 43. Qxb6+) **43. Nxc5 Bxc5 44. Rxc5 Rxc5 45. Qxc5 Qxe4+ 46. Ka1 Bc6 47. Bxe5**, yielding this position:



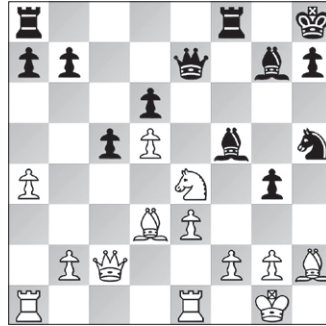
WHITE TO MOVE

As you can see, things have changed: Black has no extra pawn, no pair of bishops, and no strong knight. Shaba collected the full point.

One must also admire his attacking skills in this game:

MATING ATTACK

IM Andrew Ledger (2299)
GM Alexander Shabalov (2433)
World Senior Teams 50+ (8), Durres,
04.27.2026



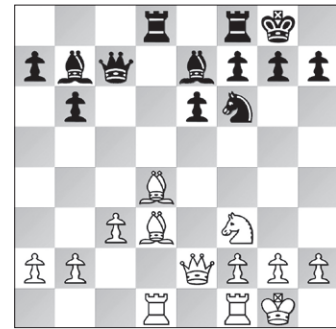
BLACK TO MOVE

IM Andrew Ledger just played 23. Bd3. It will be checkmate in 10 moves: **23. ... Bxe4! 24. Bxe4 g3! 25. fxc3 Be5 26. Bf3 Nxc3 27. Qc4** (preventing 27. ... Qh4) **27. ... Rg8 28. Rab1** (defending b2 while Rome burns) **28. ... Qg5 29. b4 Raf8 30. bxc5 Rxf3! 31. gxf3 Ne2+ 32. Kf1 Qg2 mate.**

A curious thing happened — or didn't happen — in Shabalov's game with GM Kotsur:

A WINNING CHANCE

GM Pavel Kotsur (2478)
GM Alexander Shabalov (2433)
World Senior Teams 50+ (7), Durres,
04.26.2026



BLACK TO MOVE

Kotsur has just played 15. c3, and the game went **15. ... Nd7 16. Bc2, draw**. Pretty boring, huh?

In fact, Black missed a big shot with **15. ... Bxf3!**. Now 16. Qxf3? loses a piece to 16. ... e5! 17. Be3 (or 17. Qg3 Bd6! 18. Be3 e4) 17. ... Rxd3! 18. Rxd3 e4. So White must play **16. gxf3**, when **16. ... Rd5!**, threatening 17. ... Rh5, gives Black a clear advantage.

In our all-important match against England, Gregory Kaidanov had White against GM Mark Hebden.

MISSED THE SAVE

GM Gregory Kaidanov (2491)
GM Mark Hebden (2353)
World Senior Teams 50+ (5), Durres,
04.23.2026



BLACK TO MOVE

Black is a pawn down, but if he regains it with 24. ... Nxd5, then White plays 25. Re8+ Rxe8 26. Rxe8+ Kh7 27. Ne4! Rb6 28. Neg5+!. Hebden therefore played **24. ... Qc2?**, and after **25. Re8+ Rxe8 26. Rxe8+ Kh7 27. Qxc2 Nxc2 28. Ne5! Bxe5 29. Rxe5 Nb4 30. Ne4! Rd8 31. d6!** Gregory won in style.

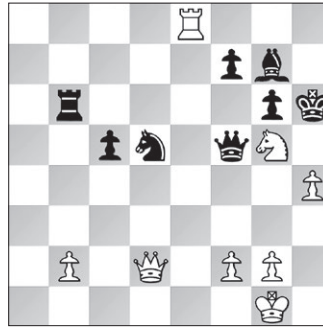
However, looks (and annotators) can be deceiving. After the cold-blooded **24. ... Nxd5! 25. Re8+ Rxe8 26. Rxe8+ Kh7 27. Ne4 Rb6 28. Neg5+ hxc3 29. Nxc3+ Kh6!**,



Team USA in action
against Iceland



GM Jaan Ehivest



POSITION AFTER 29. ... Kh6

White has no effective discovered check. White can only force a draw, for example with **30. Nxf7+ Kh7** (don't you dare play 30. ... Kh5) **31. Ng5+ Kh6 32. Nf7+**.

Still, the most dramatic game of that round was the last one to finish. GM John Emms could have leveled the match had he won with opposite-colored bishops against Igor Novikov.



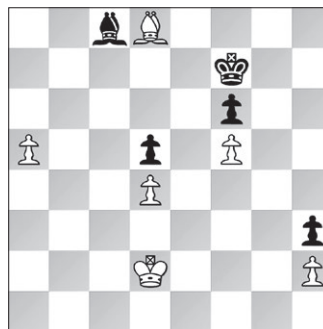
GM Gregory Kaidanov

TWO PLANS?

GM John Emms (2419)

GM Igor Novikov (2477)

World Senior Teams 50+ (5), Durres, 04.23.2026



WHITE TO MOVE

This extraordinary position arose after Igor played 60. ... Bc8. How might White win? He has two possible plans: (1) advance his king on the queenside in order to push his a-pawn (ideally winning it for Black's bishop); and (2) move his king to the kingside, hoping to take on h3. In this second scenario, White would have two passed rook-pawns, and his h-pawn could tie down Black's king while White's king strolls over to the queenside and wins Black's bishop for the a-pawn. In that case, it won't matter whether Black wins White's f-pawn at some point, because White's bishop can stop Black's f-pawn while also defending the h-pawn (either with the pawn on h4 and the bishop on e1, stopping

... f3-f2, or with the pawn on h6 and the bishop on c1, stopping ... f5-f4).

Which plan should White choose? Winning the h-pawn to create two passed rook-pawns doesn't seem possible, for after 61. Ke3 Ba6! (on 61. ... Bxf5? 62. a6 Bc8 63. a7 Bb7 64. Kf3 the h-pawn falls) 62. Kf2 Bd3 63. Kg3 Bf1!, Black saves his h-pawn — and though Black's bishop can't leave f1, it appears that Black cannot be forced into *zugzwang* because his king can toggle between f7 and g7.

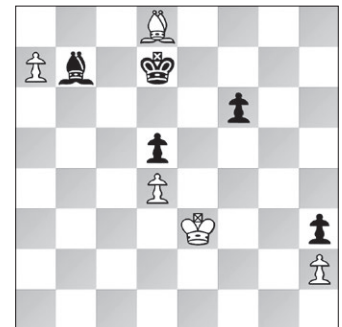
So Emms opted for the first plan, but it didn't work.

61. Kc3? Bxf5! 62. a6 Bc8 63. a7 Bb7

64. Kd3

White changes course, going for the h-pawn, because 64. Kb4 makes no headway against 64. ... Ke8 65. Bxf6 Kd7 66. Kc5 Bc6 67. Kb6 Ba8.

64. ... Ke6 65. Ke3 Kd7!



66. Bb6

Instead, 66. Bxf6 Kc7!, threatening 67. ... Kb6, draws. If White attends to the threat, then Black makes a fortress: 67. Be7 Bc6! 68. Kf4 Kb7 69. Kg3 Bd7. On the other hand, if White ignores the threat, then Black can stop White's h-pawn: 67. Kf4 Kb6 68. Kg3 Kxa7 69. Kxh3 Kb8 70. Kg4 Kc8 71. h4 Kd7 72. h5 Ba6! 73. Kg5 (73. h6 Bd3 draws) 73. ... Ke8! (not 73. ... Bd3?? 74. Kh6! and 75. Kg7) 74. Kg6 Kf8! (keeping the king out of g7) and Black's bishop goes to d3 with an easy draw.

66. ... Bc6 67. Kf4 Kc8 68. Kf5

Here 68. Kg3 Kb7! (threatening 68. ... Kxb6) 69. Bc5 Bd7 establishes the fortress just in time.

68. ... Kb7 69. Bc5 Bb5 70. Kxf6 Bd3 71. Ke5 Be4, draw.

So neither plan works, and there's no third plan. Yet White could have won! How? Look at the initial diagram and you'll see that



GM Igor Novikov

Black's pieces are perfectly placed: Black's bishop is on the only square that stops a5-a6 while also retaining the option of ... Bc8xf5, and Black's king defends f6 from the better of the two available squares (on g7, it is farther away from the queenside). White's goal, therefore, is to achieve the diagrammed position with Black to move, so that Black will have to weaken his position. This can be achieved through triangulation with the king: **61. Ke2!** (it turns out that *61. Ke1* and *61. Ke3* also work, although I think this is clearest) **61. ... Ba6+ 62. Ke3! Bc8 63. Kd2!**. Now it's Black's move, and White can take advantage of any move. For example, on **63. ... Bxf5** (which worked with White's king on c3), White has **64. a6 Bc8 65. a7 Bb7 66. Ke3!** (going for the h-pawn) **66. ... Ke6 67. Kf4 Kd7** and then either *68. Bb6* or *68. Bxf6* win, given White's extra tempo over the previous variations. Or on **63. ... Kg7 64. Kc3! Bxf5** (which worked with Black's king on f7), White has **65. a6 Bc8 66. a7 Bb7 67. Kd3 Kf7** (*67. ... Kg6 68. Ke3 Kg5 69. Kf3 Kh4 70. Bxf6+* doesn't save the h-pawn) and **68. Ke3**, transposing to the previous line. ♠

AT A GLANCE ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

▶ 2026 WORLD SENIOR TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIPS DURRES, ALBANIA | APRIL 19-28, 2026

50+ 1st: USA 1 (GMs Jaan Ehvest, Alexander Shabalov, Gregory Kaidanov, Igor Novikov; IM Stuart Rachels), 15 match points and best tiebreaks. **2nd:** Italy (GMs Alberto David, Michele Godina; IMs Fabrizio Bellia, Carlo D'amore, Giulio Borgo), 15 points. **3rd:** Kazakhstan (GMs Murtas Kazhgaleyev, Pavel Kotsur, Petr Kostenko, Serikbay Temirbayev; IM Yerlan Tikzhanov), 14 points. **Top Women's Team:** USA Women (WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia, WFM Natalia Tsodikova, WIM Beatriz Marinello, WFM Olga Sagalchik and Ivona Jezierska), 10 points.

Other Americans: **30th:** USA – Six Brothers (FM Krishan Jhunjnuwala, Naresh Jhunjnuwala, Ramesh Jhunjnuwala, Suresh Jhunjnuwala), 7 points.

65+ 1st: Germany-Lasker SGK (GMs Artur Jussupow, Rainer Knaak, Sergey Kalinitschew, Jakob Meister; Dr. Gerhard Koehler), 15 match points. **2nd:** Italy (GMs Carlos Horacio Garcia Palmer, Lexy Ortega; IM Roberto Messa; FMs Mario Sibilio, Ivano Ceschia), 14 points. **3rd:** Iceland (GMs Helgi Olafsson, Margeir Petursson, Jon Arnason; FM Thorsteinn Thorsteinsson; IM Askell Karason), 13 points. **Top Women's Team:** "FIDE" / Russia (WGMs Galina Strutinskaia, Tatiana Bogumil, Elena Fatalibenkova; WIMs Larisa Khropova, Natalia Titorenko), 10 points.

Other Americans: **32nd:** USA 2 (FMs Gregory Markzon, Konstantin Dolgister; Boris Tsynman, Vladimir Bankin), 8 points. **49th:** USA 1 (Bob Holliman, Kenneth Thomas, Randall Wayne Cope, Richard Hardin), 5 points.



IM Stuart Rachels

From Every Mountainside

Scenes from the 2026 National Elementary School Championship

BY **JOHN HARTMANN**

ANNOTATIONS BY **WGM SABINA FOISOR**



The 2026 National Elementary School Championship was one for the record books, with more than 2,500 players from

38 states (and one Canadian province) traveling to Baltimore for seven rounds of classical chess. Triumphs were celebrated and more than a few tears were shed as our youngest players tested themselves against their peers.

I never played scholastic chess when I was a child. My first games were against old Russian men who told dirty jokes while they collected my pieces. Perhaps that's why our

national scholastics are always a revelation to me. So many kids in one place, supported by parents and coaches and friends, everyone thinking and playing and laughing ...

My role at national events is haphazard. I take photos, network, and fill gaps. In Baltimore I hustled from one thing to another, moving briskly to ward off the air-conditioned chill.

There's a lot I'll remember from the NES — the piano in the lobby of the Baltimore Convention Center; the ice cream trucks smartly parked outside, swarmed by kids; the all-comers blitz games, also swarmed by

kids; and, of course, those famous Maryland crab cakes. But there's one image that sticks with me, even now, weeks after the final pawns were pushed.

The skittles room (named for pieces 'skittling' off the board during blitz or bughouse) in Baltimore was as cold as it was wide, but what I saw and heard during my walks in there are my most vivid memories. Parents, teachers and chaperones huddled together at land-grab tables strewn with chess sets and illicit pizza boxes. Kids played bughouse and kicked soda bottle caps around to burn nervous energy.



Ain't that America

I saw faces of every shade speaking every tongue. Burberry purses slumped next to stylish knockoffs. The children of magnates and millionaires connecting with kids from Title 1 schools.

I saw people from all walks of life coming together to give kids — their own and others' — opportunities to learn and grow and achieve.

What I saw, in a word, was America.

I was coming back to the Convention Center after lunch when I stumbled on the aftermath of the Impact Coaching Network photo. ICN, which serves dozens of elementary schools across New York City, brought almost 500 kids to Baltimore and herded (most of) them into one group on the Convention Center stairs.

What's missing from their picture, and what I photographed from behind the kids on the third floor, is all the adults who gave up their weekends (along with not inconsequential sums of money) to be there for the kids.

None of it — *none of it* — happens without the parents, chaperones, coaches and volunteers who do their parts to propel their children into a brighter future.

That's America to me.

Here are some scenes from Baltimore, along with six games by our K-6, K-5, and K-3 individual champions. Congrats to them, and to everyone who showed up and slugged it out to the best of their abilities.

Guest List

National scholastics always draw some big guests, but this year's Elementary really brought out some heavy hitters.

GM Elshan Moradiabadi and WGM Katerina Nemcova are two of our most popular guest GMs, and both made the trip to Baltimore. Their blitz, lectures, and simultaneous exhibitions were packed. And *Chess Life Online* Editor JJ Lang even pitched in for some late-night all-comers blitz — thanks JJ!

We also had two very special guests at the Elementary. The newly appointed "Official Ambassador of US Chess" WGM Jennifer Shahade was on hand for a simul and book signing, while IM and *Chess.com* Chief Chess Officer Danny Rensch also signed copies of his new book and played blitz with eager fans.

People forget that stars were once scholastic players too. Both Shahade and Rensch grew up playing US Chess national events, and both were clearly moved to be back

where they got their starts. And with Shahade's son, Fabian, playing in the K-6 U1000 section, I suspect we'll see her at more national scholastics in the years to come.

Girls Club

The Girls Club has been a mainstay of US Chess national scholastics since 2016, providing girls a space to connect and build community. There are lectures, simuls, and town hall meetings, with guest speakers and snacks.

Rochelle Ballantyne and WFM Laura Ross were available for analysis in the Baltimore Girls Club. Ballantyne juggles chess and legal work — she's a lawyer at Sidley Austin LLP — and Ross focuses on chess teaching and writing, with her first book (co-written with Dan Heisman) now out from Chessable.

Reincarnation?

One of my duties on Sunday was to work the K-1 award ceremony — backup photographer, parent herding, that kind of thing. By the time I made it over to Hall G the final game had just ended. It was won by a girl named Tal.

Tal Donaghy is a rising second grader at PS 77 Lower Lab in New York City. I caught her as she was leaving the board, and I asked her how she did. "I played for almost three hours," she told me, brandishing her neat and complete scoresheet, "and I won!" With such an auspicious name, she's sure to go far in chess!

To the Victors ...

Chess is a zero-sum game. While everyone can benefit from learning chess, there's no getting around the fact that losing is part of the game.

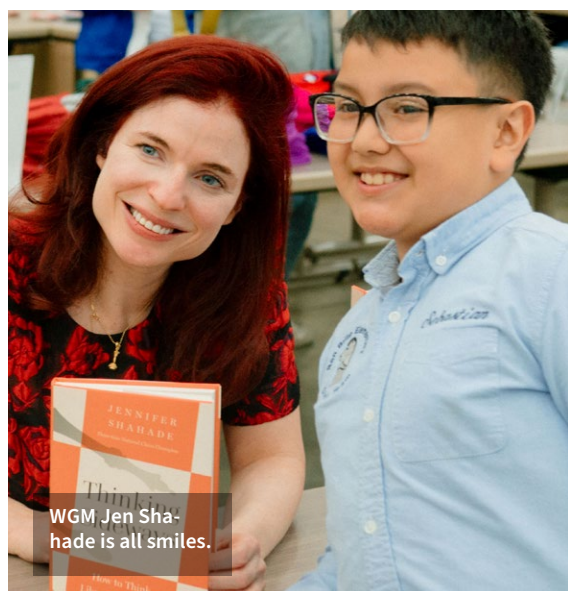
So is winning.

Our 2026 champions showed great mettle and skill in earning their titles. Here, we'll focus on our Championship section winners; for other sections, please check out our At A Glance box and weblink on page 38.

The **K-6 Championship** saw top seed WFM Aimee Yang jump into the leader's spot after five rounds with a perfect 5/5 score. Two draws — one against Winsley Wu in Round



Fun in the Girls Club!



WGM Jen Shahade is all smiles.



IM Danny Rensch with two fans



Rishi Ram Au



Meera Hariram

Milana Belov
Floresku

6 and Steven Liu in Round 7 — allowed Wu, Liu, and Grant Weyman to catch her at 6/7. All are considered co-champions. New York's Speyer Legacy School won the K-6 Team Championship with 19½ team points.

The **K-5 Championship** is unique in that it has no rating-class divisions. Fourth grader Aarav Karthik led from start to finish to earn the K-5 individual title with a score of 6½/7. Only a Round 6 draw with Rabel Goel could slow him down! The team trophy went to PS 130 The Parkside School from New York City, who also finished with 19½ points.

After sweeping the K-1 section at the 2025 SuperNationals, and tying for first in the second grade section of the 2025 K-12 Grade Championships, Mehmet Yilanli continued his winning ways at the **K-3 Championship** with a perfect 7/7 score. PS 198 Isador E Ida Straus will be bringing the K-3 team title back to New York City with 18 match points.

The **K-1 Championship** title was shared by Aiden Wang and Isaac Xiong, who each finished with 6½ points. Wang overcame a Round 5 draw against Rishan Negi to claim his medal, while Xiong shrugged off a first-round draw with Cash Holderness to do the same. Florida's Oak Hall Lower School tied for first in the team competition with New York's The Speyer Legacy School, but Oak Hall's better tiebreaks gave them the first-place trophy.

Six Championship Games

PASS UP THIS CHANCE

Grant Weyman (1883)
Rishith Bhoopathi (2178)
National K-6 Ch (3), Baltimore,
05.02.2026



WHITE TO MOVE

26. dxc6 e.p.?

I know *en passant* is rare, but just because we can do it, that doesn't mean we should. This helps Black free up the bishop and later on activate the rook as well! The right approach was 26. Kf2, activating the king for the endgame. The knight enjoys a much better position than the bishop here, with quite a few outposts that will help keep Black's king passive. It will take time, but White should be able to outplay Black.

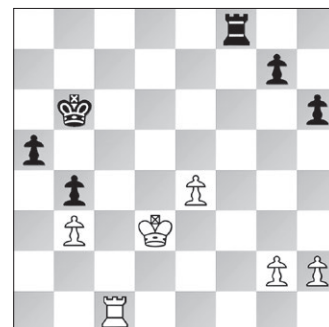
26. ... Bxa2

Now that the bishop is out, Black's pieces can get coordinated to trade the e-pawn for the c-pawn. The more the position opens, the more Black's position improves. Besides, the majority on the queenside was easy for Black

to support, thanks to the freed-up bishop.

27. Kf2 Bb3 28. Ra1 Bc4 29. Ke3 Bb5 30. Rd1+ Kxc6 31. Nxe5+ Kc7 32. Rc1+ Kb6 33. Nd3 a5 34. b3 Bxd3 35. Kxd3

Now that Black has traded the bishop, the rook endgame should be drawn, but Black has to be precise, as White already has a passed pawn. This was the moment where the game could have been saved.



35. ... Rf2??

Keeping White's king from improving with 35. ... Rd8+! was key! After 36. Ke3 it's time for Black to create a passed pawn with 36. ... a4 and now it's likely a draw. Play could go 37. bxa4 Ka5 38. e5 b3 39. Ke4 Kxa4 40. e6 b2 41. Rb1 Ka3 42. Ke5 Rd2 43. e7 Ka2 44. Re1 b1=Q 45. Rxb1 Re2+ 46. Kd6 Kxb1 47. Kd7 Rd2+ 48. Ke6 Re2+.

36. Rc2

The right way to play for a win was 36. e5!.

36. ... Rf1

It's a draw after 36. ... Rxc2 37. Kxc2 h5 38.

Kd3 Kc5 39. h4 Kb5 40. e5 Kc5 41. Ke4 g6 42. g3 a4 43. bxa4 b3 44. Kd3 Kb4 45. e6 Ka3 46. e7 b2 47. e8=Q b1=Q+.

37. e5 Re1?

There are still drawing chances after 37. ... Rd1+ 38. Rd2 Rg1 39. Re2 Kc7.

38. Re2 Rxe2 39. Kxe2

Now it is all over!

39. ... Kc5 40. Kd3 Kd5 41. e6 Kxe6 42. Kc4 Ke5 43. Kb5 Kd4 44. Kxa5 Kc5 45. g4 g6 46. h4 h5 47. gxh5 gxh5 48. Ka4 Kd4 49. Kxb4 Ke4 50. Ka5 Kf4 51. b4 Kg4 52. b5 Kxh4 53. b6 Kg3 54. b7 h4 55. b8=Q+ Kg2 56. Qg8+ Kh2, and Black resigned.

TWO KNIGHTS DEFENSE (C59)

Bryan Loayza Rivera (1984)
Winsley Wu (2165)
National K-6 Ch (3), Baltimore,
05.02.2026

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. Ng5 d5 5. exd5 Na5 6. Bb5+ c6 7. dxc6 bxc6 8. Be2 h6 9. Nf3 e4 10. Ne5 Bc5 11. 0-0 Qd6

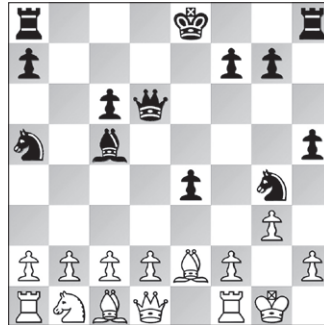
This game showed one of those opening ideas that one should always keep in mind — activity over material! White should have immediately attacked the center, giving back the pawn.

12. Ng4?

From here, Black shows great understanding. White is behind in development, so

building initiative by making moves with tempo is key! White gives the pawn back with 12. d4, but keeps equality after 12. ... Qxd4 13. Qxd4 Bxd4 14. Nc4 Nxc4 15. Bxc4.

12. ... Bxg4! 13. Bxg4 h5 14. Be2 Ng4 15. g3



15. Bxg4 may have been White's only way to avoid getting into a lost position, but it still gets difficult to defend after 15. ... hxg4 16. g3 Qg6 17. h4 gxh3 e.p. 18. d4.

15. ... Nxh2! 16. Kxh2??

16. d4 was the only way to avoid a devastating attack! Black is still much better after 16. ... exd3 e.p. 17. Kxh2 h4 18. Kg2 hxg3 19. fxe3 dxe2 20. Qxe2+ Kf8 — they've completed development and are ready to regroup and take control of White's weak king and underdeveloped queenside.

16. ... Bxf2!

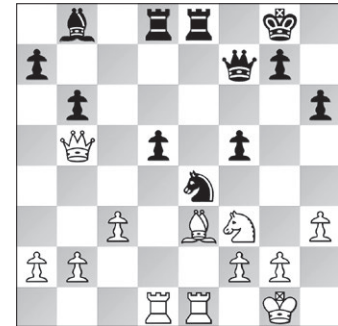
Beautifully conducted by Black!

17. Rxf2 h4 18. Kg1 hxg3 19. Rf5 g6

20. Re5+ Qxe5 21. d4 Qf6 22. Qf1 Rh1+, White resigned.

OUT OF NOWHERE

Max Mulholland (1953)
Mehmet Yilanli (1994)
National K-3 Ch (6), Baltimore,
05.03.2026



BLACK TO MOVE

Mehmet impressed me with his creative play throughout the event. Here, in a relatively equal position, he wasn't afraid to create attacking chances.

23. ... g5!?

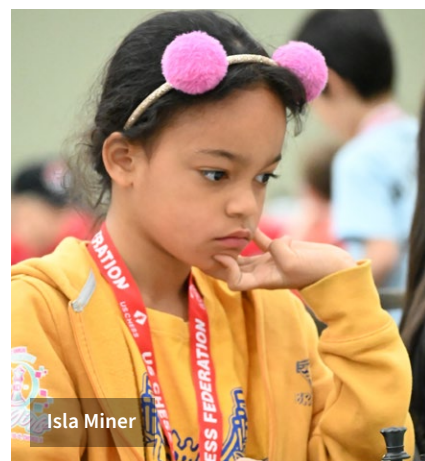
Black has the right kind of placement for his pieces — and a great knight on the e4-outpost — so it only makes sense to build up some pressure on White's king.

24. c4 g4 25. hxg4 fxg4 26. Nd2 Nxd2 27. Bxd2 dxc4 28. Bxh6

Here, however, Black has to be mindful of



Rensch has him just where he wants him.

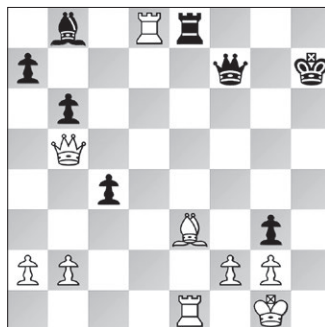


the safety of his own king.

28. ... Kh7?

28. ... Rxd1 would have led to equality: 29. Rxd1 Re5 30. Qa6 Qe6 31. Be3 Rxe3 32. fxe3 Qxe3+ with a perpetual check.

29. Be3 g3 30. Rxd8??



White could have taken over the advantage with 30. Qg5 gxf2+ 31. Bxf2 Rxd1 32. Rxd1 Bf4 33. Qg4.

30. ... Rxe3!!

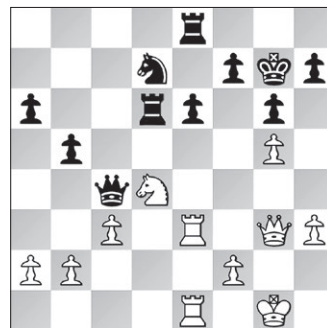
A beautiful way to execute such a creative plan!

31. Rf1 gxf2+ 32. Kh1 Rh3+!!, White resigned.

33. ... Qf3 mate is next.

SIDEWAYS TACTICS

WFM Aimee Yang (2221)
Nikolai Varfolomeev (1609)
National K-6 Ch (1), Baltimore,
05.01.2026



BLACK TO MOVE



Nikolai had played a very good game up to this point. Here, it seemed like White didn't have a way to make progress — despite the advancement of the g-pawn — due to Black's lack of weaknesses. So, Aimee kept her calm and improved her position bit by bit. Black's d6-rook is attacked, but the way he chose to deal with it allowed for some geometrical ideas.

26. ... Qd5??

Everything is covered after 26. ... Rd5 and Black can consider grabbing the a2-pawn. After 27. Nc2 Rc8 the position is still safe for Black.

27. Qh4?

Aimee missed a chance to gain an advantage here with 27. Rd1!. The knight on d4 is threatening to jump to f5 or take on e6, and it's difficult to stop both threats. For instance, after 27. ... Kg8 28. Rdd3 Qc5 29. Nb3 Black has to drop material.

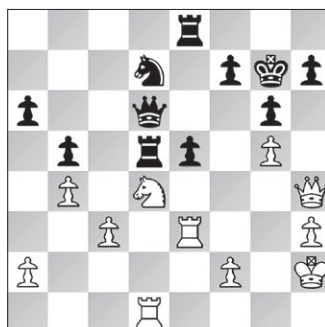
27. ... e5

27. ... Qxa2 seems to work too, though Black has to keep the rest of the pieces defending his king: 28. Rf3 Re7 29. b3 Qd2.

28. Rd1 Qc5 29. Kh2 Rd5?

Black must have underestimated White's attacking ideas. Leaving the rook on the d-file ultimately led to his downfall. Black's still all right after 29. ... f6 30. f4 e4 31. f5 fxg5 32. Qxg5 Qe5+.

30. b4 Qd6??



The final mistake. Aimee converted her position by taking advantage of a cute geometrical idea.

The final way to avoid losing material while keeping the queen active was 30. ... Qc7, but after 31. Nf5+ gxf5 32. Rxd5 e4+ 33. Kg2 f4 34. Re1 Qxc3 35. Rxd7 Qxe1 36. Qxf4 Rf8 37. a3 White maintains the advantage due to active pieces and Black's weakness on e4.

31. Qh6+! Kg8 32. Nf5!

And now Black cannot avoid the material loss.

32. ... gxf5 33. Qxd6 Rxd6 34. Rxd6 Nb8 35. Red3 Kg7 36. Rd8 Rxd8 37. Rxd8 Nc6 38. Rd6 Ne7 39. Rxa6 Nd5 40. Rc6 e4 41. Rc5 Ne7 42. Rxb5 Kg6 43. h4 f4 44. a4 Nf5 45. Kh3 e3 46. fxe3 f3 47. Kg4 Nxh4 48. Rb6+ Kg7 49. Kxh4, Black resigned.

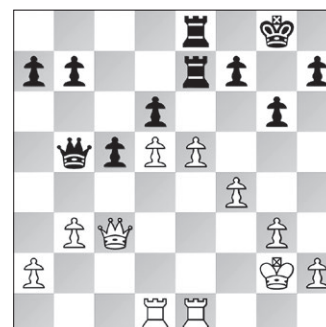
ENGLISH OPENING (A25)

Steven Liu (2180)

Nishant Saravanan (1550)

National K-6 Ch (1), Baltimore,
05.01.2026

1. c4 e5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. g3 g6 4. Bg2 Bg7 5. e3 Nge7 6. Nge2 d6 7. 0-0 0-0 8. b3 Be6 9. Ba3 Qd7 10. Rc1 Bh3 11. d3 Bxg2 12. Kxg2 Nd8 13. d4 Ne6 14. dxe5 Bxe5 15. f4 Bg7 16. Nd5 Rad8 17. Qd2 c6 18. Nxe7+ Qxe7 19. Rcd1 c5 20. Nc3 Nc7 21. Bb2 Rfe8 22. Rfe1 Qd7 23. e4 Qc6 24. Nd5 Bxb2 25. Qxb2 Nxd5 26. cxd5 Qb5 27. Qc2 Re7 28. e5 Rde8 29. Qc3



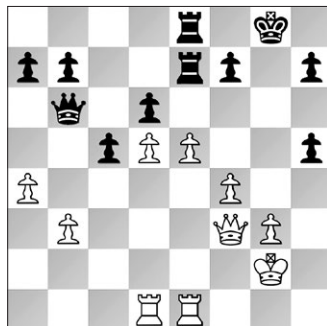
Despite their rating difference, Nishant has played a great game, showing understanding of how to keep White from building a dominant position in this Benoni structure. Here, however, Black has to find a way to keep his pieces safe and, unfortunately for him, picks the wrong square.

29. ... Qb6?

Now, White builds additional pressure on the kingside. Black would have been better off with 29. ... Qd7 followed by 30. h4 a6 starting to advance his majority on the queenside.

30. h4 Qc7 31. h5

Now White's attack on the kingside is becoming difficult to stop.

31. ... gxf5 32. Qf3 Qa5 33. a4 Qb6**34. Rh1**

Giving Black a chance to defend. White's close to winning after 34. Qxh5! Qxb3 35. Qg5+ Kh8 36. Qf6+ Kg8 37. Qxd6 with the central passed pawn.

34. ... dxe5 35. f5?

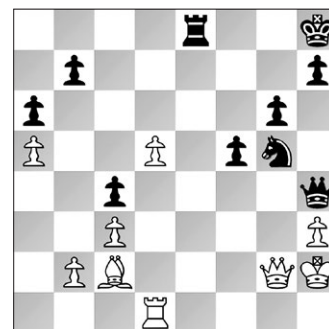
35. d6 was a must. White's a pawn down after 35. ... Re6 36. fxe5 Rxe5 37. Rxh5 but is still superior due to the passed d-pawn.

35. ... e4

Instead 35. ... f6! would have kept the position balanced after 36. d6 Rg7 37. Qd5+ Kh8 38. d7 Rd8 39. Qe6 Qc6+ 40. Qxc6 bxc6 41. Rd6 Rxd7 42. Rxf6 Rg5 followed by ... Kh8-g7!

36. Qxh5 h6??

Black misses the opportunity to cover his king for the second move in a row! 36. ... f6 would have been the final chance to keep h7 covered. Despite the pressure on the h-file and the passed d-pawn, White's attack seems to have fizzled out.

37. d6 Qxb3 38. Qg4+ Kh7 39. Rxh6+ Kxh6 40. Rh1 mate.**BLACK TO MOVE**

After a topsy-turvy game, Karthik finishes the event with a beautiful tactic:

37. ... Nxb3! 38. Kh1

Black wins after 38. Qxh3 Re2+ 39. Kg1 Qxh3.

38. ... Nf2+ 39. Kg1 Nxd1 40. Bxd1 Re1+, White resigned. ♠**A SHARP SHOT**

Advik Manchanda (2084)
Aarav Karthik (2013)
National K-5 Ch (7), Baltimore,
05.03.2026

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

2026 NATIONAL ELEMENTARY CHAMPIONSHIPS AT A GLANCE

MAY 1-3, 2026 | BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

INDIVIDUAL

K-6 Championship: Winsley Wu (NY), Grant A. Weyman (PA), WFM Aimee Yang (PA), Steven Liu (MD), 6/7. **K-6 U1400:** Gal Reichfeld (PA), 7/7. **K-6 U1200:** Reid Kipp Parker (NY), Arjun Maguluri (VA), 6½/7. **K-6 U1000:** Milo Sweet (MI), 7/7. **K-6 U800:** Aadvik Rishi Kalal (TN), Adi Deka (NY), 6½/7. **K-6 U600:** Vivaash Hariharasudhan (PA), Leland Yiran Shi (CA), 7/7. **K-6 Unr:** Kayden Thervil (NY), Davis Tomei (PA), 6/7. **K-5 Championship:** Aarav Karthik (MI), 6½/7. **K-3 Championship:** Mehmet Yilanli (OH), 7/7. **K-3 U1000:** Taj Ahluwalia (CT), 7/7. **K-3 U600 and Unr:** Neil Mukhopadhyay (NY), 7/7. **K-1 Championship:** Aidan Wang (NY), Isaac Xiong (NY), 6½/7. **K-1 U500 and Unr:** Mattia Fiorelli (NY), Maximo Brooks (FL), Leanne De Quinsai-Yang (NY), Jonah Vann (TN), 6½/7. **Blitz K-6:** Viyaan Krishna Doddapaneni (NJ), 10½/12. **Blitz K-3:** Sebastien Goodrich (NY), Johann Jayabarath (SC), 10/12. **Blitz K-6 U1400:** Ethan Ing (CT), 12/12. **Bughouse:** Albert Li (NJ) and Jayden Li (NJ), 9/10..

TEAMS

K-6 Championship: The Speyer Legacy School (NY), 19½ points. **K-6 U1400:** Packer Collegiate Institute (NY), 20½. **K-6 U1200:** Success Academy Upper West (NY), 18. **K-6 U1000:** PS 33 Chelsea Prep (NY), 19½. **K-6 U800:** Laurence School (CA), 19½. **K-6 U600:** Laurence School (CA), 22½. **K-6 Unr:** Laurence School (CA), 13½. **K-5 Championship:** PS 130 The Parkside (NY), 19½. **K-3 Championship:** PS 198 Isador E Ida Straus (NY), 18. **K-3 U1000:** PS 11 Sarah J. Garnet (NY), 19½. **K-3 U600 and Unr:** Success Academy Harlem 2 (NY), 21. **K-1 Championship:** Oak Hall Lower School (FL), The Speyer Legacy School (NY), 19. **K-1 U500 and Unr:** Oak Hall Lower School (FL), 21½. **Blitz K-6:** The Speyer Legacy School, 24½. **Blitz K-3:** PS 77 Lower Lab School (NY), 24. **Blitz K-6 U1400:** PS 11 Sarah J. Garnet (NY), 22½.

For complete results and standings, visit www.uschess.org/results/2026/elem/



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Golden Age

The U.S. Senior Women's Team wins gold and enters a new era.

BY JJ LANG

Before 2023, there was no U.S. Senior Women's Championship, and no official American women's team at the World Senior Team Championship. Now, after winning silver at the team tournament in 2024 and bronze in 2025, the USA Women won their first-ever gold medal in Durres, Albania, in April, and in July, the U.S. Senior Women's Championship will be part of the prestigious U.S. Junior & Senior Chess Championships for the first time, boasting a \$60,000 prize fund. The field features the U.S. gold medalists from Durres, as well as several players in the middle of later-life comebacks.

This is only the beginning for senior women's chess. More resources and institutional support can only lead more women to return to (or pick up!) chess and provide active players with more motivation and opportunities to compete.

As we look forward to July, let's also look back on the team's accomplishments from April.

Meet the Team

Four of the five players from last year's bronze-winning USA Women's team came back for the tournament in Durres: WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia on Board 1 and reigning U.S. Senior Women's champion WFM Natalya Tsodikova on Board 2, with WFM Olga Sagalchik on Board 4 and WFM Ivona Jezierska as the alternate. And the "new" face was WIM Beatriz Marinello, who played on the team in 2024, on Board 3.

"Naturally," said Tsodikova, this year's captain, "this time our goal was to go for gold."

Fighting Spirit

All teams compete in one Under-50 section, and the three women's teams with the highest scores at the end of the event make it to the women's podium.

After winning 3–1 against England-5 in Round 1, Team USA Women lost 3–1 to a

very strong Hungary team featuring three GMs and an IM. The next round, they were paired against Kazakhstan Women, again losing 3–1 and giving Kazakhstan a major boost in the standings as a result.

But there were still six more rounds of chess to play, and Kazakhstan's competition would only get stiffer.

Against South Africa, the American women were the rating favorite on every board, and won 2½–1½. Sagalchik's win was a lovely dismantling of her opponent's Grünfeld Defense:

GRÜNFELD DEFENSE, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D87)

WFM Olga Sagalchik (2084)

Anton Goosen (1924)

World Senior Team Championships (4), Durres, 04.22.2026

Annotations by JJ Lang

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5
5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 Bg7 7. Bc4 c5 8. Ne2
Nc6 9. Be3 0-0 10. 0-0



PHOTO: ISTC / FACEBOOK



10. ... b6

The most popular move (by a slight margin) is 10. ... Bg4, while 10. ... Qc7 is also a popular contender.

11. Rb1

This is only the sixth-most common move in this position, played only 1% of the time at the master level. While Sagalchik said this was a bit of over-the-board improvisation, it's still consistent with the spirit of modern chess, where playing the theoretically best move is often less important than posing practical problems in unfamiliar positions. The front-runner is 11. Rc1, anticipating a trade of c-pawns.

11. ... cxd4 12. cxd4 Na5!?

Black courts complications. While 12. ... Bb7 is fine, it does allow 13. d5 Ne5 14. Bb5 when White's rook makes sense on b1 for two reasons: First, White can play d4-d5 without fear of the g7-bishop; second, 14. ... a6 might be best, but White has an unusual resource with 15. Bxb6! when 15. ... Qxb6 16. Bc6 regains the piece, and 16. ... Qc5 17. Bxb7 Rab8 18. Nd4 gives White a nice grip of the c6-square.

13. Bd5

White forces a trade of bishops before Black can get an attack going on the long diagonal against White's king.

13. ... Bb7

If 13. ... Rb8? 14. Bf4 wins material.

14. Bxb7 Nxb7 15. e5

Blunting Black's bishop and preparing to launch an attack with f2-f4 next. The alternative is 15. h4 — the center is stable, so a flank attack is justified.

15. ... Qd7 16. f4

Also interesting is 16. h4, when 16. ... Rfc8 17. h5 Rc4 18. f4 is great for White, who now enjoys a kingside attack without having to worry about the ... Nb7-a5-c4 attempt at counterplay.

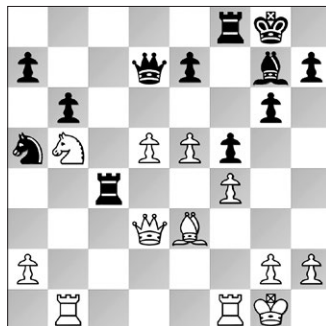
16. ... f5

Stopping the f4-f5 ideas that would give Black trouble, but d4-d5 is coming, and now the problems that will cause will be much harder to solve without a thematic ... f7-f6 undermining break.

17. Nc3 Na5 18. d5 Rac8 19. Qd3 Rc4

Black achieves nothing with 19. ... Nc4. With the d5-pawn protected, the centralizing 20. Bd4 cements White's advantage.

20. Nb5!



White has improved her position immensely over the past few turns. Now, she threatens Nb5xa7 followed by Be3xb6xa5, when the c4-rook hangs. White also has ideas such as d5-d6 or even e5-e6 due to the control of the d6-square. All of this is possible thanks to 11. Rb1!.

20. ... Rfc8 21. Rfd1

Simple and strong. More forcing is 21. e6 although it's not necessary.

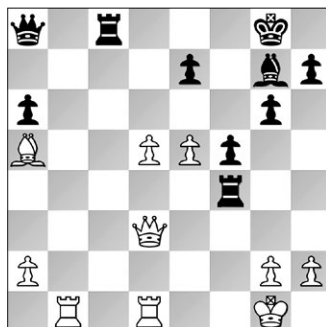
21. ... a6 22. Na7!

Of course, White had to see this when allowing ... a7-a6, as there are no other safe squares for the knight.

22. ... Qxa7 23. Bxb6 Qa8 24. Bxa5

White is currently up a pawn, but what a pawn it is. The threat of d5-d6 is immense.

24. ... Rxf4



Black tries to maintain material equality,

but the position is about to collapse. Still, other tries were not satisfactory: For example, 24. ... Rc2 25. Rd2 Rc1+ 26. Rd1 R1c2 would be an attempt at repetition, but 27. Bd2 does not leave Black any time for 27. ... Rxa2?? due to 28. d6!, now with the threat of Qd3-b3+.

25. d6!

The thematic break is screaming to be played!

25. ... exd6

If 25. ... Bxe5 26. d7 wins material.

26. exd6 Rd4 27. Qb3+ Kh8 28. d7

The star pawn seals the deal.

28. ... Rb8 29. Qxb8+, Black resigned.

The win brought the team back to an even score, where it remained after consecutive ties against England Women and Netherlands Zuid-Limburg going into the rest day after Round 6. The tie with England Women was particularly tense after Tsodikova lost on Board 2, but Marinello's win on Board 3 saved the match.

FRENCH DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (C02)

Petra Fink-Nunn (1969)

WIM Beatriz Marinello (2061)

World Senior Team Championships (5),
Durres, 04.23.2026

Annotations by JJ Lang

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5 4. c3 Qb6 5. Nf3

Nc6 6. a3 c4 7. Nbd2 Na5 8. Rb1

This is a trendy move with a strong score for White. It was also the recommendation of GM Anish Giri in his *Lifetime Repertoires*: 1. e4 – Part 2.

8. ... Bd7 9. Be2

Giri's recommendation is 9. h4!. Besides a general kingside expansion, the idea is that Rh1-h3 is a useful resource for White in some lines, particularly when Black castles long and plays ... Kc8-b8 and ... Rd8-c8 to go after the weak c3-pawn.

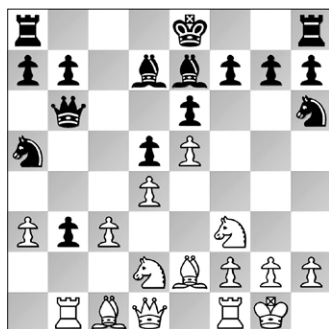
9. ... Be7

The main move is 9. ... Ne7, intending ... Ne7-g6/f5 before developing the bishop.

10. 0-0 Nh6 11. b3

It's time for the thematic break.

11. ... cxb3

**12. c4?!**

White has castled and Black hasn't, so playing to break open the center quickly is logical. But without Bc1xh6 available, Black can easily castle kingside into safety.

The critical move is 12. Nxb3, when the thematic 12. ... Ba4 runs into 13. Bxh6! gxh6 14. Nfd2 and Black's king has no good options. But 14. ... Qc7 15. Qc1 isn't any better for Black: White intends f2-f4-f5 to rip open the center.

Instead, 12. ... Nf5! keeps Black in the game. For example, if 13. Nfd2, now 13. ... Ba4 is more timely.

12. ... Ba4 13. c5 Qc7 14. Bb2?!

White should keep the threat of Bc1xh6 alive to keep Black's king guessing. Better was 14. Nxb3 Nxb3 15. Rxb3. Black survives after 15. ... 0-0!, but it's frightening after 16. Bxh6 gxh6 17. Qb1 Bxb3 18. Qxb3.

14. ... b6!

Quickly undermining White's bind before she can do anything with it.

15. cxb6 Qxb6?!

The proper recapture was 15. ... axb6, preventing Bb2-c3.

16. Bc3! Rb8 17. Qc1

It's time to liquidate with 17. Bxa5!. After 17. ... Qxa5 18. Nxb3 Rxb3 19. Rxb3 0-0 20. Qd3 Bxb3 21. Qxb3 Rc8 22. a4, Black controls the open file and White's d4-pawn can become a target in the endgame, so Black enjoys a slight advantage.

17. ... 0-0

Black keeps her obnoxious b-pawn and White can't damage Black's kingside, either.

18. Bxa5 Qxa5 19. Qb2 Rfc8 20. Rfc1 Rc7 21. Rxc7 Qxc7 22. Rc1 Qb6 23. Bd1 g6

White has had to waste considerable effort going after the b-pawn, all while Black has consolidated.

24. Rc3 Kg7 25. h3 Nf5 26. Rd3

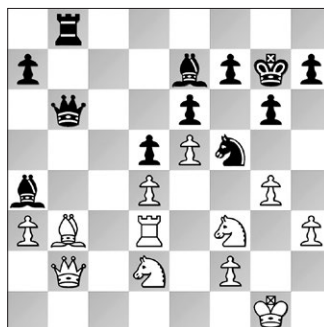
Black cannot go after the d-pawn yet, so again 26. Nxb3 was better: 26. ... Nxd4?? 27. Nfxd4 Qxd4 28. Nxd4 Rxb2 29. Bxa4 leaves White up a piece.

26. ... Qa6 27. Rc3 Qb6 28. Rd3 Qd8 29. Bxb3?!

Safer was 29. Nxb3, keeping the strong bishop.

29. ... Qb6

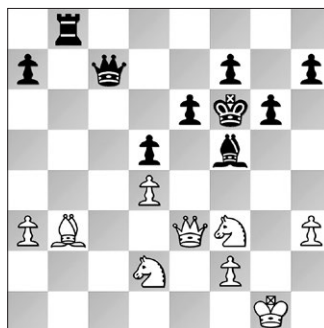
The prophylactic 29. ... h5, anticipating and discouraging g2-g4, was also strong.

30. g4**30. ... Bb5?**

Now Black introduces unnecessary complications into the position. The cleanest path was 30. ... Nh4! 31. Nxh4 Bxh4 32. Qc2 Bb5 33. Rc3 Be7.

31. gxf5 Bxd3 32. f6+ Bxf6 33. exf6+ Kxf6 34. Qc3?!

The immediate 34. Ne5! threatening Ne5-d7+ reduces Black's resources considerably. After the forced 34. ... Bb5, 35. Qc3 Kg7 36. Qe3 is unclear.

34. ... Bf5 35. Qe3 Qc7?!

More prudent was 35. ... Kg7! immediately, anticipating White's best resource.

36. Qg5+?

White makes progress only with 36. Qh6!!, when Black needs to play actively. For in-

stance, 36. ... Qc3 37. Ne5 Rxb3 38. Nxb3 Qxb3 39. Qxh7 Qxa3 40. Qxf7+ Kg5, and with Black's king so exposed, White should be able to muster a perpetual check from here.

36. ... Kg7 37. h4 h6

From here, Black proves that White has no attack.

38. Qe3 Rc8 39. Kg2 f6 40. h5 g5 41. Bd1 Qc3! 42. Qe2 g4 43. Nh2 Qh3+ 44. Kh1 Rc1, White resigned.

There's no answer to ... Bf5-c2.

Meanwhile, Kazakhstan Women maintained its lead in the women's standings with a Round 4 win over Germany - Bielefeld, but consecutive losses to North Macedonia's Alkaloid Chess Club (three GMs and a WIM) and England-3 (led by IM Andrew Ledger) created a three-way tie for first.

A Day of Rest

Belakovskaia called Albania "unforgettable." Before the tournament began, she and GM Alex Shabalov, of the U.S. Over-50 team, took a historical tour of Tirana "and heard fascinating and at times horrifying stories about Albania's communist period." A later excursion to the Bunk'Art 2 museum in Tirana reinforced the impression: "Seeing the scale of paranoia, brutality, and isolation under the communist regime was deeply moving."

She, Tsodikova, and Sagalchik spent the free Friday exploring Durres before she headed on to Shabbat services in Tirana. After meeting with the rabbi and his family there, Belakovskaia "somehow left feeling completely convinced that our team would win gold."

"Since we were staying right on the sea-side," Tsodikova added, "we also had evening walks as a team, which became a special part of the experience: time to relax, talk, and bond."

Home Stretch

Entering the final three rounds, so match strategy became more important. Captain Tsodikova coordinated preparation and match strategy with the help of her husband, IM Rostislav Tsodikov, who helped his wife and the whole team with "opening ideas for specific opponents, discussing overall

strategy, and providing support after difficult games,” Tsodikova said.

This preparation was on display in Round 7. With a critical pairing against co-leaders Czech Republic Women, this was a chance to take pole position, and Tsodikova was ready.

RUY LOPEZ (C60)

WFM Natalya Tsodikova (2122)

Martina Folkova (2037)

World Senior Team Championships (7),
Durres, 04.26.2026

Annotations by Natalya Tsodikova

My teammates agreed to relatively quick draws, so my game became the decisive one for the match.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nge7 4. 0-0 g6 5. c3 Bg7 6. d4 exd4 7. cxd4 d5 8. Bxc6+

This is not the main move, but it is what I had prepared.

8. ... bxc6

Black could also try 8. ... Nxc6, which the engine prefers. But after 9. exd5 Ne7 10. Nc3 0-0 11. Qb3, it is not so easy to get the pawn back.

9. e5 0-0 10. Re1 f6!?

Everything up to here was part of my preparation, since she often plays this line. But this isn't a main move, so I had to start fig-

uring things out at the board.

11. h3 fxe5 12. Nxe5

An improvement was 12. dxe5, inviting 12. ... c5 when 13. Nc3 Bb7 14. Bg5, followed by Qd1-b3 and Nc3-a4, putting pressure on both flanks.

12. ... Qd6?!

Since White left the pawn on d4, Black should have played 12. ... Nf5 to pressure it. After 13. Nc3 Qf6 Black threatens the kingside and intends a later ... c6-c5.

13. b3?

With the idea of Bc1-b2 or Bc1-a3, controlling the dark squares. However, 13. Nd2 was stronger.

13. ... Qf6 14. Qc2?! Bf5?! 15. Qe2 Nc8?



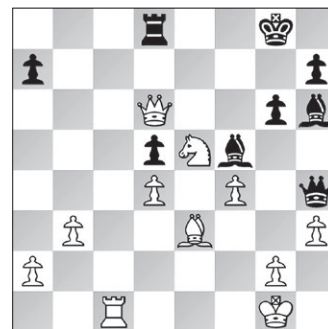
After an imperfect opening, I now had

an advantage.

16. Bb2 Nd6 17. Nd2 Ne4?! 18. Nxe4 Bxe4 19. f3 Bf5 20. Rac1 Bh6?! 21. Rxc6 Qh4 22. Qf2 Qd8 23. Bc1 Bg7 24. Be3 Rb8 25. Rec1 Rb7 26. Qd2 Bf6 27. Qc3 Bg5

Up to this point, I had been playing well and had increased my advantage to +3.5 according to the engine. I only needed to make a few accurate moves to finish the game, but it did not turn out to be a smooth ride.

28. f4?! Bh6?! 29. Rxc7 Rxc7 30. Qxc7 Qh4 31. Qd6 Rd8



32. Nf3?!

I was eager to exchange queens and simplify the position, but this approach was not justified. After 32. Qc7 Rf8 33. Qc6 Rd8 34. Qb7 Bxh3?! 35. Qf7+ Kh8 36. Rc7 Black can resign.

32. ... Rxd6 33. Nxh4 Be4 34. g4?! Ra6

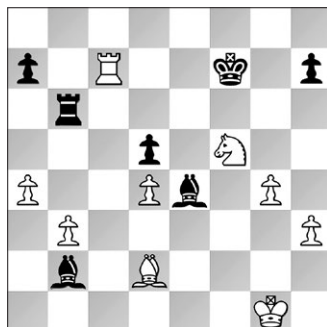


35. a4! Rb6?! 36. Rc3! Bf8 37. Bd2?

Even with the queens off the board, Black's two bishops are very active, and I began to feel some pressure. The better continuation was 37. Kf2.

37. ... Ba3?! 38. f5?

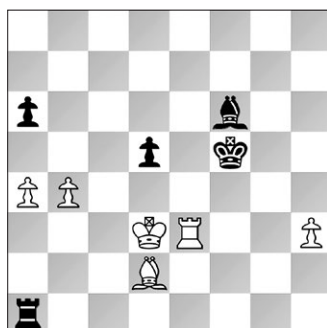
I was trying to activate my knight and exchange one of the bishops, but the better approach was to centralize the king.

38. ... gxf5?! 39. Nxf5 Bb2 40. Rc8+ Kf7 41. Rc7+?!

And just like that, the position became more or less equal. I remember thinking how cruel chess can be, but I continued to fight.

41. ... Kf6! 42. b4 Bxf5 43. gxf5 Bxd4+ 44. Kf1 Kxf5 45. Rxh7 Rg6 46. Re7 a6 47. Re8 Rg1+ 48. Ke2 Rh1 49. Kd3 Bf6 50. Re3

At this point, I noticed that if my opponent attacked my pawn on a4, it would actually be a losing move.

50. ... Ra1??

To my delight, the game followed exactly this line!

51. Rf3+! Ke6 52. Rxh6+! Ke7 53. Rxa6 Ra3+ 54. Bc3, Black resigned.

Belakovskaia's approach to preparation "was almost nonexistent in the traditional sense," she said: Before the tournament, she spent most nights grading student work fol-

lowed by online three-minute games around midnight. She also sometimes had to teach classes online overnight during the event.

Paired against Canada-Quebec in Round 8, the team aimed merely to draw the match, and her goal was to hold her strong opponent.

"Once all of my teammates agreed to draws, I offered one as well," Belakovskaia said. "But my opponent declined. ... What followed was one of the strangest games of my tournament: I gradually drifted from equality into a worse position, then into a nearly lost one, yet I never stopped creating practical problems."

ENGLISH OPENING, SYMMETRICAL VARIATION (A36)

WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia (2167)

Simon Gravel (2264)

World Senior Team Championships (8), Durres, 04.27.2026

Annotations by WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia

1. c4 c5 2. Nc3 Nc6 3. g3 g6 4. Bg2 Bg7 5. d3 e5

White chooses a stable positional setup rather than immediate confrontation in the center. Black's pawn structure already creates a long-term weakness on d5.

6. a3 Nge7 7. h4

A new move in the position, but a typical idea. Black was prioritizing kingside development, and this move discourages immediate castling.

7. ... h6 8. Rb1

More ambitious was 8. b4 immediately challenging Black on the queenside, but considering our team situation I wanted to avoid sharp complications early in the game.

8. ... a5 9. e3 d6 10. Nge2 0-0**11. Nd5?!**

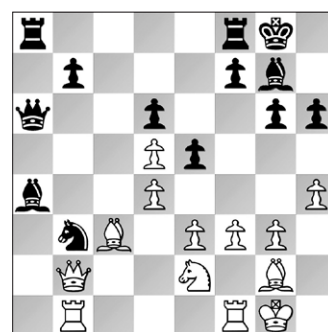
This was my first real mistake. More flexible development such as 11. 0-0 would have preserved options.

11. ... Nxd5 12. cxd5 Nb8 13. b4 cxb4 14. axb4 axb4 15. Rxb4 Na6 16. Rb1 Nc5 17. 0-0 Bg4 18. f3?!

My second positional mistake, weakening the dark squares around my king while blocking my bishop on g2. A better continuation was 18. Qd2 with approximate equality.

18. ... Bd7 19. Bb2?

I lost the thread of the position entirely and became too passive. More active play with 19. e4 or 19. Qd2, followed by d3-d4, would have offered much better practical chances.

19. ... Qa5 20. Bc3 Qa6 21. d4 Ba4 22. Qd2 Nb3 23. Qb2

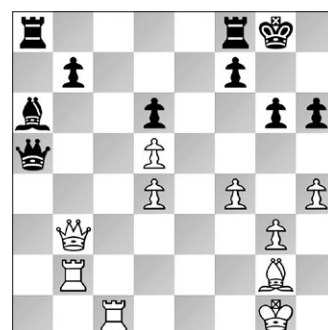
At this stage Black had achieved clear domination over the position.

23. ... Bb5?

A significant inaccuracy that finally gave me some relief. Black had stronger continuations maintaining full control: With 23. ... exd4!, Black could have preserved a very comfortable position while setting tactical problems.

24. Qxb3 Bxe2 25. Rfe1

I considered 25. Rf2, which may have been slightly more precise defensively, but I liked the idea of activating the rook on the open e-file before the central exchanges.

25. ... exd4 26. Bxd4 Bxd4 27. exd4 Bd3 28. Rb2 Qa5 29. Rc1 Ba6 30. f4?

Throughout the game I kept trying to fix my position with pawn advances, but they mostly created new weaknesses. More patient defense with 30. Kh2 was preferable.

30. ... Rfe8?

Black should have played 30. ... Rfc8, maintaining pressure and keeping good coordination.

31. Kh2

Here, White could have played 31. f5! with active counterplay and practical equality. Sadly, I missed the chance.

31. ... Qd8 32. Bf1?

I knew this move was inaccurate while I was making it. By this point I was already in serious time trouble, and exchanging pieces gave me a false sense that the position would become easier to handle practically.

32. ... Qf6 33. Bxa6 bxa6 34. Qd3 a5 35. Ra2 Reb8 36. Rc6 Rb4 37. Rc4 Rb5 38. Qe4

Around this point I had only seconds remaining repeatedly, but the increment would restore 30 seconds and allow me to survive.

38. ... Kf8 39. Rca4 Qe7 40. Qc2 Rab8

Not 40. ... Rxd5?? 41. Qc6.

41. Rxa5 Rxa5 42. Rxa5 Qe3!

Now all White's kingside weaknesses are exposed. Black's attack becomes very dangerous.

43. Ra4 Rb3 44. Qg2 Rd3 45. Ra2 Qxd4 46. f5

A practical decision aimed at destroying Black's pawn structure and creating drawing chances in an endgame.

46. ... gxf5 47. Rf2 Qxd5?

When the opposing king is this exposed, it usually makes sense to keep queens on the board. Now Black's technical task becomes much more difficult.

48. Qxd5 Rxd5 49. Kg2 Ke7 50. Re2+ Kf6 51. Kf3 Rd3+ 52. Kf4 Rd4+ 53. Kf3 h5?

Here Black creates a concrete target that finally gives me real counterplay. More accurate was 53. ... Re4 or simply centralizing while keeping the kingside intact.

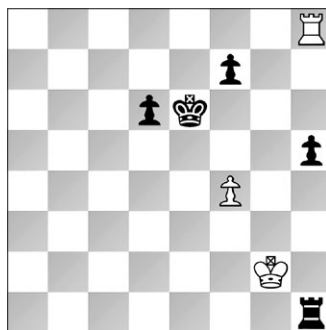
54. Re8 Rg4 55. Rd8!

When the d-pawn falls, White is close to equalizing.

55. ... f4 56. gxf4 Ke6 57. Rh8!

Now the h-pawn becomes the focus.

57. ... Rxh4 58. Kg3 Rh1 59. Kg2



59. ... Re1??

Black no longer has any real winning chances here, but plenty of moves draw. Instead, this is the decisive blunder.

60. Re8+! Kf5 61. Rxe1 Kxf4 62. Rf1+ Ke3 63. Rxf7 d5 64. Rf5 d4 65. Re5+ Kd2 66. Rxh5 d3 67. Kf2, Black resigned.

Waiting and Staying Warm

With the win, USA Women had a two-point lead in the women's standings with 10/16 (match wins were worth two points; ties, one).

Kazakhstan Women's run of tough pairings, thanks to their early success, had continued after the rest day: A loss in Round 7 and a tie in Round 8 (against one of the unofficial American teams — the Jhunjhunwala brothers of United States of America - Six Brothers) left them out of contention for gold with only 7/16. Czech Republic Women were on the same score after tying Canada - Toronto in Round 8.

The only team that could catch the Americans was England Women, which improved to 8/16 after tying compatriots England-2. If Team USA Women lost their last match and England Women defeated the Quebecois team, there would be a tie for first.

Team USA Women was up to a tie for sixth in the overall standings (out of 36 teams), and in Round 9 they would face the formidable England-1 team, boasting GMs Michael Adams, Daniel Gormally, Mark Hebden, John Emms, and Nigel Davies. Emms sat the round out, so Adams (FIDE 2629) would take Board 1 (this is only speculation, but perhaps Mickey was trying to

do his part for England Women!).

Each game was sharp, but England-1 won 4-0. Meanwhile, however, while England Women's IM Susan Lalic won on Board 1, Quebec won on the bottom two boards for a 2½-1½ match victory. Czech Republic Women and Kazakhstan Women were able to leapfrog England Women with last-round victories to each reach 9/18, winning the silver and bronze medals respectively.

"In a long event like the World Senior Teams Championship," Belakovskaia said, "every half-point matters, and our success came from collective resilience, preparation, and constant support for one another throughout the tournament."

"After the victory," Tsodikova said, "we celebrated with a team swim in the Adriatic Sea. It was still quite cold at the end of April, and almost no one else was swimming — but the excitement of winning kept us warm."

That's Not The End Of It

The newfound support for senior women's chess has changed the way the team prepares, plays, and thinks about the game.

"With the creation of the U.S. Senior Women's Championship," said Tsodikova, "my approach has definitely become more serious. ... It has become both more demanding and more rewarding."

Balancing preparation with the demands of daily life is something most readers will be familiar with. Belakovskaia is no exception. "After winning my third U.S. Women's Championship in 1999," she said, "I stepped away from professional chess because there simply was no realistic way to support myself (and a family) financially through women's chess at that time." She earned a master's degree, worked in finance, operated a chess academy, and eventually moved into academia.

The creation of the U.S. Senior Women's Championship "gave many of us a meaningful path back into serious competitive chess," she added. And the new support for the championship means even more: "I am deeply grateful to US Chess for recognizing the importance of supporting senior women players and creating opportunities for senior women to return to high-level competitive chess." ♠

Be sure to follow the 2026 U.S. Senior Championships this month at us chess.org!

'I Never Defeated a Healthy Opponent'

Savielly Tartakower could dish out zingers on the board as well.

BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI

B

ORN UNDER THE UMBRELLA of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Grandmaster Savielly Tartakower (1887-1956) would become a Polish citizen before committing his allegiance to France, joining the French Resistance under the alias "Lieutenant Cartier." Always a dangerous competitor, and a leading figure in the Hypermodern chess movement, he is possibly best known for his wit, having penned some of the most familiar one-liners in chess lore, such as "The blunders are all there on the board, waiting to be made," or, "It's always better to sacrifice your opponent's men."

In this month's game, we see that Tartakower's tactical shots could be as on target as his sharp tongue.

THREE KNIGHTS GAME (C63)

David Schapiro
Savielly Tartakower
Barmen, 1905

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Nc3



Now ensure that the position above is set up on your chessboard. As you play through the remaining moves in this game, use a piece of

paper to cover the article, exposing Black's next move only after trying to guess it. If you guess correctly, give yourself the par score. Sometimes points are also awarded for second-best moves, and there may even be bonus points — or deductions — for other moves and variations. Note that ** means that Black's move is on the next line. **

3. **Par Score 5** **f5**

With this advance, Black gets central play in return for tolerating a weakened king's position. You may accept **full credit** for 3. ... Nf6.

4. **Bb5**

This brings the game into the Schliemann Variation of the Ruy Lopez. **

4. **Par Score 5** **Nf6**

Black develops and pressures e4. Please accept **full credit** for 4. ... fxe4.

5. **exf5**

White has several other moves, but this is the most energetic. **

5. **Par Score 5** **e4**

This is best, though you may accept **full credit** for 5. ... Bc5, especially if you planned to answer 6. Nxe5 by 6. ... 0-0.

6. **Qe2**

Instead of this pin, White simply could have played 6. Nh4. **

6. **Par Score 5** **Qe7**

Black unpins his e-pawn, and now White's f3-knight will soon have to move anyway.

7. **Bxc6**

White was afraid that 7. Nh4 would be answered by 7. ... Nd4, so he first gets rid of

the c6-knight. **

7. **Par Score 3** **bxc6**

Capturing toward the center is better, but you may have **full credit** for 7. ... dxc6.

8. **Nh4**

Since he must move the f3-knight, White makes sure his f5-pawn is bolstered. **

8. **Par Score 5** **d5**

A typical move, overprotecting e4 and opening a diagonal for the light-squared bishop. Black is thinking about playing 9. ... d4.

9. **d3**

White prepares to develop the c1-bishop, while nullifying 9. ... d4. **

9. **Par Score 5** **exd3**

You may accept **full credit** for 9. ... Ba6.

10. **cxd3**

White takes back, knowing he retains the option of trading queens. **

10. **Par Score 6** **Ba6**

Black posts the bishop with a threat to the d3-pawn.

11. **Qxe7+**

Even though 11. Bg5 Bxd3 12. Qxe7+ Bxe7 13. 0-0-0 gives back a pawn, it was a little better than the text. **

11. **Par Score 3** **Bxe7**

12. **d4**

This gives Black a definite advantage. The developing 12. Bg5 was still more prudent. **

12. **Par Score 6** **0-0**

ABCS OF CHESS

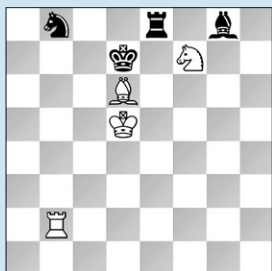
THESE PROBLEMS ARE all related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

JULY EXERCISE:

If you're in a rut, try a different tack: Instead of worrying about results, take a break and try playing for the sheer amusement of it all. Do this for a while, playing casual games and exploring openings and time controls. You might find your nervousness abates. Don't be surprised if your game suddenly feels fresh, and you can once again appreciate chess as the stimulating pastime it really is.

PROBLEM 1

Mating net



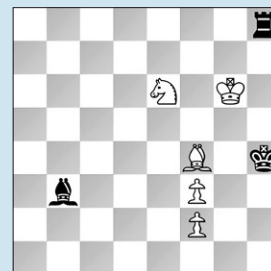
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



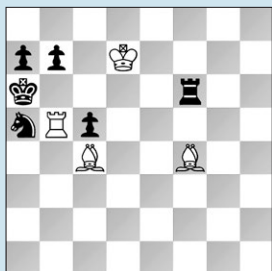
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



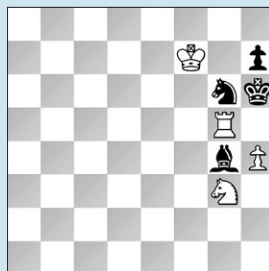
PROBLEM 4

Mating net



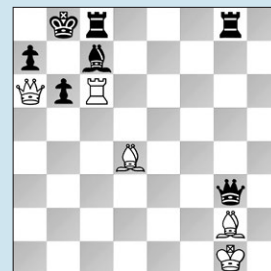
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



Tartakower continues to mobilize his pieces, but also interesting was 12. ... Rab8 (**full credit**), after which White has some problems to solve.

13. Nf3

White hopes to post this knight on e5, but Black stays clearly in command. **

13. Par Score 6 Bb4

A natural pin, but there are other good moves. Accept **full credit** for 13. ... Rae8 or 13. ... Rab8.

14. Bd2

Obstructing the e-file with 14. Be3 or 14. Ne5 would have been better. **

14. Par Score 5 Rae8+

This is the right rook to check with, since Black still wants to target the f5-pawn.

15. Kd1

Even though a tempo is wasted, White should have retrenched with 15. Be3. His king now becomes exposed. **

15. Par Score 5 Ng4

White is in trouble. How is he to defend the f2-pawn?

16. Re1

He chooses not to defend it. If 16. Be1, then 16. ... Bxc3 17. bxc3 Re2 puts White under

great pressure (**1 bonus point** if you saw that). **

16. Par Score 5 Nxf2+

17. Kc2

On 17. Kc1, Black has 17. ... Nd3+. **

17. Par Score 5 Bd3+

18. Kb3

The retreat 18. Kc1 is met by 18. ... Bxf5, with various threats. The White king is not in a happy place. **

18. Par Score 5 Rb8

Black defends the bishop and sets up a discovered check. **

19. Ne5

White might have tried 19. a3, but Black still comes out ahead after 19. ... Bd6+ 20. Ka2 Bc4+ 21. Kb1 Nd3 (**1 bonus point**). **

19. Par Score 6 Bc5+

This is the best discovery, since it keeps open the possibility of giving a bishop check on b6 in some lines.

20. Ka4 **

20. Par Score 5 Rb4+

21. Ka3

Walking into a discovered check. But 21. Ka5 heads toward "no man's land." **

21. Par Score 5 Rxd4+

22. Kb3

It doesn't help much to play 22. b4. After 22. ... Bxb4+ 23. Kb2 Bxf5, White's position is hopeless. **

22. Par Score 5 Rb8+

White can jettison a couple of pieces, and he still doesn't survive: After 23. Nb5 Rxb5+ there's 24. Kc3 Rc4+ 25. Nxc4 d4 mate or 24. Bb4 Rdx4+ 25. Kc3 d4+ 26. Kd2 Rxb2+ 27. Kc1 Rc2 mate. Faced with those two bleak endings, White gave up.

23. White resigned.



POSITION AFTER 22. ... Rb8

A very nice little game by Tartakower. ♠

Thrill of the Chase

Jordan Himelfarb chronicles the contest for the crown.

BY IM JOHN WATSON



JORDAN HIMELFARB'S *Interregnum* is subtitled "Inside the Grueling and Glamorous Battle to Become the

Next King of Chess." The core of the book is an account of the 2024 World Championship, beginning with the qualification process for the 2023 Candidates Tournament, in Toronto, through the Candidates itself to the World Championship match between GMs Ding Liren and Gukesh Dommaraju.

The use of 'interregnum' in the title refers to the vacancy created by Magnus Carlsen's voluntary abdication of the championship. The idea is that the subsequent match won by Ding over Nepomniachtchi in some sense put the chess world into a waiting period until an indisputable king emerged — one who had gone through the entire cycle in traditional fashion. Be that as it may, Himelfarb's *Prologue* nicely sets the scene for the 2023-24 cycle by focusing on Ding, Nepomniachtchi, and Carlsen: the world champion at the time, the most recent challenger, and the world's leading player.

Since the World Championship match itself is more thoroughly covered elsewhere, I'm going to focus upon the book's unique coverage of the Candidates cycle, and especially the qualifying cycle, which has seldom been the subject of chess books. Nepomniachtchi was already qualified by virtue of being a finalist in the previous World Championship, leaving seven slots to be determined. Himelfarb's main narrative begins with the 2023 World Cup in Baku, Azerbaijan, a knockout tournament which produces three qualifiers.

He first portrays the chessplaying life of modern elite players in general terms, writing in a lively and entertaining style. Himelfarb then turns to individual players, some of whom he has interviewed. He be-



gins with GM Wesley So, who in mid-tournament is in a crisis and beset by what the author describes as "anxiety and emotional exhaustion." The author first provides some background, with an empathetic account of So's complex and difficult upbringing, including his defection from the Filipino chess federation to the U.S. team and his subsequent rise to the world's elite. Himelfarb's well-written biographical snippets are one of the best features of his book, giving the reader a feel for the players' upbringing and personalities.

Turning to the World Cup itself, the author gives verbal accounts of games, but with no moves or diagrams. He begins with So's two-game knockout match against GM Alexey Sarana in the fourth round, and here Himelfarb's lack of playing experience

becomes apparent. Describing So's first-game loss, Himelfarb writes: "So was buckling; by the twenty-third move of his game against Sarana, his position was falling apart. A knight on the rim, the saying goes, is dim — and So's horse, stranded on the flank, was proving the maxim. Meanwhile, the Russian's most powerful pieces were well coordinated in the center of the board, providing cover for his pawn as it marched inexorably into white territory, threatening to become a queen. By move fifty-three, So's position was hopeless and the American resigned."

It's a dramatic story and nicely expressed, but not quite what happened in the game, where Sarana actually made a mistake on Move 24 and allowed So to completely equalize. A few moves later So, who had already centralized his "dim" knight and stood perfectly well, miscalculated badly and fell into a lost position; the game ended quickly after 34 (not 53) moves. Himelfarb then describes So (Black) as fighting back in the second game: "He pointed his bishops at the white king. He brought his queen into the attack. But try as he might, he could not find an advantage" In fact, never once did So point either of his bishops at the enemy king (much less both) and his queen wasn't part of any attack. Did the author even look at the game? The lack of a proofreader who plays chess may not bother a popular audience, but I found it misleading that he describes games so dramatically and simplistically even when the description doesn't match what happened.

In the Caruana – Dominguez World Cup mini-match, Himelfarb writes that "Caruana played a brilliant game" and describes the Tarrasch Variation of the Queen's Gambit Declined as leaving Black with "an ill-defended queen's pawn, a potential long-term weakness. Caruana pressed and pressed,

exploiting with glacial pace and force the fault in his opponent's pawn structure until, on move forty-five, with black's position untenable, Dominguez saw the truth and resigned." That sounds plausible, but the truth is more mundane: Dominguez effortlessly maintained complete equality throughout the game without any problems whatsoever with his d-pawn, and only after Caruana exchanged that pawn did Dominguez make a serious error that gave Caruana the advantage (right before time control, as so often happens). Caruana has played many brilliant games, to be sure, but this was one was fairly routine. Similarly, in the game Pragganandhaa – Erigaisi, Black's knight sacrifice is described as giving him "a winning initiative," even though the resulting position is completely equal and the game is decided because White blunders (again, in a hurry just before time control).

There are numerous cases throughout the book in which Himelfarb tries to describe the course of a game or position in specific terms and misses the mark, or exaggerates how dramatic or unusual the play is. I understand that these won't affect the enjoyment of 99% of readers, but those familiar with chess literature should understand that this is a piece of journalistic writing, rather like popular sportswriting, that emphasizes narrative drama, sometimes at the expense of a less exciting reality.

In the end, Pragganandhaa ends up qualifying from the World Cup, as does Caruana (who gets extensive coverage throughout the book). The third new Candidate is a surprise: GM Nijat Abasov, a "local" Azerbaijani, who defeats powerful opponents such as Giri, Svidler, and Vidit. He even nabs a draw against Carlsen, losing their mini-match but finishing in the top three when Carlsen cedes his spot. Himelfarb supplies a sympathetic and entertaining portrait of this underdog, whose cause is taken up by Azerbaijani fans throughout the country. This chapter also includes a brief history of the Indian chess explosion which began with Anand's ascent to the World Championship. The reader is introduced to the accomplishments and personalities of Erigaisi, Pragganandhaa, Gukesh, and Vidit. Anyone who follows contemporary events will enjoy knowing the background of these leading participants.

Two further slots for the 2024 Candidates were reserved for the winners of the Grand Swiss tournament in the city of Douglas on the Isle of Man. These slots ended up going to Vidit and American GM Hikaru Nakamura. Himelfarb recounts Nakamura's transi-

tion from a longtime member of the world's chess elite (reaching #2) to the world's most popular and successful chess streamer. Nakamura had moved into streaming as his over-the-board results declined and he began to play much less frequently. But after a few years, he felt that his absence from the grueling professional schedule gave him an opportunity to play for fun, free of the pressure of constant preparation. It seemed to work, as his results improved dramatically. When asked why that was the case, he replied, "I literally don't care." This attitude, while it aroused skepticism, seemed to be a good psychological formula, as he qualified for two consecutive Candidates and scored well in both. His journey has continued this year with a return to second in the world rankings and a third consecutive Candidates.

According to Himelfarb's account, Vidit's success was also attributable, at least partially, to psychological factors. He was an extremely promising young player who remained highly ranked but whose progress seemed to have stalled in his mid-20s as other young guns passed him by. Vidit began working with a guru on mindfulness and meditation. He improved at controlling his emotions and recovering from losses. It paid off in Douglas, where he kept his head in critical situations and achieved his goal of qualifying for the Candidates. This chapter has some fascinating portraits of various chess stars, including GM Levon Aronian, with various details of his rich life story.

After Baku and the Isle of Man, only two slots remained. One of these was based solely upon having the highest rating, and the chapter "The Ratings Race" recounts the story of how So and the French-Iranian GM Alireza Firouzja compete to grab that spot. In the end, Firouzja plays in a fairly obscure tournament at the end of the year and overtakes So. The various shenanigans along the way illustrate how the system is in need of reform (which to some extent has happened).

Finally, a series of tournaments called the FIDE Circuit guarantee a Candidates slot for the player who has earned the most points during the year. Caruana was the clear winner in 2023, but since he had already qualified via the World Cup, the race came down to the world-class 29-year-old "veteran" Anish Giri and 17-year-old Gukesh Dommaraju, who had just broken Carlsen's record as the youngest player ever to reach 2750. Himelfarb is at his best providing in-depth accounts of both of their backgrounds. Somewhat sadly, as in the ratings race, the process again allows for some (perfectly legal) manipulation, and a tournament ar-

ranged by the Indian federation at the last minute with the specific intent of helping Gukesh becomes decisive in giving him enough points to overtake Giri. This minor manipulation proves to be history-changing.

In the 2024 Toronto Candidates Tournament itself, the lower-rated dark horses Abasov and Vidit quickly fell off the pace, while of the younger stars, Firouzja had a disastrous collapse, finishing second-to-last, and Pragganandhaa played well, but only enough to finish with an even score. It's refreshing that instead of dismissing the players who were unsuccessful, Himelfarb spends some time on their personalities, families, and feelings.

In the meantime, the more experienced players asserted themselves. Nepomniachtchi took an early lead (as he had in the previous two Candidates, which he won), and Caruana and Nakamura won enough games to stay within striking range. Then there was the amazing case of Gukesh, who just kept drawing the top players and beating most of the ones below him. Suddenly, in Rounds 12 and 13, he won two games in a row to land in clear first place. By the 14th and last round, four players were in contention for first, with Gukesh half-point ahead of Nakamura, Caruana, and Nepomniachtchi. In an exciting last round, Gukesh drew Nakamura and Caruana missed some clear wins, one right after time control, leaving Gukesh the clear winner.

I'll skip the account of the World Championship itself, which is well-covered elsewhere. Gukesh's win over Ding only confirmed the growing strength of young players in professional chess, and in spite of the continued presence of Carlsen, Nakamura, and Caruana at the top of the ranking list, youngsters in their early and mid-20s are increasingly filling the slots on that list, while this year's championship between 19-year-old Gukesh and 20-year-old Sindarov is simply unprecedented.

For casual players and those whose chess experience comes from online sources, *Interregnum* would serve as a fun introduction to the world of contemporary over-the-board competition. The book won't improve your chess, but paints a revealing picture of the excitement and challenges of tournament life. Unlike most chess books, this one makes us feel that we have gotten to understand the players better on a human level, which increases our appreciation of their struggles. ♠

Himelfarb, Jordan. *Interregnum: Inside the Grueling and Glamorous Battle to Become the Next King of Chess*. Pegasus Books, 2026. 224 pp.; ISBN 9781639369911.

Little Things Can Mean a Lot

In the Sigeman tournament, points depended on subtleties.

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

A

NUMBER OF ENDGAMES AT the Sigeman tournament, held in Malmö, Sweden, in May, featured missed opportunities that

escaped the keen eyes of elite players.

The marquee attraction of the tournament was, of course, a rare appearance by Magnus Carlsen in classical chess. And our marquee game this month is Carlsen's shock loss to GM Jordan van Foreest. The rare rook versus knight dynamics coaxed a surprising number of mistakes, with the last blunder deciding the issue.

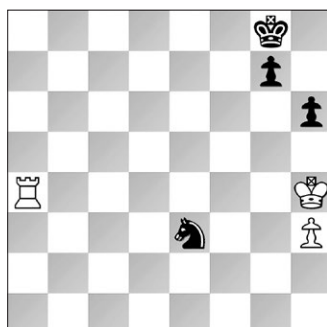
KNIGHT ON THE RIM

GM Jorden van Foreest (2735)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2840)

31st Sigeman & Co. (4), Malmö,

05.04.2026



BLACK TO MOVE

Magnus Carlsen notoriously quipped that he didn't believe in fortresses — then GM Sergey Karjakin pulled off a remarkable one in their World Championship match. But it seems Magnus still does not believe in them. Here all Black has to do is bring his

knight home to the king. The easiest way to do this is 58. ... Nd5 and the fortress is not particularly difficult.

58. ... Kh7?!

Even 58. ... Kf7 would suffice, as the knight is still OK.

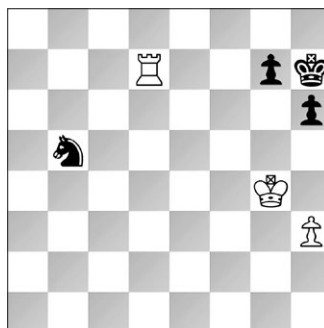
59. Ra5! Kg6 60. Re5 Nf5+ 61. Kg4 Nd4?

The one danger in this endgame is for the knight to be pulled apart from the king, and now it is actually happening. It's still a fortress after 61. ... h5+! 62. Kf4 Nh6 63. Re6+ Kh7 64. Kg5 Ng8. White's h-pawn just isn't much to work with.

62. Re4 Nb5 63. Rc4 Kh7

An abject admission that he has misplayed his king, but 63. ... Kf7 64. Kh5 enables White's king to penetrate to g6 with decisive effect.

64. Rc6 Nd4 65. Rd6 Nb5 66. Rd7?



How can it be wrong to put the rook on this beautiful square? The timing is off. The right way was 66. Rd8!! Kg6 67. Rd7! creating *zugzwang*. After 67. ... Kh7 68. Kf5 (or 67. ... Na3 68. Rd6+ Kh7 69. Kf5) White's

king will cut back to completely ensnare the wayward knight.

66. ... Nc3?

With 66. ... Kg6! Black is the one to spring the *zugzwang*: 67. Kf4 Kf6 and 67. h4 Kf6 68. Kh5 g5! do not get the job done.

67. Kf5 Ne2 68. Re7?!

This does not quite cost the win, but 68. Rd3! looks much more logical. The knight will be duly rounded up: 68. ... Nc1 69. Re3 Na2 70. Ke4 Kg6 (70. ... Nb4 71. Rc3 Kg6 72. Rc4!) 71. Ra3 Nb4 72. Rb3 Nc2 73. Rb2 Na3 74. Kd3 etc.

68. ... Nd4+ 69. Kf4 Kg6 70. Re4 Nb5

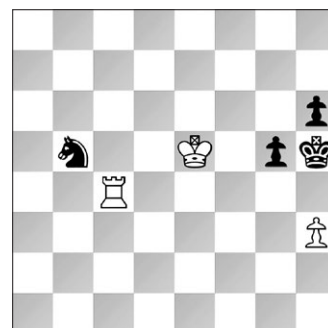
71. Rc4

It looks like we've just been going around in circles, but White's king has nudged over to f4. Now 71. ... Kh7 72. Ke5 will cost the knight, so Magnus has to seek counterplay.

71. ... Kh5 72. Ke5

It looks like a nice trick: 72. Rc5+ g5+ saves the knight. But White should do this and win anyway after 73. Ke5.

72. ... g5



73. Ke6?

73. Rc5, as mentioned in the previous note, was the winning move. 73. ... Na7 (if 73. ... Na3 74. Ke4 Kh4 75. Kd3 Kxh3 76. Ra5 White captures the knight in the nick of time) 74. Rc7 Nb5 75. Rc4 Na3 (75. ... Na7 76. Kd5) 76. Rc3 Nb5 77. Rb3 Nc7 78. Rb6 Ne8 79. Rc6 Ng7 80. Kf6 Ne8+ 81. Kf5! (81. Kf7? g4! actually draws!) 81. ... Ng7+ 82. Ke5 with a fatal zugzwang.

73. ... Na3!

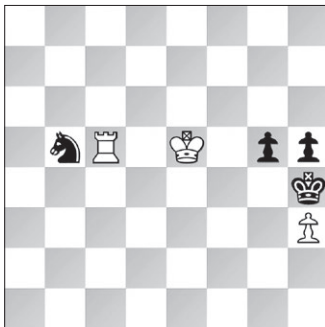
Forced, but Magnus shouldn't have tried this move again.

74. Rd4 Nb5 75. Rd3 Kh4 76. Ke5 h5

77. Rb3 Na7 78. Rc3 Nb5

Perhaps 78. ... g4 79. hxg4 Kxg4! was more straightforward.

79. Rc5



78. ... Na3?

Now this is the wrong direction, as Black needs for his king to move freely. The draw

is there with 79. ... Na7 80. Kf5 Kxh3 81. Kxg5 Kg3 — White needs to remove the h-pawn to get the knight, but if he takes the pawn Black's king will enact a rescue.

80. Kf5 Nb1 81. Rc2 Na3 82. Rb2 g4

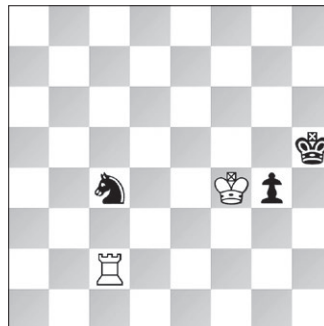
83. hxg4 hxg4 84. Kf4

This doesn't spoil anything, but the direct path was 84. Rg2 g3 85. Kf4.

84. ... Kh5 85. Ra2?

Van Foreest errs again on the cusp of victory. 85. Kf5 Kh4 86. Rg2 g3 87. Kf4 was again available. One possible finish would be 87. ... Nb5 88. Rg1 Kh5 89. Rxg3 Nd4 90. Rd3 Ne6+ 91. Kf5 Ng7+ 92. Kf6 Ne8+ 93. Kf7 winning the knight.

85. ... Nc4 86. Rc2



86. ... Na3?

This blunder is particularly mystifying. The 30-second increment is certainly enough to see the knight is lost immediately here. By process of elimination 86. ... Nb6 had to be

tried, and it even draws! After 87. Rc5+ Kh4 88. Rg5 (88. Rc6 Nd5+ is the key point) 88. ... Nd7 89. Rxg4+ Kh5 90. Kf5 Nf8 the knight has pulled off the miracle escape.

87. Rc3 Nb1 88. Rd3, Black resigned.

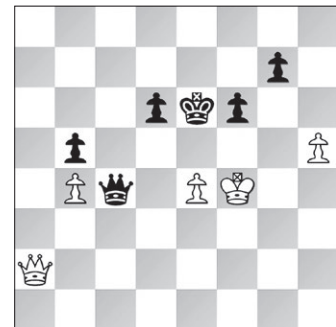
QUEEN ENDING X2

GM Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (2708)

GM Arjun Erigaisi (2751)

31st Sigeman & Co. (2), Malmö,

05.02.2026



WHITE TO MOVE

White can't stay in the queen ending without dropping at least a pawn, so the trade is obligatory.

60. Qxc4+ bxc4 61. b5 d5!

Black has two moves to play, but in what order? 61. ... c3 62. Ke3 d5 63. b6 would transpose into the game, but 63. exd5+! Kxd5 64. Kd3 Kc5 65. Kxc3 Kxb5 66. Kd4 Kc6 67.



The aftermath of
van Foreest versus
Carlsen

Ke4 Kd6 68. Kf5 Ke7 69. Kg6 Kf8 70. h6 gxh6 71. Kxf6 draws by force.

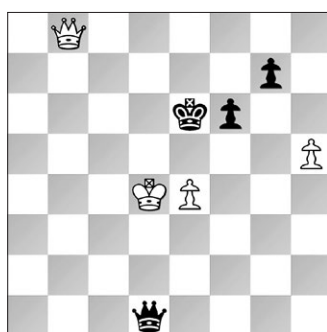
62. b6 c3 63. Ke3?

A queen ending is in the offing, but which one? It is not so obvious, but 63. exd5+ Kxd5 64. b7 c2 65. b8=Q c1=Q+ 66. Kg3 was the right one to go for. The tablebase confirms White should draw with proper play. I would say the pawn structure makes it harder for Black's king to successfully advance.

63. ... d4+!

Without this move White would win, but now 64. Kd3? Kd6 wins routinely, so it is time to "unliquidate."

64. Kxd4 c2 65. b7 c1=Q 66. b8=Q Qd1+?



Erigaissi grabs the pawn as fast as he can, but elite grandmasters tend to approach these problems less directly, looking to retain important options. The way to preserve winning chances was 66. ... Qd2+! 67. Kc4 Qe2+ 68. Kd4 Qxh5; the key point is that 69. Qg8+ Qf7 70. Qc8+? Qd7+ forces a queen trade. Without the immediate forced draw, White will likely succumb in the long run, with the Black king marching up the side of the board. The tablebase confirms the win.

67. Ke3 Qxh5

Here Black should try 67. ... Qg1+ 68. Kf3 Qh1+ 69. Ke3 Qh3+ 70. Kf2 Qxh5, though White can barely hold with 71. Qa7 or 71. Qc7.

68. Qg8+

White essentially has a perpetual check or a successful liquidation.

68. ... Qf7 69. Qc8+ Qd7 70. Qg8+ Kd6

71. Qf8+ Kc6 72. Qa8+ Kc7 73. Qa5+ Kd6

74. e5+! fxe5 75. Qb4+ Kc6

75. ... Ke6 76. Qg4+ continues the harassment of Black's king.

76. Qa4+ Kc7 77. Qa5+ Kd6

Or 77. ... Kb7 78. Qb4+ Kc8 79. Qf8+ Kc7 80. Qc5+, etc.

78. Qb4+, draw.

American GM Andy Woodward started off with a nice victory over GM Nils Grandelius, but he let a couple of wins get away later.

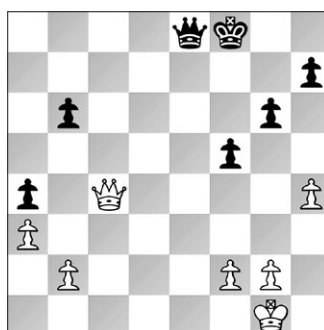
PUSH THE PAWN, ANDY!

GM Andy Woodward (2635)

GM Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (2708)

31st Sigeman & Co. (5), Malmö,

05.05.2026



WHITE TO MOVE

29. Qd4

Tempting, but 29. Qb4+ Qe7 30. Qxb6 Qxh4 31. b3 is the way to maintain some winning chances with the outside passed pawn.

29. ... b5 30. Qh8+ Kf7?

Andy's choice is rewarded! 30. ... Ke7 31. Qxh7+ Kd8 produces a clear draw, as White does not have time to defend an upcoming queen incursion.

31. Qxh7+ Kf6 32. Kh2! Qe5+ 33. Kh3 Qc5?

Erdogmus allows a critical strengthening that the superior 33. ... Qe4 would have prevented.

34. Qh8+ Kf7 35. f3

White can consolidate with 35. h5 gxh5 36. Qxh5+ Kf8 37. Qf3 with great hopes of reeling in the point.

35. ... b4?

Erdogmus understandably wants to liquidate the queenside, but putting more heat on the king with 35. ... Qc1 would have kept White's winning chances minimal.

36. axb4 Qxb4 37. Qe5?

This was Andy's last chance for a tactical solution: 37. h5! gxh5 38. Qxh5+ wins easily, as Black's queen and king are unfortunately

placed. 38. ... Kf6 39. Qh4+ trades queens, but 39. ... Ke6 39. g4! raises that specter, too, while 39. ... Qxb2 40. Qxf5+ Ke7 41. Qe4+ wins slowly but surely.

37. ... a3 38. bxa3 Qxa3 39. h5 Qc1!

In Andy's defense, Erdogmus had to find this move to hold.

40. hxg6+ Kxg6

The time control has been reached but White no longer has realistic chances, and a draw was agreed on Move 104 after endless maneuvers.

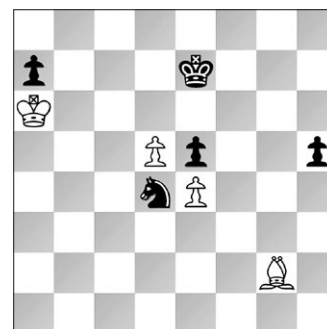
BOXING LESSON

GM Arjun Erigaissi (2751)

GM Andy Woodward (2635)

31st Sigeman & Co. (7), Malmö,

05.07.2026



BLACK TO MOVE

52. ... h4??

Such an unfortunate blunder after a beautiful performance — 52. ... Kd6 53. Kxa7 Kc5! was the key to victory. The White king doesn't get back, nor can it successfully aid the d-pawn: 54. Kb7 Nb5! 55. Kc8 Kd6! and the knight goes to assist the h-pawn.

53. Kxa7 Kd6 54. Kb6 Nc2 55. Kb5 Ne3 56.

Bf3 h3 57. Kb4 Nc2+ 58. Kc3 Nd4 59. Bh1

Ne2+ 60. Kd2 Nd4, draw.

Alas, Black is one tempo slow: 60. ... Ng3 61. Bf3 h2 62. Ke3 h1=Q 63. Bxh1 Nxh1?? 64. Kf3 would again show the limitations of knights!

While 16-year-old Woodward was trying to knock Erigaissi off the winner's podium, 14-year-old Turkish superstar Erdogmus was trying to do the same with Carlsen. Erdogmus' earlier kick saves in the endgame fueled an excellent result, but Carlsen managed to break through and tie for first with Erigaissi — despite the fact that Erdogmus had set up a seemingly impenetrable fortress. ♠

TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

2026 U.S. G/30 & G/60 National Championship

SEPTEMBER 11-13, 2026 — LATLA# 55780

Site: Lavin Bernick Center, Tulane University
Address: 29 McAlister Drive, New Orleans, LA 70118
Overall Prize Fund: \$6,000 **GP Pts:** 20
FIDE: N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Downriver Chess & Tulane Chess • info@downriverchess.com • downriverchess.com

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of June 10, 2026, for the 2026 Grand Prix. These standings are updated regularly, but should be considered unofficial. Visit ratings.uschess.org/grand-prix/standings for up-to-date information.

2026 US CHESS GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

	Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1.	GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	264.00
2.	GM JOSE GABRIEL CARDOSO FOR	MA	75.00
3.	GM FRANCESCO SONIS	MO	64.00
4.	EMMANUEL CARTER	NC	63.00
5.	GM ALEXANDER IVANOV	MA	62.00
6.	JAMISON EDRIKH KAO	CT	51.00
7.	GM MARK HEIMANN	CA	48.00
8.	GM SEMEN KHANIN	IN	46.00
9.	GM B. SUBRAMANIAM H	FOR	45.00
10.	IM OLEKSII BILYCH	CA	45.00

The Grand Prix continues in 2026. For information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

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

54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC **TLA# 53565**

Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008
Overall Prize Fund: \$208,000 **GP Pts:** 300 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.tour.com

GRAND PRIX

2026 Super Summer Swiss

JULY 2-5, 2026 — TN **TLA# 56642**

Site: Memphis Chess Club **Address:** 195 Madison Ave Suite 101, Memphis, TN 38103
Overall Prize Fund: \$6,420 **GP Pts:** 15 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Memphis Chess Club • info@memphischessclub.com • 9015013257 • memphischessclub.com/tournaments

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship

JULY 3-5, 2026 — CA-N **TLA# 55950**

Site: Holiday Inn Express & Suites **Address:** 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821
Overall Prize Fund: \$12,500 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** John McCumiskey • sactochess@sbcglobal.net • 916-524-9479 • sacramentochessclub.org

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship

JULY 5, 2026 — DC **TLA# 55320**

Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel **Address:** 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008
Overall Prize Fund: \$3,000 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Drag-

on Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX

The 4th Annual DMV Open

JULY 10-12, 2026 — VA **TLA# 56509**

Site: SpringHill Suites by Marriott Dulles Airport
Address: 22595 Shaw Road, Sterling, VA 20166
Overall Prize Fund: \$3,500 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** DMV Chess • inpersonevents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

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

19th annual Chicago Class Championships

JULY 17-19, 2026 — IL **TLA# 55299**

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@chess.us • chess.tour.com

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

34th annual Southern Open

JULY 17-19, 2026 — FL **TLA# 55402**

Site: Holiday Inn Resort Kissimmee By The Parks **Address:** 3011 Maingate Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34747
Overall Prize Fund: \$20,000
GP Pts: 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.tour.com

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

27th annual Pittsburgh Open

JULY 17-19, 2026 — PA **TLA# 55352**

Site: Courtyard Marriott University Center Hotel **Address:** 100 Lyttone Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Overall Prize Fund: \$13,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.tour.com

GRAND PRIX

ICA FIDE Championship

JULY 18-19, 2026 — NJ **TLA# 57159**

Site: Community Church of Glen Rock Education Building **Address:** 354 Rock Road, Glen Rock, NJ 07452
Overall Prize Fund: \$2,300 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** International Chess Academy • chessdirector@icanj.net • 2017970330 • icanj.net

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

75th New Hampshire Open

JULY 18-19, 2026 — NH **TLA# 57078**

Site: DoubleTree Hotel **Address:** 700 Elm St., Manchester, NH 03101
Overall Prize Fund: \$2,875 **GP Pts:** 15 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Hal Terrie • halterrie@comcast.net • 6038582728 • nhchess.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

11th annual Chicago Class Blitz Championship

JULY 18, 2026 — IL **TLA# 55307**

Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel **Address:** 601 N Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling IL 60090
Overall Prize Fund: \$500 **GP Pts:** 10
FIDE: N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.tour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess National Ice Cream Day Grand Prix

JULY 19, 2026 — NC **TLA# 57092**

Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560
Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 **GP Pts:** 10
FIDE: N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Drag-

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

new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar

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

on Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

6th Annual Joe Yun Memorial

JULY 24-26, 2026 — OH **TLA# 56722**

Site: Crowne Plaza Cleveland Airport **Address:** 7230 Engle Rd, Middleburg Heights, OH 44130
Overall Prize Fund: \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Progress With Chess • eliot@progresswithchess.org • 914342557 • progresswithchess.org/yun

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

31st Annual Bradley Open

JULY 24-26, 2026 — CT **TLA# 55353**

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@chess.us • chess.tour.com

GRAND PRIX

13th Annual Washington International

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD **TLA# 54236**

Site: Rockville Hilton **Address:** 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852
Overall Prize Fund: \$51,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Michael W Regan • mregan@stsci.edu • 4104195130 • mdchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess Parents' Day Grand Prix

JULY 26, 2026 — NC **TLA# 57093**

Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560
Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 **GP Pts:** 10
FIDE: N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

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

31st annual Pacific Coast Open

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA-S **TLA# 55399**

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@chess.us • chess.tour.com

GRAND PRIX

3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ **TLA# 56530**

Site: Hilton Garden Inn Mount Holly/Westampton **Address:** 111 Hancock Lane, Westampton, NJ 08060
Overall Prize Fund: \$3,500 **GP Pts:** 30
FIDE: Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** DMV Chess • josh@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

GRAND PRIX

2026 Charlotte Summer Open

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NC **TLA# 55300**

Site: Hilton Garden Inn - Southpark **Address:** 4808 Sharon Road, Charlotte, NC 28210
Overall Prize Fund: \$5,500 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Charlotte Chess Center • events@charlottechesscenter.org • charlottechesscenter.org/events

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

12th Annual Pacific Coast Open Blitz Championship

AUGUST 1, 2026 — CA-S **TLA# 55401**

Site: Hilton Orange County Airport Hotel **Address:** 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine CA 92612
Overall Prize Fund: \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.tour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess Friendship Day Grand Prix

AUGUST 2, 2026 — NC **TLA# 57094**

Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center **Address:** 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560
Overall Prize Fund: \$1,228 **GP Pts:** 10

2026 Awards

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

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

PLEASE NOTE DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

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

FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

GRAND PRIX

5th Annual Beltway Open

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
Site: Hampton Inn and Suites Dulles Address: 22700 Holiday Park Drive, Sterling, VA 20166
Overall Prize Fund: \$3,500 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** DMV Chess • inpersonvents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

GRAND PRIX

Brennan's Rapid Open 2026

AUGUST 8, 2026 — MO TLA# 55388
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club Address: 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Chess National Bowling Day Grand Prix

AUGUST 9, 2026 — NC TLA# 57095
Site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,228 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Dragon Knight Chess • jon@dragonknightchess.com • (919) 422-2535 • dragonknightchess.com

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

56th annual Continental Open

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA TLA# 55944
Site: Hilton Boston/Woburn Hotel Address: 2 Forbes Road, Woburn, MA 01801 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$30,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

13th Annual Potomac Open

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — MD TLA# 56612
Site: Rockville Hilton Address: 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 **Overall Prize Fund:** see online TLA **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Michael Regan • mregan@stsci.edu • 4104195130 • mdchess.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

16th annual Central California Open

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — CA TLA# 55857
Site: Doubletree Hotel Address: 2233 Cesar Chavez, Fresno, CA 93721 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

12th annual Continental Open Blitz Championship

AUGUST 15, 2026 — MA TLA# 55945
Site: Hilton Boston/Woburn Hotel Address: 2 Forbes Road, Woburn, MA 01801 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

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

58th annual Atlantic Open

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
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 • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

21st annual Indianapolis Open

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946
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 • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

13th annual Atlantic Open Blitz Championship

AUGUST 22, 2026 — DC TLA# 55859
Site: Omni Shoreham Hotel Address: 2500 Calvert St., NW, Washington, DC 20008 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

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

2026 Illinois Open

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
Site: DoubleTree by Hilton Lisle-Naperville Address: 3003 Corporate W Dr, Lisle, IL 60532 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$15,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Wilson's Chess & King Registration • bill@kingregistration.com • kingregistration.com/event/10pen26

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

2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
Site: Memphis Downtown Holiday Inn AND Memphis Chess Club Address: 160 Union Ave, and 195 Madison Avenue, respectively, Memphis, TN 38103 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,001 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Memphis Chess Club • info@memphischessclub.com • 9015013257 • memphischessclub.com/tournaments

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2026 Michigan Open

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — MI TLA# 57124
Site: Courtyard by Marriott Address: 11 Monroe Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$5,100 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Michigan Chess Association • jeffchess64@gmail.com • 810-955-7271 • michess.org

GRAND PRIX

2026 Southern California Open

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 57008
Site: Hilton Los Angeles North/Glendale Address: 100 West Glenoaks Blvd., Glendale, CA 91202 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$60,000 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Armen Ambartsoumian • americanchessacademy@gmail.com • coachsamtd@gmail.com • onlineregistration.cc/tournaments/index.php?txn=y9Dg4A%3D%3D&view=zt7g2Q-%3D%3D&act=ven&tid=m6ignw%3D%3D

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

148th annual New York State Championship—America's oldest annual tournament!

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — NY TLA# 55860
Site: Albany Marriott Hotel Address: 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$18,000 **GP Pts:** 80 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • REGIONALS

85th New England Open

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2026 — MA TLA# 57128
Site: Renaissance Framingham Hotel and Conference Center Address: 11657 Worcester Rd., Framingham, MA 01701 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$4,300 **GP Pts:** 30 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Massachusetts Chess Association • info@masschess.org • masschess.org

GRAND PRIX • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2026 Michigan Speed Championship

SEPTEMBER 5, 2026 — MI TLA# 57125
Site: Courtyard Grand Rapids Downtown Address: 11 Monroe Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$600 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Michigan Chess Association • jeffchess64@gmail.com • 810-955-7271 • michess.org

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

2026 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2026 — FL TLA# 53516
Site: Hilton Melbourne at Rialto Place Address: 200 Rialto Place, Melbourne, FL 32901 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$16,000 **GP Pts:** 60 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Space Coast Chess Foundation, Inc. • andrea2@yahoo.com • 412-418-1591 • spacecoastchessfoundation.org/event/floridastatechampionship

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

12th annual New York State Blitz Championship!

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026 — NY TLA# 55862
Site: Albany Marriott Hotel Address: 189 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$800 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Site: Holiday Inn Express & Suites Address: 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$4,800 b/60 **GP Pts:** 20 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** John McCumiskey • sactochess@sbcglobal.net • 916-524-9479 • sacramentochessclub.org

GRAND PRIX

2026 Sacramento Senior Championship

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
Site: Holiday Inn Express & Suites Address: 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$3,300 b/40 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** John McCumiskey • sactochess@sbcglobal.net • 916-524-9479 • sacramentochessclub.org

GRAND PRIX

Beckstead Family Classic 2026

SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2026 — MO TLA# 55384
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club Address: 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2026 Autumn Open & Scholastic

SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2026 — FL TLA# 57109
Site: Delta Hotels Marriott Orlando Celebration Address: 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$9,000 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Central Florida Chess Club (CFCC) • storchnoi@gmail.com • (407) 312-6237 • centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-autumn-open-and-scholastic-weekend-tournament

GRAND PRIX

Catherine McLaughlin Rapid Open 2026

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55387
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club Address: 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2026 Autumn Open Saturday Night Open Blitz

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 — FL TLA# 57110
Site: Delta Hotels Marriott Orlando Celebration Address: 2900 Parkway Boulevard, Kissimmee, FL 34747 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$500 **GP Pts:** 10 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Central Florida Chess Club (CFCC) • storchnoi@gmail.com • (407) 312-6237 • centralflchess.org/cfcc-2026-autumn-open-and-scholastic-weekend-tournament

GRAND PRIX

1st Azeri Chess Academy Open

OCTOBER 5-10, 2026 — TX TLA# 56866
Site: Houston Chess Studio Address: 250 Patton Street, Suite H, Houston, TX 77009 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$12,500 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Azeri Chess Academy LLC • info@azerichessacademy.com • azerichessacademy.com/tournaments/1st-azeri-chess-academy-open

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

43rd Annual Reno Western States Open

OCTOBER 2-4, 2026 — NV TLA# 57101
Site: J Resort Casino Hotel Address: 345 N. Arlington Avenue, Reno NV 89501 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$27,500 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Jerome V. Weikel • wackykyk@aol.com • 775-747-1405 • renochessclub.org

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

34th annual Midwest Class Championships

OCTOBER 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 56700
Site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks, CT 06096 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$17,000 **GP Pts:** 100 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

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

34th annual Eastern Class Championships

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — CT TLA# 56702
Site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel Address: 601 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 • chesstour.com

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

30th annual Eastern Chess Congress

OCTOBER 23-25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56703
Site: Westin Princeton at Forrestal Village Hotel Address: 201 Village Blvd, Princeton, NJ 08540 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$25,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

21st annual Los Angeles Open

NOVEMBER 6-8, 2026 — CA TLA# 56845
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 • chesstour.com

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

35th annual Kings Island Open

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — OH TLA# 56847
Site: Embassy Suites Cincinnati NE Address: 4554 Lake Forest Dr, Blue Ash OH 45242 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$25,000 **GP Pts:** 150 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

Thanksgiving Open 2026

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club **Address:** 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 120 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

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

57th annual National Chess Congress
NOVEMBER 27-29, 2026 — PA TLA# 56849
Site: Loews Hotel **Address:** 1200 Market St, Philadelphia, PA 19107 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$45,250 **GP Pts:** 200 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Continental Chess • director@chess.us • chess.us • chesstour.com

GRAND PRIX

2026 Saint Louis Chess Club Championship
DECEMBER 18-20, 2026 — MO TLA# 55385
Site: Saint Louis Chess Club **Address:** 4663 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis MO 63108 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$5,000 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Saint Louis Chess Club • tournaments@saintlouischessclub.org • 3143612437 • saintlouischessclub.org

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

51st annual Eastern Open
DECEMBER 26-29, 2026 — VA TLA# 56880
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 • chesstour.com

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

36th annual North American Open
DECEMBER 26-30, 2026 — NV TLA# 57084
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 • chess-tour.com

GRAND PRIX

\$10K Guaranteed Ken Ferguson Memorial Open
JANUARY 16-18, 2027 — LA TLA# 55902
Site: Sheraton New Orleans Hotel **Address:** 500 Canal, New Orleans, LA 70130 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$10,000 **GP Pts:** 40 **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Downriver Chess & Tulane Chess • info@downriverchess.com • downriverchess.com

Regional

ALABAMA

JULY 2-5, 2026 — TN TLA# 56642
2026 Super Summer Swiss
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402
34th annual Southern Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

JULY 18, 2026 — AL TLA# 56751
Alabama Dual-Rated State Championship
Site: Evangel Church **Address:** 3975 Vaughn Rd, Montgomery, AL 36106 **Overall Prize Fund:**

\$1,400 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Doug Strout • evangelchess@yahoo.com • facebook.com/evangelchessclub

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

ALASKA

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

JULY 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399
31st annual Pacific Coast Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 6-8, 2026 — CA TLA# 56845
21st annual Los Angeles Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2026 — NV TLA# 57084
36th annual North American Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

ARKANSAS

JULY 2-5, 2026 — TN TLA# 56642
2026 Super Summer Swiss
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 10-31, 2026 — CA TLA# 56764
La Palma Divisional

56th annual CONTINENTAL OPEN

August 13-16, 14-16 or 15-16, 2026 - \$30,000 Guaranteed prizes!

7 rounds at NEW LOCATION: Hilton Boston/Woburn Hotel, Massachusetts!

Hilton Boston/Woburn, 2 Forbes Road, Woburn, MA 01801 (about 11½ miles from downtown Boston). Free parking.

7 sections. 150 Grand Prix Points.

Top 5 sections: August 13-16 or 14-16, 40/80, SD/30; d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60 d10), both schedules merge and play for same prizes within each of the sections.

Under 1300 & Under 1100 sections: August 15-16, G/60, d10.

Premier Section: Open to 2000+ (see peakrating.us). Prizes \$3000-1500-800-400-300, clear/tiebreak win \$100 bonus, top USCF Under 2300 \$1300-700. FIDE rated.

U2100, U1900, U1700 Sections: Prizes each section \$2000-1000-500-300-200. Under 2100 is also FIDE rated.

U1500, U1300 Sections: Prizes each section \$1400-800-400-300-200.

U1100 section: \$800-500-300-200-100.

Unrated prize limits: U1100 \$100, U1300 \$200, U1500 \$300, U1700 \$400, U1900 \$500, U2100 \$600.

Mixed Doubles: best male/female 2-player team combined score (team average under 2200) among all sections: \$1000-500-300. May play different sections and schedules; register (no extra fee) before both players begin round 2.

Cannot play below USCF Online Regular rating minus 100 points. August Official ratings used, USCF unofficial or Online Regular ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. Players scoring 8 or more in 2026 World Open U2200 or below must play in higher section than World Open. See chessevents.us for more rules.

Top 6 sections entry fee: \$158 online by 8/11, \$180 later online or at site until 1 hour before round 1. GMs free, \$150 from prize. Re-entry \$80, no Premier to Premier.

U1100 Section EF: all \$40 less than top 6 sections fee. U1100 re-entry \$60. No checks, credit cards OK.

USCF membership required. See chessevents.us for special rates.

Online entry fee \$5 less to MACA members, join/renew at masschess.org.

4-day Schedule: Reg Thu to 6 pm, rds Thu 7, Fri 11 & 5, Sat & Sun 10 & 4.

3-day Schedule: Reg. Fri to 10 am, rds Fri 11, 2 & 5, merges with 4-day, Fri 5 pm.

2-day Schedule (Under 1300, Under 1100 only): Reg. Sat to 9, rds Sat 10, 1, 4, 7, Sun 10, 1 & 4. **No 4-Day or 3-Day Schedules in U1300 or U1100 Sections.**

Half-point byes OK all rds (limit 2, must commit before rd 3). Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied.

Hotel rates: \$169-169-169-169, use link at chessevents.us or call 781-932-0999, reserve by 7/23.

Enter online: Chessaction.com. No mail entry. Refunds, \$15 service charge.

Email: director@chess.us (also see chesstour.com, chessevents.us).

Blitz: Sat 9:30 pm, enter by 9:10 pm.

Site: La Palma Recreations Center **Address:** 7821 Walker St., La Palma, CA 90623 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$380 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Matthew Smith • seal-frog@gmail.com • T149313277 • lapalmachess.com/LPCC/home/index.html

JULY 15-19, 2026 — NY TLA# 57003
14th NY International Super Swiss Championship
See New York.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399
31st annual Pacific Coast Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 1, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 55401
12th Annual Pacific Coast Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — CA TLA# 55857
16th annual Central California Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — CA-S TLA# 57008
2026 Southern California Open
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 6-8, 2026 — CA TLA# 56845
21st annual Los Angeles Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2026 — NV TLA# 57084
36th annual North American Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

COLORADO

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2026 — NV TLA# 57084
36th annual North American Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

CONNECTICUT

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — CT TLA# 55353
31st Annual Bradley Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56530
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA TLA# 55944
56th annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — CT TLA# 56702
34th annual Eastern Class Championships
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

DELAWARE

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 10-12, 2026 — VA TLA# 56509
The 4th Annual DMV Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56530
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 1, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56531
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Scholastic Championship
See New Jersey.

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
5th Annual Beltway Open
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 11, 2026 — VA TLA# 56510
The 4th Annual DMV Open Scholastic Championship
See Virginia.

JULY 19, 2026 — VA TLA# 56511
2nd Annual Capital-Region Scholastic Championship
See Virginia.

JULY 19, 2026 — VA TLA# 56512
The Mid-Summer Action Tournament
See Virginia.

JULY 25, 2026 — VA TLA# 56548
DMV Summer Scholastic - Saturday
See Virginia.

JULY 25-26, 2026 — VA TLA# 56547
DMV Summer Open Game-45 Tournament
See Virginia.

JULY 26, 2026 — VA TLA# 56550
DMV Summer Scholastic - Sunday
See Virginia.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56530
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 1, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56531
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Scholastic Championship
See New Jersey.

AUGUST 2, 2026 — MD TLA# 56528
Rockville Mid-Summer Action Tournament
See Maryland.

AUGUST 2, 2026 — MD TLA# 56529
The Montgomery County Scholastic Challenge
See Maryland.

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
5th Annual Beltway Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8, 2026 — VA TLA# 56546
5th Annual Beltway Open Scholastic Championship
See Virginia.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 22, 2026 — DC TLA# 55859
13th annual Atlantic Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

FLORIDA

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 15-19, 2026 — NY TLA# 57003
14th NY International Super Swiss Championship
See New York.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402
34th annual Southern Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2026 — FL TLA# 53516
2026 Harvey Lerman Florida State Championship
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2026 — FL TLA# 57109
CFCC 2026 Autumn Open & Scholastic
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 — FL TLA# 57110
CFCC 2026 Autumn Open Saturday Night Open Blitz
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

GEORGIA

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 2-5, 2026 — TN TLA# 56642
2026 Super Summer Swiss
See Grand Prix.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402
34th annual Southern Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

HAWAII

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

IDAHO

JULY 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 2-5, 2026 — TN TLA# 56642
2026 Super Summer Swiss
See Grand Prix.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — IL TLA# 55299
19th annual Chicago Class Championships
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 18, 2026 — IL TLA# 55307
11th annual Chicago Class Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 1, 2026 — IL TLA# 56682
Springfield Chess Club Golden Jubilee Open
Site: Southern View Village Hall **Address:** 3410 South 5th St., Springfield, IL 62703 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$400 **b/30 GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** David Long • 217-726-2584 • springfieldchessclub.com

AUGUST 8, 2026 — IL TLA# 56134
Southern Illinois Summer Open 2026
Site: Salem Community Activities Center **Address:** 416 E Oglesby St. Salem, IL 62881 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$360 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Carl Purcell • carltanpurcell@gmail.com • 6182678145

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946
21st annual Indianapolis Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 56700
34th annual Midwest Class Championships
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — OH TLA# 56847
35th annual Kings Island Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

INDIANA

JULY 17-19, 2026 — IL TLA# 55299
19th annual Chicago Class Championships
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 15, 2026 — KY TLA# 57233
NKY Rated Beginners Open
See Kentucky.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946
21st annual Indianapolis Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 56700
34th annual Midwest Class Championships
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — OH TLA# 56847
35th annual Kings Island Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

IOWA

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

KANSAS

JULY 15-19, 2026 — NY TLA# 57003
14th NY International Super Swiss Championship
See New York.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

KENTUCKY

JULY 2-5, 2026 — TN TLA# 56642
2026 Super Summer Swiss
See Grand Prix.

JULY 8-22, 2026 — KY TLA# 57155
Coach Corbin's Cash Prize Weeklies
Site: Locals Food Hub and Pizza Pub Address: 822 East Broadway, Louisville, KY 40202 Overall Prize Fund: \$160 b/20 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Coach Corbin • urbanlouisvillechess@yahoo.com • 5023656369

JULY 11-18, 2026 — KY TLA# 57156
The Samuel Reese Bughouse Challenges
Site: Locals Food Hub and Pizza Pub Address: 822 East Broadway, Louisville, KY 40202 Overall Prize Fund: \$320 b/16 teams GP Pts: n/a FIDE:

N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Coach Corbin • urbanlouisvillechess@yahoo.com • 5023656369

AUGUST 15, 2026 — KY TLA# 57233
NKY Rated Beginners Open
Site: Open Door Community Church Address: 3534 Turkeyfoot Rd., Erlanger, KY 41018 Overall Prize Fund: see online TLA GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Timothy Sawyer • tasawyer81@icloud.com • 859-414-8825

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946
21st annual Indianapolis Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — OH TLA# 56847
35th annual Kings Island Open
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

LOUISIANA

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 16-18, 2027 — LA TLA# 55902
\$10K Guaranteed Ken Ferguson Memorial Open
See Grand Prix.

MAINE

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56530
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 10-12, 2026 — VA TLA# 56509
The 4th Annual DMV Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 11, 2026 — VA TLA# 56510
The 4th Annual DMV Open Scholastic Championship
See Virginia.

JULY 19, 2026 — VA TLA# 56511
2nd Annual Capital-Region Scholastic Championship
See Virginia.

JULY 19, 2026 — VA TLA# 56512
The Mid-Summer Action Tournament
See Virginia.

JULY 25, 2026 — VA TLA# 56548
DMV Summer Scholastic - Saturday
See Virginia.

58th annual Atlantic Open

August 21-23 or 22-23, 2026 - Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC

A Heritage Event With \$30,000 GUARANTEED PRIZES!

5-round Swiss, 40/80, SD/30; d30
(2-day option, rds 1-2 G/60 d10),
Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert
St. NW, Washington, DC 20008. Red
Line Woodley Park/Zoo Metro: 1 block.

7 sections. 150 Grand Prix Points.

Major Section (1900/up): \$3000-
1500-700-400-300, clear/tiebreak 1st
\$100 bonus, top USCF Under 2300
\$1300-700. FIDE rated.

U2100: \$2000-1000-500-400-300.
FIDE rated.

U1900: \$2000-1000-500-400-300.

U1700: \$1800-900-500-300-200.

U1500: \$1500-800-400-300-200.

U1300: \$1300-700-400-300-200.

U1000: \$800-400-300-200-100.

Unrated prize limits: U1000
\$150, U1300 \$300, U1500 \$450,
U1700 \$600, U1900 \$750.

Mixed Doubles: best male+female
2-player team combined score (team
average under 2200): \$1000-500-300-
200. Different sections, schedules OK;
register (no extra fee) by 2 pm Sat.

Top 6 sections entry fee: \$148 at
chessaction.com by 8/18, \$170 later or at
site until 1 hour before round 1 (no checks,
credit cards OK). GMs free, \$130 from
prize. **Under 1000 Section:** all \$20 less.

Re-entry \$70 (no Major to Major).

Cannot play below Online Regular
Rating - 100 points. Aug. official ratings
used; unofficial or Online Regular USCF
ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.
Players scoring 8 or more in 2026
World Open U2200 or below must play in
higher section than World Open.

USCF membership required. See
chessevents.us. No mail entries.

3-day schedule: Reg. ends Fri 6
pm, rds. Fri 7 pm, Sat 11 am & 5 pm,
Sun. 10 am & 3:30 pm.

2-day schedule: Reg. ends Sat 10
am, rds. Sat 11 am, 2 pm & 5 pm;
Sun. 10 am & 3:30 pm.

1/2-point byes OK all (limit 2),
must commit before round 2.

Bring set, board, & clock if
possible- none supplied.

Hotel rates: \$169-169-169-169,
use link at chessevents.us or call 202-
234-0700, reserve by 8/6. Hotel
parking is valet only: \$45/day; see
chessevents.us for offsite parking..

Enter online: Chessaction.com.
\$15 service charge for refunds.

Email: director@chess.us. (see
also: chessevents.us, chesstour.com).

Blitz Sat 9:30 pm, enter Sat by 9:10.

JULY 25-26, 2026 — VA TLA# 56547
DMV Summer Open Game-45 Tournament
 See Virginia.

JULY 26, 2026 — VA TLA# 56550
DMV Summer Scholastic - Sunday
 See Virginia.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56530
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 1, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56531
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Scholastic Championship
 See New Jersey.

AUGUST 2, 2026 — MD TLA# 56528
Rockville Mid-Summer Action Tournament
 Site: Hilton Garden Inn Rockville-Gaithersburg
 Address: 14975 Shady Grove Rd, Rockville, Maryland 20850 Overall Prize Fund: \$150 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: DMV Chess • inpersonevents@dmvchess.com • 7036090499 • dmvchess.com

AUGUST 2, 2026 — MD TLA# 56529
The Montgomery County Scholastic Challenge
 Site: Hilton Garden Inn Rockville-Gaithersburg
 Address: 14975 Shady Grove Rd, Rockville, Maryland 20850 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: DMV Chess • inpersonevents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
5th Annual Beltway Open
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8, 2026 — VA TLA# 56546
5th Annual Beltway Open Scholastic Championship
 See Virginia.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 23-25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56703
30th annual Eastern Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 27-29, 2026 — PA TLA# 56849
57th annual National Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2026 — VA TLA# 56880
51st annual Eastern Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MASSACHUSETTS

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — CT TLA# 55353
31st Annual Bradley Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA TLA# 55944

56th annual Continental Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 15, 2026 — MA TLA# 55945
12th annual Continental Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2026 — MA TLA# 57128
85th New England Open
 See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — CT TLA# 56702
34th annual Eastern Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

MICHIGAN

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — MI TLA# 57124
2026 Michigan Open
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2026 — MI TLA# 57125
2026 Michigan Speed Championship
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — OH TLA# 56847
35th annual Kings Island Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

MISSISSIPPI

JULY 2-5, 2026 — TN TLA# 56642
2026 Super Summer Swiss
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

MISSOURI

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 2-5, 2026 — TN TLA# 56642
2026 Super Summer Swiss
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8, 2026 — MO TLA# 55388
Brennan's Rapid Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592

2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 — MO TLA# 55387
Catherine McLaughlin Rapid Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 18-20, 2026 — MO TLA# 55385
2026 Saint Louis Chess Club Championship
 See Grand Prix.

MONTANA

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NEBRASKA

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

JULY 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399
31st annual Pacific Coast Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — CA TLA# 55857
16th annual Central California Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
 See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
 See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 2-4, 2026 — NV TLA# 57101
43rd Annual Reno Western States Open
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 6-8, 2026 — CA TLA# 56845
21st annual Los Angeles Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2026 — NV TLA# 57084
36th annual North American Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

JULY 18-19, 2026 — NH TLA# 57078
75th New Hampshire Open
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 10-12, 2026 — VA TLA# 56509
The 4th Annual DMV Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 54718
Hamilton Chess Club Quads
 Site: Edward McManimon building Address: 320 Scully Ave., Hamilton, NJ 08610 Overall Prize Fund: \$25/quad GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Edward J Sytnik • edmendou@aol.com • 6093512437 • hamiltonchessclub.com

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 1, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56531
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Scholastic Championship
 Site: Hilton Garden Inn Mount Holly/Westampton Address: 111 Hancock Lane, Westampton, NJ 08060 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: DMV Chess • inpersonevents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
5th Annual Beltway Open
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA TLA# 55944
56th annual Continental Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — MD TLA# 56612
13th Annual Potomac Open
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — CT TLA# 56702
34th annual Eastern Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 23-25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56703
30th annual Eastern Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 27-29, 2026 — PA TLA# 56849
57th annual National Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2026 — VA TLA# 56880
51st annual Eastern Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW MEXICO

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2026 — NV TLA# 57084
36th annual North American Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW YORK

MONTHLY ON SATURDAYS — NY TLA# 56202
Buffalo Chess Association Open Swiss
 Site: Buffalo Chess Association Address: 6043 Transit Rd, #101b, East Amherst, NY 14051 Overall Prize Fund: \$200+ GP Pts: n/a FIDE:

N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Buffalo Chess Association • thebuffalochessassociation@gmail.com • (716)243-2719 • buffalochessassociation.com

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 10-12, 2026 — VA TLA# 56509
The 4th Annual DMV Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 15-19, 2026 — NY TLA# 57003
14th NY International Super Swiss Championship
Site: Marshall Chess Club Address: 23 West 10th Street, New York, NY 10011 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,150 GP Pts: n/a FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Carlos Chavez • carlosc@marshallchessclub.org • 9178865645 • marshallchessclub.org

JULY 17-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 55352
27th annual Pittsburgh Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 18-19, 2026 — NJ TLA# 57159
ICA FIDE Championship
See Grand Prix.

JULY 24-26, 2026 — CT TLA# 55353
31st Annual Bradley Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56530
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 1, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56531
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Scholastic Championship
See New Jersey.

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
5th Annual Beltway Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 13-16, 2026 — MA TLA# 55944
56th annual Continental Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — NY TLA# 55860
148th annual New York State Championship- America's oldest annual tournament!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026 — NY TLA# 55862
12th annual New York State Blitz Championship!
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — CT TLA# 56702
34th annual Eastern Class Championships
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

OCTOBER 23-25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56703
30th annual Eastern Chess Congress
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 27-29, 2026 — PA TLA# 56849
57th annual National Chess Congress
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

DECEMBER 26-29, 2026 — VA TLA# 56880
51st annual Eastern Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

📍 NORTH CAROLINA

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 10-12, 2026 — VA TLA# 56509
The 4th Annual DMV Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 15-19, 2026 — NY TLA# 57003
14th NY International Super Swiss Championship
See New York.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — FL TLA# 55402
34th annual Southern Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 19, 2026 — NC TLA# 57092
Dragon Knight Chess National Ice Cream Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

JULY 26, 2026 — NC TLA# 57093
2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess Parents' Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NC TLA# 55300
2026 Charlotte Summer Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 2, 2026 — NC TLA# 57094
2nd Annual Dragon Knight Chess Friendship Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
5th Annual Beltway Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 9, 2026 — NC TLA# 57095
Dragon Knight Chess National Bowling Day Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — MD TLA# 56612
13th Annual Potomac Open
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2026 — VA TLA# 56880
51st annual Eastern Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

📍 NORTH DAKOTA

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

📍 OHIO

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 17-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 55352
27th annual Pittsburgh Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 24-26, 2026 — OH TLA# 56722
6th Annual Joe Yun Memorial
See Grand Prix.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 15, 2026 — KY TLA# 57233
NKY Rated Beginners Open
See Kentucky.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — IN TLA# 55946
21st annual Indianapolis Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — OH TLA# 56847
35th annual Kings Island Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

📍 OKLAHOMA

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

📍 OREGON

JULY 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952

2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2026 — NV TLA# 57084
36th annual North American Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

📍 PENNSYLVANIA

JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 10-12, 2026 — VA TLA# 56509
The 4th Annual DMV Open
See Grand Prix.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — PA TLA# 55352
27th annual Pittsburgh Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56530
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 1, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56531
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Scholastic Championship
See New Jersey.

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
5th Annual Beltway Open
See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](#).

2026 - 43rd Annual Reno- Western States Open

An American Classic & Heritage Event!

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SEE TLA on page 54

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — NY TLA# 55860
148th annual New York State Championship— America's oldest annual tournament!
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 23-25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56703
30th annual Eastern Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 27-29, 2026 — PA TLA# 56849
57th annual National Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2026 — VA TLA# 56880
51st annual Eastern Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

PUERTO RICO
NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

RHODE ISLAND
NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

SOUTH CAROLINA
NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

SOUTH DAKOTA
NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

TENNESSEE
JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

TEXAS
JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 15-19, 2026 — NY TLA# 57003
14th NY International Super Swiss Championship
 See New York.

JULY 25-29, 2026 — MD TLA# 54236
13th Annual Washington International
 See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 5-10, 2026 — TX TLA# 56866
1st Azeri Chess Academy Open
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2026 — NV TLA# 57084
36th annual North American Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

UTAH

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

VERMONT
NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

VIRGINIA
JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5, 2026 — DC TLA# 55320
37th Annual World Open Blitz Championship
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 11, 2026 — VA TLA# 56510
The 4th Annual DMV Open Scholastic Championship
 Site: SpringHill Suites by Marriott Dulles Airport
 Address: 22595 Shaw Road, Sterling, VA 20166
 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N
 Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: DMV Chess • inporevents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

JULY 19, 2026 — VA TLA# 56511
2nd Annual Capital-Region Scholastic Championship
 Site: Hampton Inn and Suites Dulles Address: 22700 Holiday Park Drive, Sterling, VA 20166
 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N
 Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: DMV Chess • inporevents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

JULY 25, 2026 — VA TLA# 56548
DMV Summer Scholastic - Saturday
 Site: SpringHill Suites by Marriott Dulles Airport
 Address: 22595 Shaw Road, Sterling, VA 20166
 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N
 Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: DMV Chess • inporevents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

JULY 25-26, 2026 — VA TLA# 56547
DMV Summer Open Game-45 Tournament
 Site: SpringHill Suites by Marriott Dulles Airport
 Address: 22595 Shaw Road, Sterling, VA 20166
 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N
 Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: DMV Chess • inporevents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

JULY 26, 2026 — VA TLA# 56550
DMV Summer Scholastic - Sunday
 Site: SpringHill Suites by Marriott Dulles Airport
 Address: 22595 Shaw Road, Sterling, VA 20166
 Overall Prize Fund: n/a GP Pts: n/a FIDE: N
 Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: DMV Chess • inporevents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56530
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 2, 2026 — MD TLA# 56528
Rockville Mid-Summer Action Tournament
 See Maryland.

AUGUST 2, 2026 — MD TLA# 56529
The Montgomery County Scholastic Challenge
 See Maryland.

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
5th Annual Beltway Open
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8, 2026 — VA TLA# 56546
5th Annual Beltway Open Scholastic Championship

Site: Hampton Inn and Suites Dulles **Address:** 22700 Holiday Park Drive, Sterling, VA 20166
Overall Prize Fund: n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N
Accessible: Y **Residency:** N **Org:** DMV Chess • inporevents@dmvchess.com • dmvchess.com

AUGUST 14-16, 2026 — MD TLA# 56612
13th Annual Potomac Open
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 21-23, 2026 — DC TLA# 55858
58th annual Atlantic Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

OCTOBER 23-25, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56703
30th annual Eastern Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 27-29, 2026 — PA TLA# 56849
57th annual National Chess Congress
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DECEMBER 26-29, 2026 — VA TLA# 56880
51st annual Eastern Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WASHINGTON
JULY 3-5, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55950
28th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — CA TLA# 55399
31st annual Pacific Coast Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55952
2026 Sacramento Senior Championship
 See Grand Prix.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

DECEMBER 26-30, 2026 — NV TLA# 57084
36th annual North American Open
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WEST VIRGINIA
JULY 10-12, 2026 — VA TLA# 56509
The 4th Annual DMV Open
 See Grand Prix.

JULY 19, 2026 — VA TLA# 56511
2nd Annual Capital-Region Scholastic Championship
 See Virginia.

JULY 25-26, 2026 — VA TLA# 56547
DMV Summer Open Game-45 Tournament
 See Virginia.

JULY 31-AUG. 2, 2026 — NJ TLA# 56530
3rd Annual Benjamin Franklin Open
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 7-9, 2026 — VA TLA# 56544
5th Annual Beltway Open
 See Grand Prix.

AUGUST 8, 2026 — VA TLA# 56546
5th Annual Beltway Open Scholastic Championship
 See Virginia.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN
JULY 1-5, 2026 — DC TLA# 53565
54th Annual World Open (Open through Under 1400 Sections)
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 17-19, 2026 — IL TLA# 55299
19th annual Chicago Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
 See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 9-11, 2026 — IL TLA# 56700
34th annual Midwest Class Championships
 See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

WYOMING
NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MOTLA# 55381
Thanksgiving Open 2026
 See Grand Prix.

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www.chessanity.org

Continental Chess Association

Pelham, NY
201.347.2269
www.chesstour.co

Dirigo Chess Club

Falmouth, ME
207.318.4630
www.dirigochessclub.org/

Florida Scholastic Chess League

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786.755.FSCL (3725)
www.fslchess.org/

Grand Knights Chess Academy

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425.445.8588
www.grandknightschess.com/

Hamden Chess Club

Hamden, CT
203.680.8456
www.playmorechess.com/

King Registration

Chicago, IL
773.317.8347
www.kingregistration.com/

Marshall Chess Club

New York, NY
212.477.3716
www.marshallchessclub.org

New York State Chess Association

New York, NY
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PAGE 13 PRACTICAL TASKS

POSITION 1. 23. ... Qd7! Black should win in the long run after 23. ... Qe5 24. Nf3! Qh5 25. Nh4 Qg4, but it's not as convincing. **24. Kf1 Bxd4! 25. Bxd4 Qf5 26. Bxf6 gxf6 27. Ke1 Rh1+ 28. Kd2 Qxf2+ 29. Kc1 Qxe3+** and Black easily converted. Sheppard – Pal, 4NCL Congress, Harrogate, 2024. **POSITION 2. 27. Rd1!** Players miss tactics most often in technical positions; since the play is based more on long-term plans, it is difficult to seize tactical opportunities when they arise. White played 27. Ne1? and was still pushing after 27. ... Bf8, but the moment has passed. **27. ... Nxb4 28. Rd8+** and White wins a piece. Pagano – Milicevic, Slovenia, 2024 (analysis). **POSITION 3. 12. ... Nh5!** would have been fine, to capture White's knight if it comes to g3. 12. ... Qe7? walks into 13. Ng3! preparing a jump into f5 with tempo. Safronov – Sundui Sonom, IPCA Rapid Ch, Goa, 2025. **POSITION 4. 18. Nxf7!** The knight is poisoned! **18. ... exd5 18. ... Kxf7 19. dxe6+** is even worse. **19. Qe6! Kh7 20. Ne5 Rc7 21. Qxc8 Rxc8 22. cxd5 Bd6 23. Bh3! Re8 24. Bf5! Kg8 25. Be6! Kh7 26. Nd7 Bxf4 27. Nxf6+! gxf6 28. gxf4** and White converted expertly. Campos – Doan Thu Huyen, IPCA Rapid Ch, Goa, 2025. **POSITION 5. 7. Nxd7!** is game over! Black has to take on d7 to avoid discovered check, and then he loses the bishop on d6. White played 7. Bxd7? in the game. Mencfel – Butterworth, Warsaw, 2025 (analysis). **POSITION 6. 8. Bxf7+!** 8. Ne5? 8. ... Qa5+! 9. Bd2 Qxe5+! 10. dxe5 Bxd1 and Black is basically OK. **8. ... Kxf7 9. Ne5+ Kg8 10. Nxc4** and White was winning, although the game ended in a draw. Ganguly – Sajanani, Mindsports International Open, London, 2025. **POSITION 7. 46. Nxb7+!** In the game, White played 46. Kxe2? c1=Q 47. Rxc1 Rxc1 48. Nxb7+ with a drawn ending, although Black managed to win in the end. If 46. Rxc2? Nd4+ 47. Kg2 Nxc2 48. Kxh1 h6 is a drawn ending. **46. ... Ke8 46. ... Kg8 47. Nf6+ Kf8 48. Rxc2** is the same. **47. Nf6+ 47. Rxc2** is also good. **47. ... Kf8 48. Rxc2 Nd4+ 49. Kg2** and White is up two pawns. Lightbown – Young, Peterborough Rapid 2026 (analysis). **POSITION 8. 18. ... Qf4** keeps an extra piece and wins! Black played 18. ... exf5?? — whoops! — 19. Qe8+ Kg7 20. Qxf7+ Kh8 21. Qxg8 mate. Nguyen – Gampa, Peterborough Rapid 2026. **POSITION 9. 19. ... Ng4!** sets up a deadly check on the a7-g1 diagonal. 19. ... Rac8? was played in the game. **20. Bxc6** If 20. Qe2 Bc5+ 21. Kf1 (21. Kh1 Nf2+ wins) 21. ... Nxb2 mate. **20. ... Qxc6 21. Qg2 Bc5+ 22. Kf1 Nxb2+! 23. Qxh2 Qf3+.** Chuiko – Kulyasa, Lysenko Mem, Lviv, 2026 (analysis).

PAGE 15 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. 27. Rg3! Qxd2 28. Rxc7+ Kh8 29. Nf7 mate. Also winning are 27. ... Re7 28. Qxh6 and 27. ... g5 28. Rxc7+ hxc7 29. Qxc7+. **PROBLEM 2.** Black resigned after **15. Rxd7!** because he saw 15. ... Qxd7 16. Nf6+ Bxf6 17. Bxf6 threatens 18. Qh6 and 19. Qg7 mate, and 17. ... Qe7 was the only way out. **PROBLEM 3. 24. h4!** and now 24. ... Qxh4 25. Nxe5+ Ke8 26. Nxc6 bxc6 27. Qxc6+. If 24.

... Qg7 25. Rf7+! Qxf7 26. Nxe5+ and 27. Nxf7. The game went **24. ... Qxh4 25. Nxe5+ Kd6** and after repeating moves with **26. Nf7+ Kd7 27. Ne5+ Kd6**, Sindarov put it away with **28. d4 cxd4 29. Rf7 Nxe5 30. Qb4+, Black resigned. PROBLEM 4. 29. ... Rxd6!** so that **30. Qxd6 Nf3!** threatens 31. ... Bg4+ as well as 31. ... Nxe1. Black mates after 31. gxf3 Qxf3+, and in the game he won after **31. Bg6! fxc6 32. Qxd5+ Qxd5. PROBLEM 5. 23. Rxf7+** forces mate: **23. ... Kxf7 24. Bg6+ Kf8 25. Qh8+ Ke7 26. Qxc7+ Kd6 27. Ne4+ Kd5 28. Qe5 mate. PROBLEM 6. 22. Re6! fxe6 23. Bxf6** threatens 24. Rg3+. Black resigned after **23. ... Qd6 24. Qg4+ Kf7 25. fxe6+ Rxe6 26. Qh5+** (before 26. ... Kg8 27. Qxh7 mate or 27. Bxh7 mate).

PAGE 27 TACTICAL TESTS

TACTIC 1. Time for the x-ray attack! **59. ... Re2+** Not 59. ... Kf8? as in Diachek – Leiva, *Chess.com*, 2026. **60. Kf5 Rxe7** and Black wins. **TACTIC 2.** Use the pin! **35. Nf6+ Kh8 36. Qh5 mate.** (Mangudi – Pajcin, *Chess.com*, 2026) **TACTIC 3.** First a preparatory move: **27. ... Bxf3+ 28. Kxf3** And now the double attack is ready: **28. ... Rd3+ 29. Ke4 Rxc3** (Gallegos Quispe – Evans, *Chess.com*, 2026). **TACTIC 4.** Pin it to win it! **37. ... Rb8!** 37. ... Bxb7 38. Rxb7 h4 was equal in Solano Trillos – Antipov, *Chess.com*, 2026. **38. Bxd5** Any rook move is met with 38. ... Rxb7. **38. ... Rxb6. TACTIC 5.** Black wins the queen: **66. ... Qh4+! 67. Kf3 g4+!** Unleashing the attack on the white queen. **68. Ke4 Qxf6, White resigned.** Bortnyk – Yakubboev, *Chess.com*, 2026. **TACTIC 6.** White found the only way to win: **77. c5+! Kc7 77. ... Kb7** is the same. **78. Rxc6+! Kxc6 79. Bb5+ Kb7 80. Bxe8.** Pasti – Fiskaaen, *Chess.com*, 2026. **TACTIC 7. 19. ... Bb2 20. Rd1 Bc2** and now the point is revealed: After **21. Re1** (White gave up the Exchange with 21. Bf3 Bxd1 in Sahakyan – Sindarov, *Chess.com*, 2026) **21. ... Bd3+! TACTIC 8. 27. Rxe4!** 27. Rxb7? led to trouble in Karthikeyan – Gelman, *Chess.com*, 2026. **27. ... Qxe4** If 27. ... d2 28. Rxb7 Qxb7 29. Re8+ Kxe8 30. Nd6+. **28. Rxf7+ Kxf7** Or 28. ... Ke8 29. Nd6+. **29. Nd6+ Kf8 30. Nxe4** and White is up a boatload of material. If 30. ... Bxe4 31. Qc8+ Ke7 32. Qc4 Bg6 33. Bxd3 with a

technical win. **TACTIC 9.** White could have scored a big upset in Vakhidov – Caruana, *Chess.com*, 2026, with the double attack **47. f5!** It looks like **47. ... Rf6** stops all of White's fun, but remember the Shankland rule: What if we play what we want anyway? **48. fxe6! Rxf2 49. Rxf2** and Black can't stop the e-pawn. **49. ... Qd8 50. e7 Qe8 51. Rf8. TACTIC 10.** Black could have won with **39. ... a5! 40. b5** If 40. bxa5 the white king can't ever stray too far from the d-pawn: 40. ... Kb7 41. Kd6 d4 (41. ... Ka6 42. Kxc6? d4) 42. a6+ Kxa6 43. Kxc6 d3! and the king will have to go to the d-file to free the c-pawn. **40. ... cxb5 41. axb5 a4 42. b6+ Kc6! 43. Kd4 a3! 44. Kc3 d4+!** and the king can't stop both pawns. Brown – Dreelinck, *Chess.com*, 2026. **TACTIC 11. 15. Nc4! Qc7 16. e5! Nfd5 17. Nxd5! Nxd5 18. Nd6+! Ke7 19. Bc4!** Cashing in immediately with 19. Nxc8+ Rxc8 is less convincing. **19. ... Nb6** If 19. ... Rb8 20. Rc1! **20. Qb4!** and White was winning in Madaminov – Aimdilkowong, *Chess.com*, 2026. **TACTIC 12.** This one is tough! **18. ... Nd5!** The fork is obvious, but White appears to have resources. **19. Qc6!** Fighting fire with fire, but ... **19. ... Bd7!** 19. ... Rxa2 was equal in Gnojek – Samdanov, *Chess.com*, 2026. **20. Qb7 Qc2!!** 20. ... Rxa2 21. Rbb1 lets White off the hook. **21. Rbb1 Nc3!** and White is out of tricks: **22. Nd4 22. Ne1 Qf5!** and Black wins the Exchange. **22. ... Qxa2.**

PAGE 47 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1. White mates in 2: **1. Rb7+ Kc8 2. Rc7 mate. PROBLEM 2.** White mates in 2: **1. Rc5+ Nxc5 2. d5 mate. PROBLEM 3.** White mates in 2: **1. Bg3+ Kh3 2. Nf4 mate. PROBLEM 4.** White mates in 2: **1. Rb6+ Kxb6 2. Bc7 mate. PROBLEM 5.** White mates in 2: **1. Rh5+ Bxh5 2. Nf5 mate. PROBLEM 6.** White mates in 2: **1. Qb7+ Kxb7 2. Rxb6 mate.** White can also play 1. Rxb6+ first: 1. ... Bxb6 2. Qb7 mate, or 1. ... axb6 2. Qa8 mate.

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51-65	1800-1999
36-50	1600-1799
21-35	1400-1599
06-20	1200-1399
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MY BEST MOVE

CC-IM FREDERICK RHINE,
RETIRED ATTORNEY

I STARTED PLAYING TOURNAMENT chess in 1973, becoming a national master in 1983. In 1997, I became a senior master of correspondence chess, and am currently tied for second in the US Chess correspondence ratings. In 2025, I became an ICCF-IM, and am now rated 2405.

I retired from my job as an attorney last year. This has given me a lot of time to study and play chess. I sometimes have more than 100 ICCF games going simultaneously, and I occasionally play OTB, most recently in the Over-65 Section of the World Senior Championship last year.

I think this game against Joseph Tanti, a ICCF-IM from Australia, is among the most remarkable in chess history! We were able to use engines, which are legal in ICCF.

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ICCF-IM Frederick Rhine (2364)

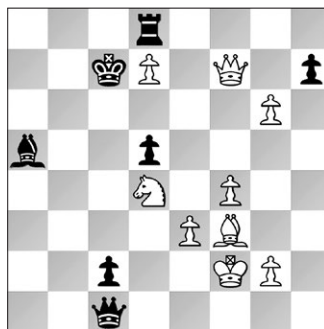
ICCF-IM Joseph Tanti (2368)

Caribbean White Sands
(correspondence), 2025-26

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 exd5
5. Bg5 Be7 6. e3 c6 7. Bd3 Nbd7 8. Nf3 Nf8
9. Bh4 Ng6 10. Bg3 Nh5 11. a3 Bf6 12. Be5
Nxe5 13. dxe5 Be7 14. Qc2 g6 15. O-O-O
Ng7 16. Nd4 Bd7 17. Kb1 Ne6 18. f4 Qc7
19. Ka2 Nc5 20. Rc1 a5 21. h4 O-O-O
22. Nxd5!? cxd5 23. b4 axb4 24. axb4 b6
25. bxc5 Qa7+ 26. Kb2 bxc5 27. Ra1 Qb6+
28. Kc1 Kc7 29. Kd2 c4 30. Rhb1 Bb4+
31. Ke2 Qc5 32. Kf2 Ra8! 33. Be2 Rxa1
34. Rxa1 Rb8 35. Bf3 Ba5 36. h5 c3 37. Rc1
Qa3 38. hxg6 Ba4 39. Qf5! Qxc1 40. Qxf7+
Bd7 41. Ne6+ Kc6 42. Nd4+ Kc7 43. e6 Rd8
44. exd7 c2!

At first blush, this looks grim for me. Tanti's c-pawn is on the verge of promotion. Worse yet, he threatens 45. ... Qe1 mate! If I avoid this with 45. Nxc2?, Black wins with 45. ... Qxc2+ and 46. ... Rxd7. And 45. Ne6+? Kb8 is no better. I must keep the knight on d4, even at the cost of allowing him a second queen!

Hence **My Best Move**:



45. Kg3!!

The game continued:

45. ... Qe1+ 46. Kg4! h5+ 47. Kg5 c1=Q
48. Qxd5!

Now the shoe is on the other foot! Tanti has a massive material advantage: queen and rook for my knight and a few pawns. But my queen, knight, bishop, pawns, and even king are a potent attacking force. My king on the fifth rank is safer than his on its second!

I threaten, among other things, 49. Ne6+

Kb6 (or 49. ... Kb8) 50. Qb7 mate! If 48. ... Rxd7, it's mate with 49. Qb7+ Kd6 (or 49. ... Kd8 50. Qb8+ Qc8 51. Nc6+! Ke8 52. Qe5+! and mate next) 50. Qa6+ Bb6 51. Qxb6+ Ke7 52. Qf6+ Ke8 53. Qh8+ Ke7 54. Nf5+ Ke6 55. Qf6 mate. Other defensive tries also fail.

Incredibly, my threats are so strong that he must sacrifice a queen and rook to draw!

48. ... Qg3+! 49. Kh6! Qxf4+!! 50. exf4
Qxf4+ 51. Kh7!

Now 51. ... Rxd7+, forking my king and queen, looks crushing. But I would win with 52. g7!! Rxd5 53. Ne6+!, a royal fork of my own!

51...Rh8+! 52. Kxh8 Qh6+! 53. Kg8 Qxg6+
54. Kh8! Qh6+!, draw.

Every move in this sequence, for both sides, is forced! If I'd tried to avoid the perpetual with 54. Kf8?!, his dormant bishop would have sprung to life with 54. ... Bb4+!, forcing a sort of Boden's mate.

Note that my king traveled from a2 to h8! An extraordinary game! ♠

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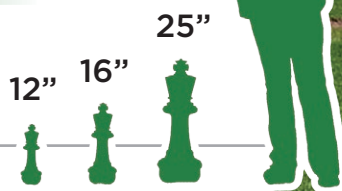
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