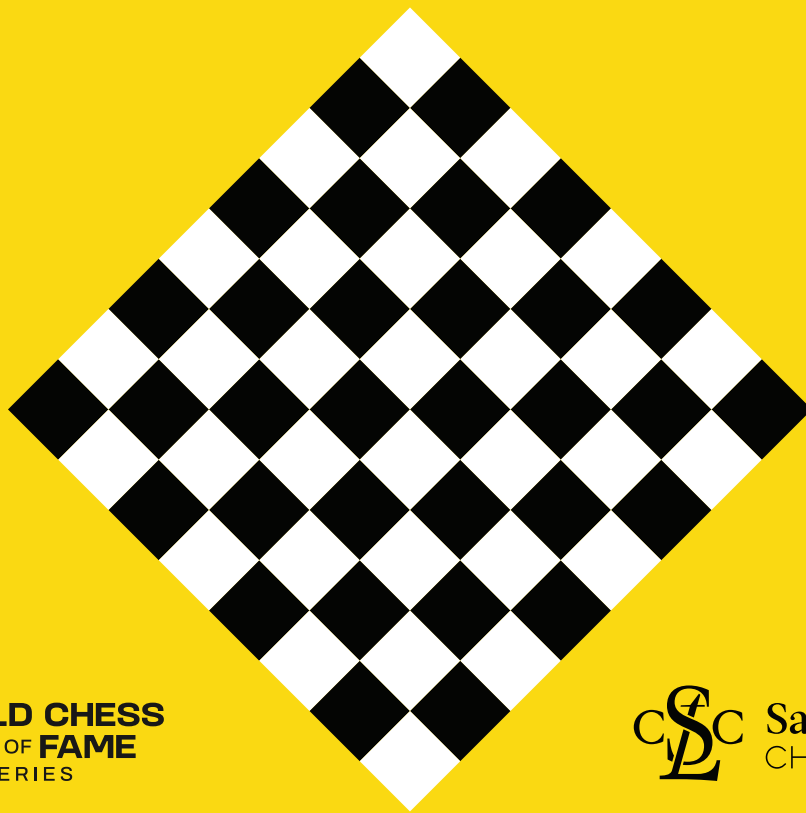


CHESS **LIFE** **Kids**

THE CHAMP
NMS Winner IM Bryan
Enming Lin annotates



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By Dr. Jeanne Cairns Sinquefield

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ON THE COVER

IM Bryan Enming Lin is a rising 9th grader at Hunter College High School in New York, New York. He scored a perfect 7/7 to win the 2026 National Middle School Championship in Round Rock, Texas, and we're thrilled that he annotated three games from the tournament for this issue. Currently rated #23 on the US Chess Under 21 rating list, we expect big things from Bryan in the future!

PHOTO: JAVIER CARRERA FOR US CHESS

CHESSLIFE Kids

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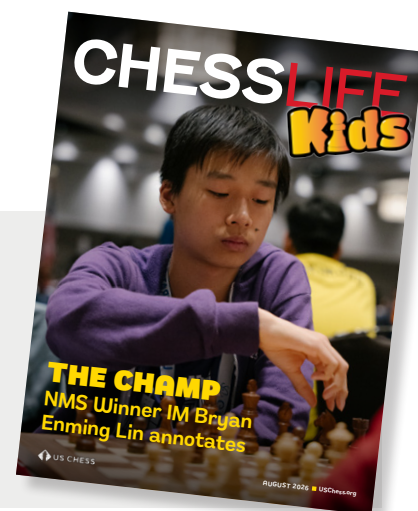
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Odds and Ends

Lesser-known tries in the Open Games

BY JOHN HARTMANN

THESE ARE THE last bits of the Open Games before we wrap up our repertoire by looking at the black side of the Ruy Lopez. Don't ignore these lines — some of them have some real bite for us and our opponents — but you'll be OK if you know what you're doing. In fact, some of these lines transpose to stuff we've already seen.

2. d4

1. e4 e5 2. d4

You'll see this quite a bit, especially in blitz games. White can use this to try for the Center Game, the Danish Gambit with 2. d4 exd4 3. c3, or to transpose into the Scotch or the 4. d4 gambit lines. We already know how we to deal with the transpositions:

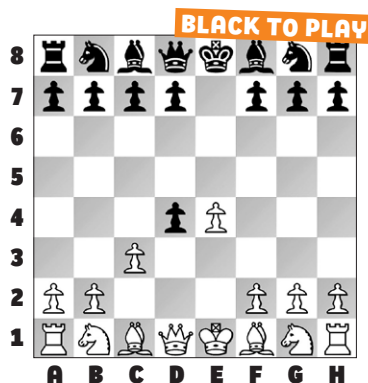
2. ... exd4 3. c3

We meet 3. Nf3 with 3. ... Nc6 and now we know what to do against White's three main moves:

- (a) **4. Bc4 Nf6** transposes to the 4. d4 gambits we saw in August 2025.
- (b) **4. Nxd4 Nf6** is the Scotch,

which we discussed in October 2025.

(c) **4. c3 d5** is another shift into the Göring Gambit.



3. ... d5

We transpose into the Göring Gambit. We covered this in October 2025; here's our main conclusion:

4. exd5

4. Qxd4 isn't a challenge: 4. ... Nf6 5. exd5 Qxd5 6. Qxd5 Nxd5 7. Bc4 Be6 is fully equal.

4. ... Qxd5 5. cxd4 Nc6 6. Nf3 Bg4 7. Be2 Bb4+ 8. Nc3 Bxf3 9. Bxf3 Qc4

Now White has three main moves: 10. Bxc6+, 10. Be3, and 10. Qb3. Check out the October 2025 issue

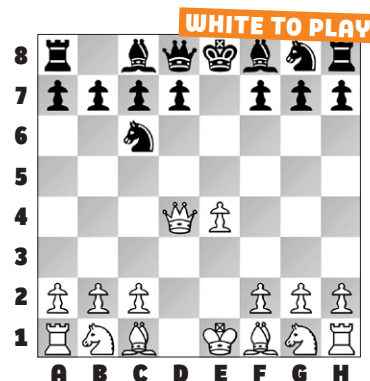
for details, including two model games.

The Center Game

1. e4 e5 2. d4 exd4 3. Qxd4

The Center Game is low-key popular with tactical players who like to sharpen things up right away, but the queen can be chased from the center.

3. ... Nc6!



Now White has to decide where to stash the queen.

There are two main moves, but the goal is the same: develop the b1-knight and c1-bishop, castle queenside, and attack!

4. Qe3

The classical move.

4. Qc4!? avoids blocking the c1-bishop at the cost of possibly limiting the f1-bishop. This move is seen in top-level rapid and blitz games, and some young American players have it in their repertoires.

Even so, with straightforward development Black will come out with full equality: **4. ... Nf6 5. Nc3 Bb4 6. Bd2 0-0 7. 0-0-0** and both sides will attack their opponents' kings. A sample line is 7. ... d6 (or 7. ... Re8 8. f3 a5!?) 8. f3 Be6 9. Qe2 a5!?

4. ... Nf6 5. Nc3

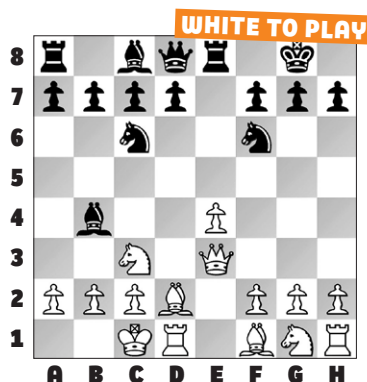
(a) **5. e5!?** looks dangerous, but because Black is ahead in development it is easily dealt with — **5. ... Ng4!** and now:

(a1) **6. Qe4 Ngxe5** (not 6. ... d6?! 7. exd6+ Be6 8. Ba6!) and Black doesn't fear 7. f4 because of 7. ... d5! when Black has possibilities of ... Bf8-b4+ and ... 0-0 along with a well-timed ... Bc8-g4 followed by ... Nc6-d4. In some lines White can get in trouble on the e-file; for example, 8. Qe2 Bg4! 9. Nf3 Bc5 10. fxe5 Nd4.

(a2) **6. Qe2 d6!** (6. ... Ngxe5? doesn't work here because of 7. f4 when there is no time to push the d-pawn and free the c8-bishop) **7. exd6+ Be6** and Black's development advantage is worth more than the pawn. If 8. dxc7? Qxc7 Black will play ... Bf8-c5 and/or ... Nc6-d4 and overwhelm White's position.

(b) **5. Bd2** will mostly transpose to our main line after **5. ... Bb4 6. Nc3**, but we should mention two alternatives for White, even though they're not scary: 6. c3?! Be7 makes it hard to develop the b1-knight, while 6. Bxb4?! Nxb4 7. Na3 0-0 is nice for Black.

5. ... Bb4 6. Bd2 0-0 7. 0-0-0 Re8



8. Qg3

This move, first seen in the games of Frank Marshall and Jacques Mieses, does not hide White's attacking intent, but the e-pawn is poorly defended.

Another popular move is 8. Bc4 but after 8. ... d6 9. Nf3 Be6! 10. Bxe6 Rxe6 11. Ng5 Re8 is at least equal for Black. White doesn't have real threats.

8. ... Nxe4!

8. ... Rxe4 is also good, but I think taking with the knight is simpler and better.

9. Nxe4 Rxe4 10. c3

White has to develop quickly and attack to justify the pawn sacrifice.

Otherwise, 10. Bf4 attacks c7, with the idea that 10. ... d6 11. Bd3 Re8 12. Nf3 gives White good play for the pawn, but Black has a better response: 10. ... Qf6! 11. Bxc7 d6! 12. Bxd6 Qh6+! 13. Kb1 Bxd6 and Black is up a piece for a pawn; White can't take back on d6 due to the weak back rank. 10. Bxb4 Rxb4 11. a3 Rb6 is fine.

10. ... Be7!

It looks like this blocks the rook from returning to safety, but the tactics tend to work out in Black's favor — the rook can slide along the fourth rank to a4, and ... Be7-h4 can be a threat. For example:

11. Bd3

If 11. Nf3 d6 (or 11. ... Ra4) 12. Bf4 Ra4, and instead if 11. f4?! d5! 12. Bd3 Bf5! 13. Bxe4 Bxe4.

11. ... Bh4!

11. ... Ra4 is also safe in many variations.

12. Qf3 Re8 13. Qh5 g6 14. Qh6 Ne5!

White has no real compensation for the sacrificed pawn.

2. Qh5 / 2. Qf3

We haven't covered Scholar's Mate yet. If you're a tournament player, likely you've already gone through the "four-move checkmate" phase in your development and know what to do. But just in case ...

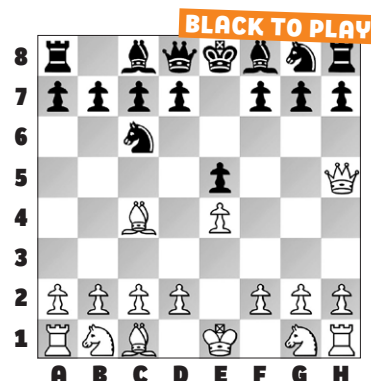
1. e4 e5 2. Qh5

Attacking the e5-pawn and eyeing f7. This is the "strongest" version of the mate try, as after 2. Qf3 Nf6 already blocks the mate.

2. ... Nc6

Defending e5. The reply 2. ... Nf6 is also good, even though it sacrifices a pawn. The only really bad move is 2. ... g6??.

3. Bc4



Two attackers on f7, only one defender — and a poor one (the king) at that!

3. ... g6!

This is best, attacking the queen and preventing the mate on f7.

3. ... Qe7 is OK but it blocks the bishop from developing. 3. ... Qf6 also works, but after Nb1-c3-d5 the queen will have to move again.

4. Qf3

White is usually persistent in attacking f7.

4. ... Nf6

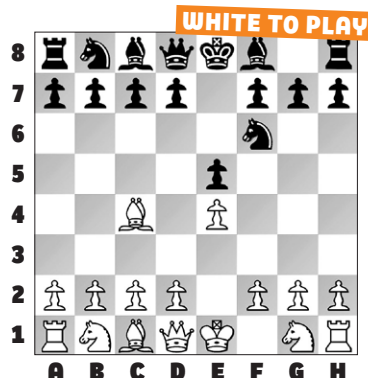
Again, blocking the queen's access to f7. Now Black can put the f8-bishop on g7 and then castle.

Now 5. Ne2 is probably the best move here for White. After 5. ... Bg7 6. d3 0-0 7. Bg5 Black just has to be careful not to allow any tactical tricks due to the pin on the f6-knight. One way to do that is 7. ... h6 8. Bh4 g5! 9. Bg3 and now Black has time to play our favorite move: 9. ... d5! 10. exd5 Nb4! and because White has to stop ... Nb4xc2+, we have enough time to win back the d5-pawn.

If White continues with 5. Qb3, then 5. ... Nd4! 6. Bxf7+ Ke7 7. Qc4 b5 wins the bishop.

Bishop's Opening

1. e4 e5 2. Bc4 Nf6

**3. d3**

White is trying to save time on

Ng1-f3 and keep options open, but this means that Black also has more freedom.

(a) **3. Nc3** was analyzed in April 2026 as part of our study of the Vienna Opening.

(b) **3. d4 exd4 4. Nf3 Nc6** transposes to the d2-d4 gambit lines we studied in August 2025.

(c) **3. Nf3** is a mostly incorrect gambit: 3. ... Nc6 transposes to the Two Knights, but you can also take the pawn with **3. ... Nxe4**. Now:

4. Nc3 Nc6 transposes to the "fork trick" after 5. Nxe4 d5, while 4. ... Nxc3 5. dxc3 f6 tries to refute White's play.

4. Nxe5 looks scary, but we play our favorite move 4. ... d5! and suddenly ... Qd8-g5 is always a threat, with a double attack on the knight and g2-pawn. If 5. Qf3 Be6 6. d4 (6. Bb3 Qg5!) 6. ... Bd6 7. 0-0 0-0 8. Bb3 Black is a little better.

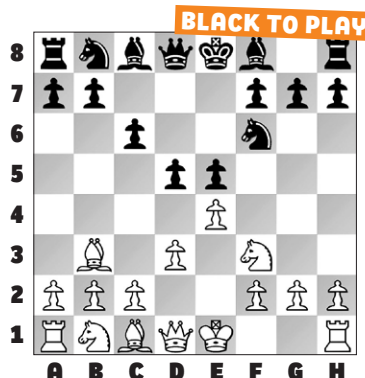
3. ... c6

With 3. ... c6 we have one goal, and you know what it is by now: Push ... d7-d5!

4. Nf3

4. Bg5 is played every now and again, but after 4. ... d5! 5. exd5 cxd5 6. Bb3 Nc6 Black has the center and is doing very well.

4. ... d5! 5. Bb3



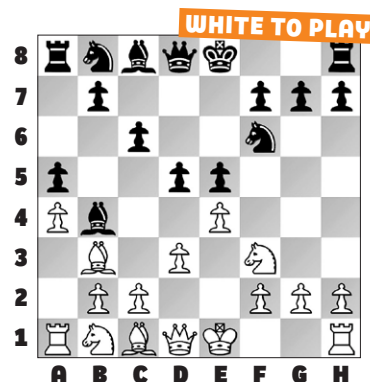
The key position in this line of the Bishop's Opening. Black has

pushed ... d7-d5 and grabbed the center, but now they have to decide what to do about the threat to the e5-pawn. Black has a number of options; I like two best.

5. ... Bd6

Simply developing and defending the e5-pawn.

5. ... a5 tries to make use of the fact that the b3-bishop doesn't have a retreat square after ... a5-a4. White usually plays 6. a4 (6. a3 a4 7. Ba2 Bd6 gives Black a bit more space than in the game) and now 6. ... Bb4+!



trying to get White to play c2-c3 and take away the c3-square from the b1-knight. Play continues:

(a) **7. Bd2 Bd6** is a little more flexible for White, but play is similar: **8. exd5 cxd5 9. Bg5 Be6 10. Nc3** (10. Na3 Nc6 11. Nb5 Bb8) **10. ... d4! 11. Bxe6 dxc3! 12. Bc4 e4!?** (or 12. ... cxb2).

(b) **7. Nc3?** is met with **7. ... d4**.

(c) **7. c3 Bd6** is already a balanced position. The Lichess statistics heavily favor Black here; one sample line goes **8. 0-0 0-0 9. Re1** (indirectly pressuring the e5-pawn) **9. ... dxe4! 10. dxe4 Qe7**.

6. Nc3 0-0!

Three attackers on d5, two defenders. Why does Black allow this?

7. exd5

7. 0-0 is met by 7. ... dxe4 8. Nxe4 Nxe4 9. dxe4 Na6 (or 9. ... Bg4). Meanwhile, 7. Bg5?! doesn't strike while the iron is hot: 7. ... d4! 8. Ne2 h6 (or 8. ... a5).

7. ... Nxd5!

Now there's no knight on f6 to pin!

8. Bxd5

8. Nxd5?! heads down a bad path: 8. ... cxd5 and if 9. Bxd5?? Qa5+ wins for Black.

8. ... cxd5 9. Nxd5

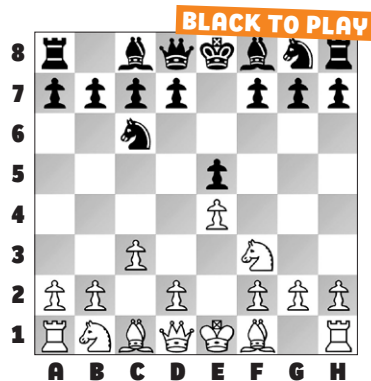
Black has good compensation for the pawn with easy development and lots of targets. One way to proceed is ...

9. ... Be6 10. Nc3 Nc6

With excellent play.

Ponziani Opening

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. c3



This is the Ponziani Opening, named for Domenico Lorenzo Ponziani, who studied the move way back in 1769!

With this pawn move White wants to support the d2-d4 push, but the c3-square is taken away from the b1-knight.

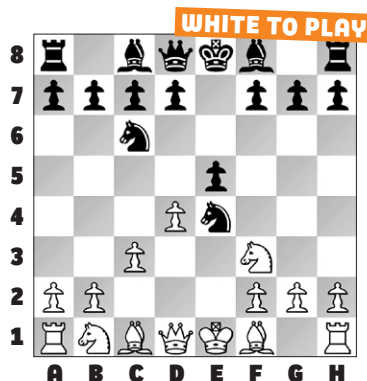
Black has two good options in 3. ... d5 and 3. ... Nf6; I prefer the latter, because it's not only good

against best play, but it also sets a neat trap that your opponent might fall into if they play a really logical move.

3. ... Nf6 4. d4

The logical continuation in the Ponziani. Meanwhile, 4. d3 gives away any hope of an opening advantage after 4. ... d5 or 4. ... Bc5.

4. ... Nxe4



Taking the pawn with a very specific idea.

5. d5?

Played almost universally among masters, and just as often among club players.

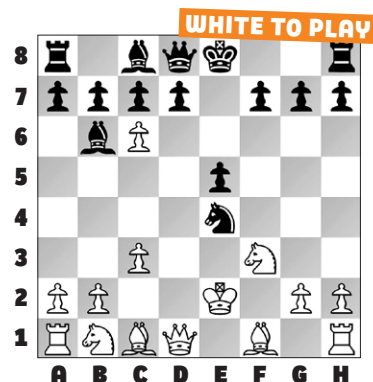
The main alternative is 5. Bd3, when 5. ... d5 looks like a Petroff except that White would like to have a knight on c3 instead of a pawn. I think Black is at least equal after 6. dxe5 (6. Nxe5 Bd6 7. Nxc6 bxc6 8. 0-0 0-0; 6. 0-0 Bg4 7. dxe5 Bc5!) 6. ... Bg4 (or 6. ... Bc5 7. 0-0 0-0).

After 5. d5? it used to be thought that Black had to retreat the knight with 5. ... Nb8, but today we know that we can get a great attacking position with ...

5. ... Bc5! 6. dxc6

White's only chance to stay in the game, because 6. Be3 Bxe3 7. fxe3 Ne7 8. Nxe5 0-0 is great for Black.

6. ... Bxf2+ 7. Ke2 Bb6



Black has two pawns for the piece, but more importantly, White's king is in the center and there's the matter of ... Ne4-f2 coming, forking the rook and queen.

8. Qd5

Getting out of the fork and threatening the e5-pawn. None of the alternatives can be recommended:

(a) 8. Be3 bxc6 9. Bxb6 axb6 10. Nbd2 Nf6;

(b) 8. cxd7+? Bxd7 9. Nxe5? Bb5+;

(c) 8. Nxe5? d5 is fantastic for Black.

8. ... Nf2! 9. Rg1

The position is unclear after 9. cxb7 Bxb7 10. Qxb7 Nxh1, while 9. Qxe5+ is met with 9. ... Kf8! 10. Rg1 Ng4.

9. ... 0-0 10. cxb7 Bxb7 11. Qxb7 Qf6

Black has a terrific attack in exchange for the material with ... e5-e4 coming soon and attacks on the queen.

12. Be3?

12. Na3 doesn't work because of 12. ... Rab8 13. Qd5 c6!; 12. Qd5 runs into 12. ... c6! 13. Qd2 e4.

12. ... Bxe3 13. Kxe3 Rab8 14. Qxc7 Rxb2

Black is winning. ♠



Building the Attack

Part 4

BY NM TIM MCGREW

HOW ARE SUCCESSFUL attacks built? In this issue and the next we take a look at two games featuring a simple system that White can use against the French and certain variations of the Sicilian. We'll choose a couple of high-level online games to show that this idea is still relevant in today's fast-moving world.

KING'S INDIAN ATTACK (A08)

DimonSiritsa (2555)
SimpleChess_VN (2423)
[Lichess.org](https://lichess.org), 2025

1. e4 e6 2. d3

In the French Defense, Black gets to see the same two or three typical pawn structures in almost every game, which means that he usually understands them very well. So White dodges that kind of battle and opts for the King's Indian Attack instead. This is not passive play; White is just putting off the full battle until the middlegame.

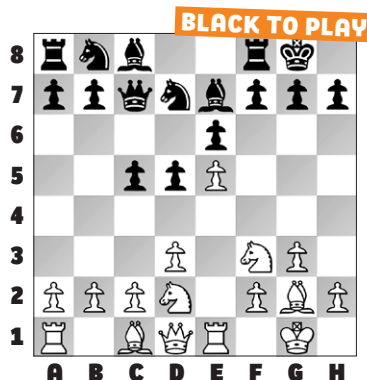
2. ... c5 3. Nf3

We have transposed into a line Bobby Fischer used to prefer against the 2. ... e6 Sicilian. It is worth mentioning that in online games, at least, this is one of Black's best Sicilians. One could do worse than following in Fischer's footsteps.

3. ... d5 4. Nbd2

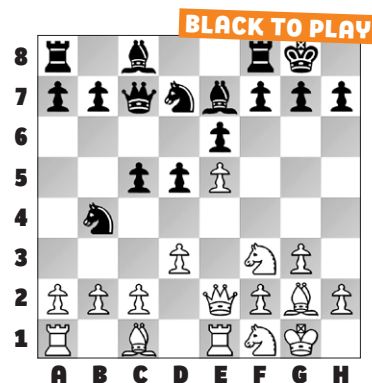
Now the queens will stay on the board even if the pawns are exchanged on e4.

4. ... Nf6 5. g3 Be7 6. Bg2 0-0 7. 0-0 Qc7 8. e5 Nfd7 9. Re1



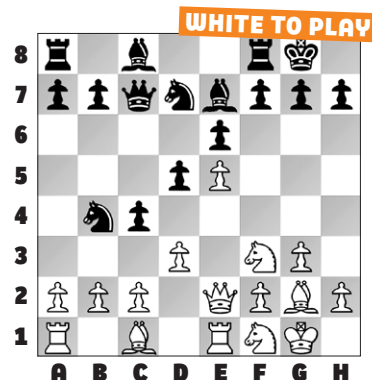
White has just enough pieces to keep the pawn on e5 defended against all the force Black can focus against it.

9. ... Nc6 10. Qe2 Nb4 11. Nf1



This slow move is more than just a way of defending the c2-pawn. White wanted to bring the knight over to the kingside in any event. (In a moment, we'll see where it is heading.) It is very difficult for Black to create active counterplay in this position, and meanwhile White's pieces know exactly where they are going.

11. ... c4



Black realizes that White has the upper hand on the kingside, slow though it might be, and he tries hard to open some lines before anything serious happens to his king.

12. d4!

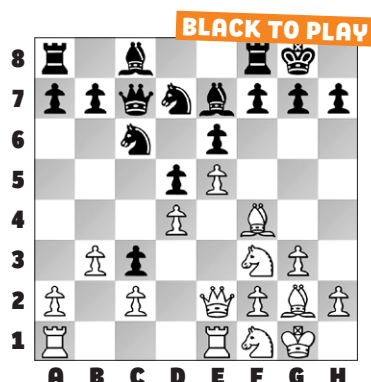
This is an excellent practical

decision. The queenside is Black's hunting ground, because the pawn structure gives Black more space there. White plays to keep lines closed, which means Black has a harder time finding targets.

12. ... c3 13. b3!

Again, White sensibly declines to exchange any pawns. It is very hard for Black to bring any more pieces to attack the pawn on c2.

13. ... Nc6 14. Bf4

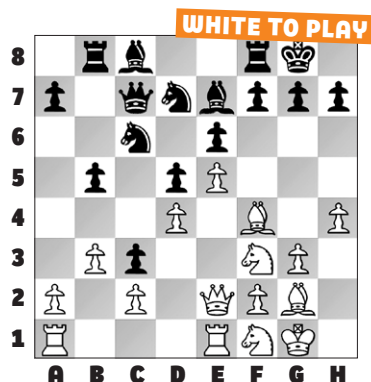


This move has a preventative function. Black can't play ... f7-f6 now, because the capture will reveal an attack on the black queen.

14. ... Rb8

In hindsight, this move looks like a complete loss of time. But what, exactly, was Black supposed to do instead?

15. h4 b5



16. N1h2

If this move seems slow to you, it may be that you aren't thinking hard about the Black kingside. With a pawn on e5, White has driven away the knight from f6. Black's king is a defender, and perhaps the bishop on e7 counts as half a defender, since it helps to control f6.

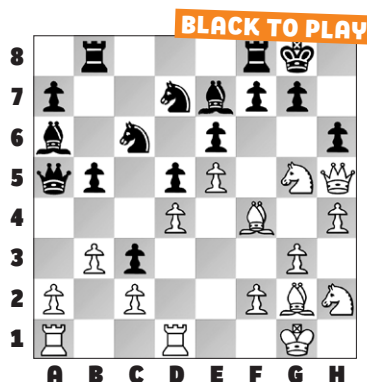
But the g7- and h7-squares are terribly weak, with only the king for their defender. White is going to roll up the board with moves such as Nh2-g4, Nf3-g5, and perhaps Kg1-g2 and Re1-h1.

Once White's pieces are in position, what will the ratio of attackers to defenders be?

16. ... Qa5 17. Red1 Ba6 18. Ng5! h6

A nice thing about having a huge advantage in the assault ratio is that you can often just ignore a threat to a piece and bring up more attackers. That's why White is able to play the stunning ...

19. Qh5!!



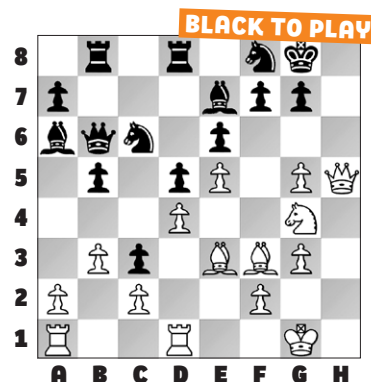
Black is quite lost. The immediate threat, if Black does not take the knight, is Nh2-g4xh6+ with a quick mate incoming.

19. ... hxg5 20. hxg5 Qb6 21. Be3

This move does not throw away the win, but the immediate 21. Ng4 threatening 22. Nf6+ would have ended the game almost

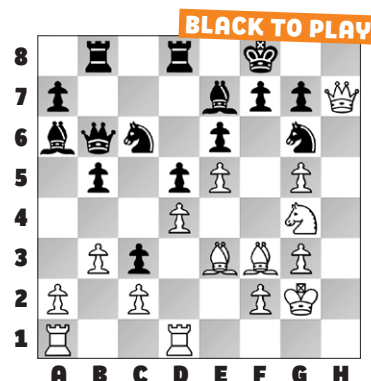
immediately.

21. ... Rfd8 22. Ng4 Nf8 23. Bf3



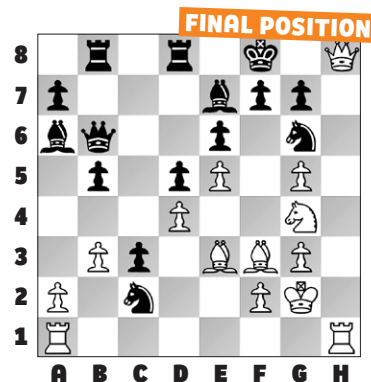
The bishop isn't doing anything special on f3, but White is clearing the g2-square for the king.

23. ... Ng6 24. Kg2 Kf8 25. Qh7



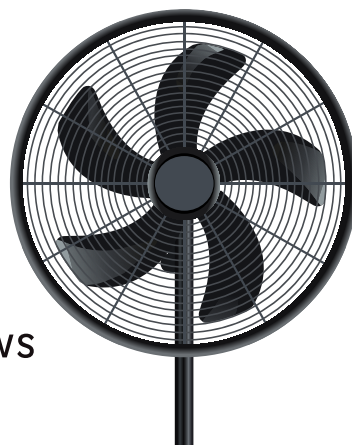
White wants to grab the pawn on g7 if Black's king abandons it.

25. ... Nb4 26. Rh1 Nxc2 27. Qh8+, Black resigned.



We'll pick up with another game in this line in October! 📅

Cooling Off With Chess



A World Cup hydration station draws players from all over the world.

BY **TANYA SINHA**

AM 9 YEARS old, and I love chess because it's fun to meet other people when you play. On the Fourth of July weekend, my friend Naomi and I started a hydration stand in Elfreth's Alley, in Philadelphia, with a chessboard that I sat behind.

Each customer who came up to

our stand had the chance to make a move on the chessboard for free. They could buy a refreshing drink from Naomi and get to interact with a game that I love. Our goal was to sell drinks to people visiting Philadelphia for the World Cup in order to raise money for my chess club, and to

play lots of people from around the world.

Many of the people who came up to us already knew the game, but there were a few who I got to teach the rules to. It felt nice to help introduce others to the game, and to play some people who already know it.



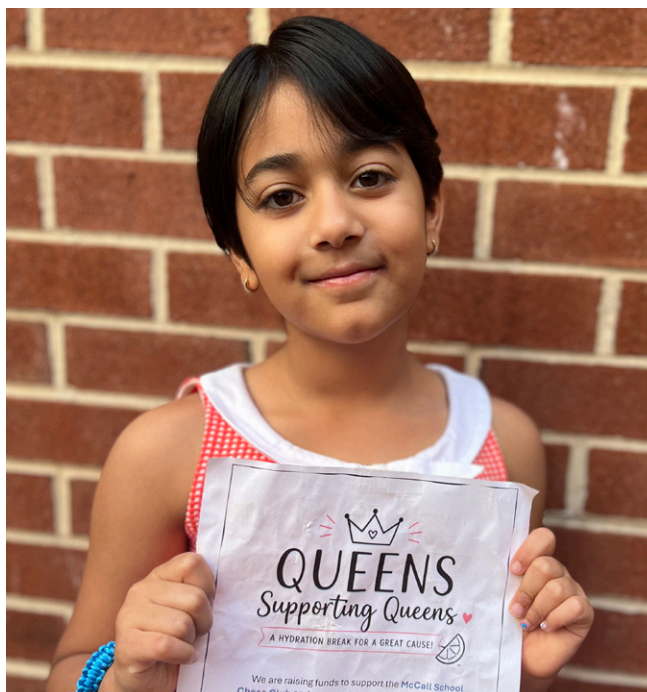
PHOTOS: COURTESY GARIMA SINHA

A hard moment in the day came when a group of teenage girls came up to our stand to get a drink, and I tried to offer them advice on what a good first move might be in chess. Instead of trying to learn, they said “Thank you” and walked away with a smile. Part of the reason I started the stand was to teach more girls about chess, and I am looking forward to visiting my old pre-K and bringing my love of chess to other kids, including young girls. So it was hard to see that some girls were not interested.

The most exciting part of the day was getting to see my neighbors and some people from my school community who I don’t get to see in the summer, along with brand-new friends who came up to our stand. I met a group of people from Paraguay, and it was really amazing to be

able to connect over chess when so much of the rest of our lives are different. We mainly communicated through our shared understanding of the game.

Giving out drinks on a hot day while raising money for a club I care about taught me that it is always nice to help each other in as many ways as possible, and that there are so many different ways to connect with people. I want people to know that chess can be for anyone, no matter who



you are. I am really grateful for the opportunity to share my love of chess with so many people, and I hope to continue to do so. 📌



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Notes from the Champ

IM Bryan Enming Lin annotates games from Round Rock.

BY IM BRYAN ENMING LIN AND RICK MASSIMO

T'S HARD TO ARGUE WITH

perfection, and that's just what IM Bryan Enming Lin turned in May 15-17 when he won the National Middle School (K-8) Championship in Round Rock, Texas.

It's also tough to argue when two teammates are playing the decisive Board 1 game in the last round, and that's what happened in Round Rock when Lin won over his Hunter College Elementary and High School teammate CM Arabella Fang in Round 7. Hunter won the team prize going away by a neat two points.

We asked Bryan to annotate two of his games from the championship. He not only did that

but also gave his notes to one of the games by the eventual winner of the Under-1400 Section.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, NAJDORF VARIATION (B92)

IM Bryan Enming Lin (2446)

Maxwell Yang (2173)

National Middle School

Championship (5), Round Rock, 05.16.2026

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 a6 6. Be2

A quiet line in the Najdorf. The game will center around who will be able to control the key d5-square.

6. ... e5 7. Nb3 Be7 8. 0-0 0-0 9. Re1 Be6 10. Bf3 Nbd7

11. a4 Qb8!?

A move that signals deep preparation. One idea is that when the white bishop goes to e3, Black can react by bringing their bishop from e7 to d8 and then b6.

12. Be3 Rc8 13. Qd3 Bc4 14. Qd2 b6



Now both players are out of prep, and the maneuvering game begins.

15. h3 Qb7 16. Red1

All the pieces are trying to control d5.

16. ... Nf8?!

A misunderstanding of Black's plans. Black was better off playing 16. ... h6, and after 17. Qe1 Be6 the quiet maneuvering continues.

17. Bg5! Rd8 18. Bxf6! Bxf6

I've been able to remove a key defender of the d5-square. Next, all my pieces will reroute there.

19. Qe1 Rac8 20. Nd2 Be6 21. Be2 Ng6 22. Qf1 Ra8 23. Nc4 Qc6?

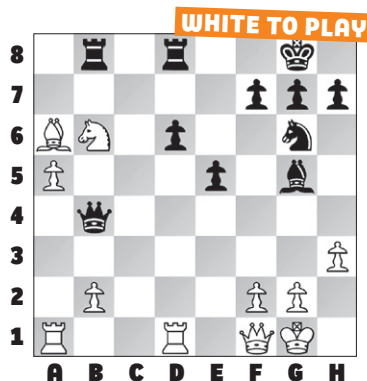
Allowing my knight to reroute itself to e3, increasing my control of d5.

24. Ne3! Bg5 25. Ned5 Bxd5 26. Nxd5 Qxc2 27. Nxb6 Rab8 28. a5 Qxe4 29. Bxa6

Black has been able to eliminate some pressure on the d5-square,

but now I have achieved a different advantage: an outside passed pawn.

29. ... Qb4?



30. Qc4!

Essentially forcing the exchange of queens.

30. ... Qxc4

The point is that after 30. ... Qxb2 31. Ra2 the queen is trapped. Black would have to play 31. ... d5 32. Nxd5 and he still would still have to exchange queens with 32. ... Qb3.

31. Bxc4

Now my connected passers will

decide the game.

31. ... Ne7 32. Bd5 Nxd5 33. Rxd5 Bf6 34. Rb5 Rb7 35. a6 Ra7 36. Nd5 e4 37. Rb7 Raa8 38. Nc7 d5 39. Nxa8 Rxa8 40. a7 Be5 41. Rc1 h6 42. Rb8+, Black resigned.

A relatively smooth game where I was able to demonstrate the importance of controlling the key d5-square in the Najdorf, an important principle in a lot of Sicilian lines.

SICILIAN DEFENSE, FOUR KNIGHTS VARIATION (B45)

Srikar Kandikayala (2113)
IM Bryan Enming Lin (2446)
National Middle School
Championship (6), Round Rock,
05.17.2026

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 e6 3. d4 cxd4 4.

Nxd4 Nf6 5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Ndb5 Bc5

The Cobra Variation, an aggressive try over the more drawish 6. ... Bb4.

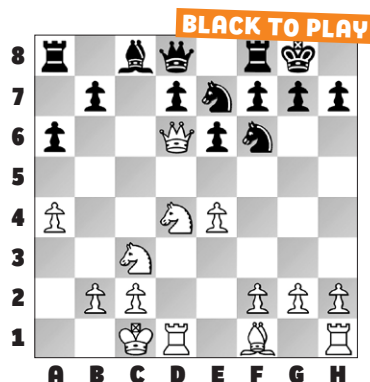
7. Bf4 0-0 8. Bc7 Qe7 9. Bd6 Bxd6

10. Qxd6 Qd8 11. 0-0-0 a6



Doron-Repa (R)
versus Jang (L)

12. Nd4 Ne7 13. a4



So far, both of us have been well prepared. This slightly rare move aims to prevent ... b7-b5 entirely.

13. ... Ne8

Black could also play the immediate 13. ... b5! 14. axb5 axb5 15. Bxb5 Ne8 16. Qb4 Ra1+ 17. Kd2 Ra8 18. Kc1 Ra1+ 19. Kd2 Ra8 20. Kc1. Grandmasters Leko and Erigaisi agreed to a draw here in a game from last year.

14. Qb4 Rb8 15. Be2

Another option was 15. Bxa6, taking advantage of the pinned b-pawn. After 15. ... e5 16. Nf3 Nc6 defending the b8-rook, White can play 17. Qc4 and now I have to force a draw with 17. ... Na5 (if

17. ... bxa6? 18. Qxc6! and White is better) 18. Qb4 Nc6 19. Qc4.

15. ... b5 16. axb5 axb5 17. b3

Taking on b5 is always carries some risk, so White plays it safe for now.

17. ... Bb7 18. f3 Nc6 19. Nxc6?!

It may seem counterintuitive, but 19. Qxb5! is best. Probably what White missed is 19. ... Nxd4 20. Rxd4 Bxe4? 21. Rxd7! (21. Qxd7? isn't as good: 21. ... Qg5+! 22. Kb2 Qxg2 23. Rdd1 Nf6 24. Qd4 Bg6 with a fighting position) 21. ... Qc8 22. Qe5! Qxd7 23. Qxb8 Nc7 24. Qa7 Bg6 and White is up a clean pawn with connected passed pawns on the queenside.

19. ... Bxc6 20. g4 Nc7 21. h4 Na6 22. Qd4 Qa5 23. Nb1?!

White needed to create play on the kingside with 23. h5! b4 24. Nb1 Nc5 25. h6 e5 26. Qd2 (26. Qxe5?? Nxb3+!) 26. ... g6 27. Qd6.

23. ... d5 24. e5?

This move shuts the door to the queen's sight of the kingside, allowing me to freely conduct my own operations on the queenside. White's best was still 24. h5!, creating counterplay. After

24. ... f6 25. h6 e5 26. Qd2 Qxd2+ 27. Nxd2 d4 it should still be balanced.

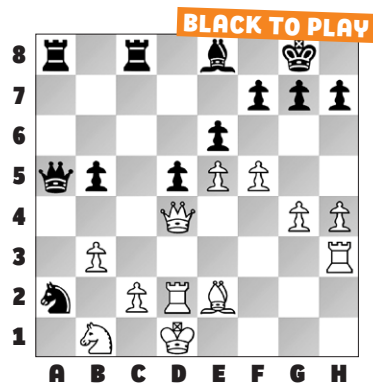
24. ... Rfc8 25. f4 Be8!

Clearing the way for the rook.

26. Rh3 Nb4

26. ... Rxc2+!! is already an option: 27. Kxc2 Nb4+ 28. Kd2 Qa2+ 29. Ke1 Nc2+! winning the queen.

27. Rd2 Ra8 28. f5 Na2+ 29. Kd1



29. ... Nc3+!!

Seemingly out of nowhere, I take advantage of back-rank ideas.

30. Kc1

Not 30. Rxc3 Qxc3 31. Nxc3 Ra1+ 32. Nb1 Rxb1 mate, but now my queen's infiltration will decide the game.

2026 NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) CHAMPIONSHIPS AT A GLANCE

MAY 15-17, 2026 | ROUND ROCK, TEXAS

INDIVIDUAL

K-8 CHAMPIONSHIP: IM Bryan Lin, 7/7. **K-8 U1700:** Vyas Omshankar, 6½/7. **K-8 U1400:** Yotam Doron-Repa, Louie Nakamura, 6½/7. **K-8 U1100:** Thiago Briceno, 6½/7. **K-8 U900:** Alex Alaniz, 7/7. **K-8 U700:** Andrew Bonner Hodge, 7/7. **K-8 UNRATED:** Adonis Landry, 7/7. **K-8 BLITZ:** FM Ethan Guo, Jashith Karthi, 10/12. **K-8 U1600 BLITZ:** Tarun Vinayagaram, Inba Siva Sai, 10/12. **BUGHOUSE:** Elliot Goodrich + CM Tariq Yue, 10/10.

TEAM

K-8 CHAMPIONSHIP: Hunter College (New York, NY), 21½. **K-8 U1700:** IS 318 (Brooklyn, NY), 19. **K-8 U1400:** IS 318 (Brooklyn, NY), 24. **K-8 U1100:** The Seeall Academy (Brooklyn, NY), 20. **K-8 U900:** Mandarin Immersion Magnet School (Houston, TX), 22. **K-8 U700:** Academy of Accelerated Learning (Houston, TX), 23. **K-8 UNRATED:** Sudie L Williams Talented and Gifted Academy (Dallas, TX), 19. **K-8 BLITZ:** The Speyer Legacy School (New York, NY), 22½. **K-8 U1600 BLITZ:** Bates Academy (Detroit, MI), 22.

For complete results, visit www.uschess.org/results/2026/ms

30. ... b4 31. Rxc3 bxc3 32. Rd3 Bb5
33. Re3 Bxe2 34. Rxe2 Qa1, White
resigned.

This game was a classic Sicilian
where the first player to get to the
opponent's king won the game.

Yotam Doron-Repa went on to tie for
first in the Under-1400 Section with
6½/7, winning the title on tiebreaks.
He's the third member of his family
to win a section in a national
scholastic: Maya tied for first in the
Under-10 Section of the 2015 All-
Girls Nationals, and last year Hillel
won the K-8 Under 1700 section at
Supnationals on tiebreaks.

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

Yotam Doron-Repa (1367)

Jinwon Jang (929)

National Middle School Championship
(5), Round Rock, 05.16.2026

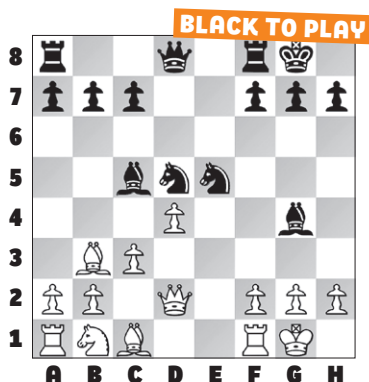
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5
4. c3 Nf6 5. d3 0-0 6. Bb3 d5 7. exd5
Nxd5 8. 0-0 Bf5 9. Nxe5?!

A common trick. However, here it
isn't the best.

9. ... Nxe5 10. d4 Bg4?!

Better was 10. ... Re8! 11. dxc5
(if 11. dxe5 Rxe5 Black is more
developed and has more active
pieces) 11. ... Bd3! 12. Re1 Qh4!
when Black's kingside attack is
plenty of compensation.

11. Qd2



11. ... Bxd4??

It was better to give back the piece without giving White new threats. After 11. ... Re8 12. dxc5 c6 13. Na3 Qe7 White is up a pawn, but Black has better development, and it's about equal.

12. Qxd4 Nf3+?

A desperate try in a difficult position.

13. gxf3 Bh3 14. Qxd5 Qf6 15. Re1 Rae8 16. Qxf7+!

White gives back a piece to trade queens.

16. ... Qxf7

Not 16. ... Rxf7 17. Rxe8 mate.

17. Bxf7+ Kxf7 18. Re4 Kg8 19. Be3 Rxe4 20. fxe4 Rf6 21. f4 g5 22. f5 g4 23. Kf2, Black resigned.

A nice game where White pounced on Black's early inaccuracies. ♠



Yotam Doron-Repa

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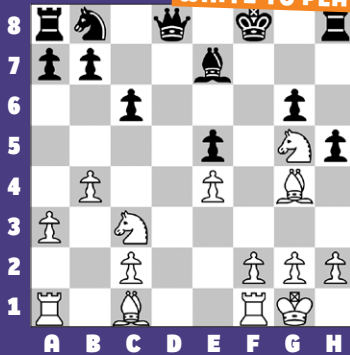


official site



1.

WHITE TO PLAY



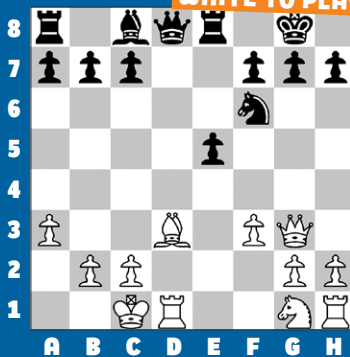
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WHITE TO PLAY



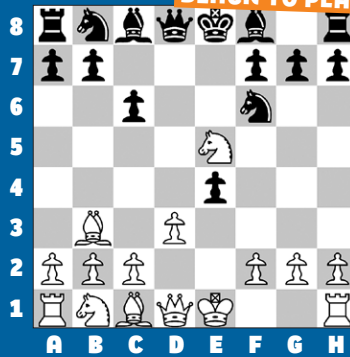
3.

WHITE TO PLAY



4.

BLACK TO PLAY



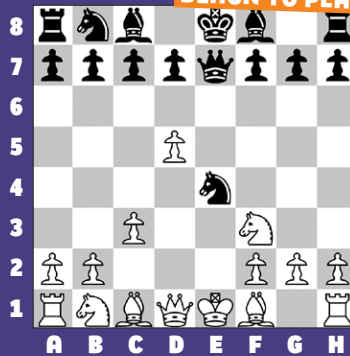
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WHITE TO PLAY



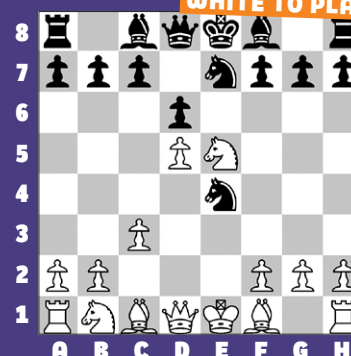
6.

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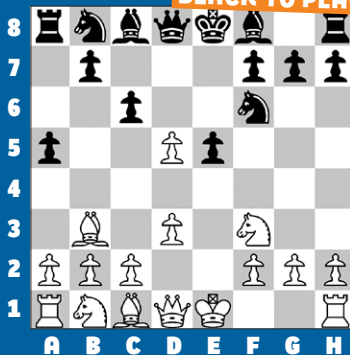
7.

WHITE TO PLAY



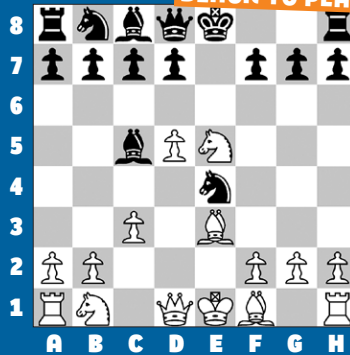
8.

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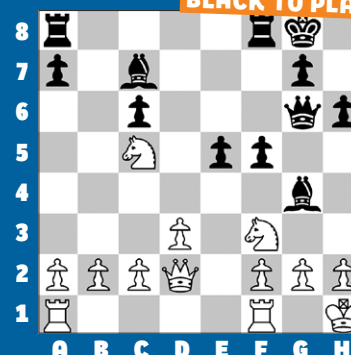
9.

BLACK TO PLAY



10.

BLACK TO PLAY



THE OPEN GAMES

Next time, In Session will begin tackling the Ruy Lopez, giving you a sound but aggressive repertoire against one of the oldest known chess openings.

For now, however, we're saying goodbye to the other 1. e4 e5 openings with this set of tactics, all from recent games that started with the lines we've discussed in the last few columns. Every opening is different, but you'll find there are patterns that recur, and they're especially important to know — it's why they're called the Open Games.

The answers are on page 23.

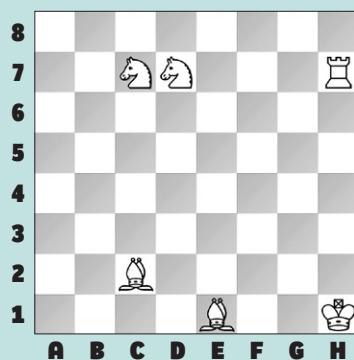
Puzzle Me THIS Puzzle Me THAT

BY JEFF COAKLEY



Hey there, kids. We're Zed and Zephyr, the almost famous zebras, back again with another bunch of fun and challenging puzzles. There's a little bit of this and a little bit of that. Some of the problems have special rules. Others are the standard kind of positions that might happen in your games. Good luck!

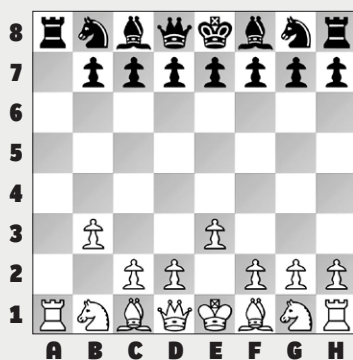
1. Triple Loyd



Place the black king on the board so that

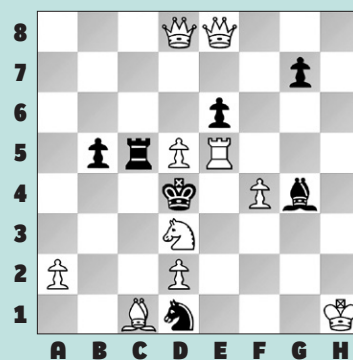
- Black is in checkmate.
- Black is in stalemate.
- White has mate in one.

2. Proof Game



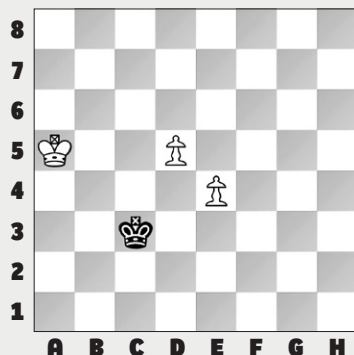
This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

3. Maze Race



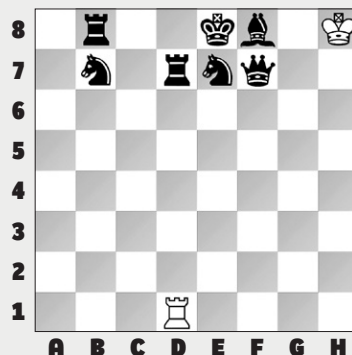
Only one white piece (rook, bishop, or knight) may move. Black does not get a turn. Capture the black king without taking any pieces or moving to a square guarded by Black. Which piece is fastest? Which is slowest?

4. Inverted Loyd



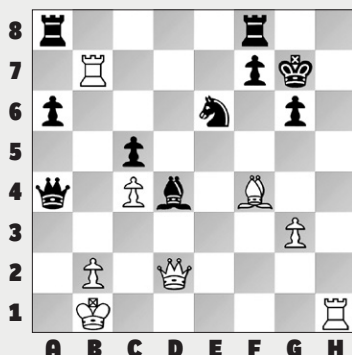
Add a white rook, bishop, and knight so that White has mate in one.

5. Series-Mate in 17



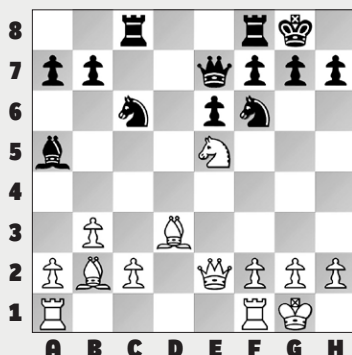
White plays 17 moves in a row to checkmate Black. Only the final move may give check. Captures are allowed. Black does not get a turn. White may not place their own king in check, even if they get out of check on the next move.

6. Mate in 3



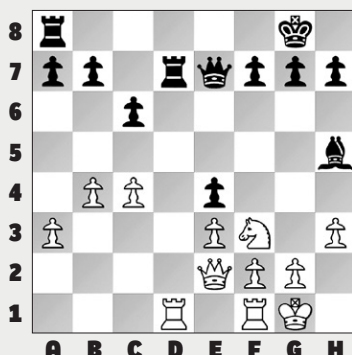
White to play. Mate in three.

7. Combo



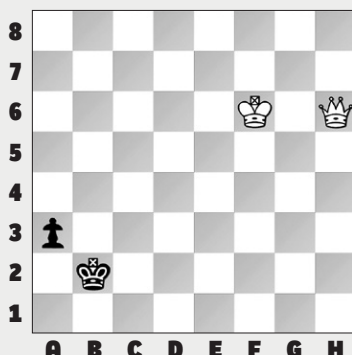
White to play and win material.

8. Defense



White to play and not lose.

9. Endgame



White to play and win.

10. Synthetic game

Make up a game where Black wins with the non-capture 4. ... Qc3 mate.

Answers:

1) A. Ka5 mate. B. Kg8 stalemate. C. Kc4, allowing 1. Rh4 mate. 2) 1. e3 a6 2. Bxa6 Ra7 3. Bf1 Rxa2 4. b3 Ra8. A sneaky black rook. 3) The knight is fastest. The bishop is slowest. Here are the lines: Nd3-e1-g2-h4-g6-h8-f7-d6-b7-a5-b3xd4 (11 moves), Re5-e1-g1-g2-h2-h8-f8-f7-a7-a3-b3-b4xd4 (12), Bc1-a3-b4-a5-b6-a7-b8-d6-e7-h4-g3-h2-g1xd4 (13). 4) Add Rd2 Ba2 Na3 for 1. Nb1 mate. 5) To solve this puzzle, we must first see the final position. White cannot take the bishop on f8 or knight on e7, so the only way to

mate is by Rd8 with the king on c7. The king needs lots of help from the rook to get there. 1. Rg1 2. Rg7 3. Kh7 4. Kh6 5. Kg5 6. Rg6 7. Rf6 8. Kf4 9. Ke5 10. Rb6 11. Rxb7 12. Rxd7 13. Kd6 14. Kc7 15. Kxb8 16. Kc7 17. Rd8 mate. 6) The obvious 1. Bh6+ Kg8 leads nowhere and the tricky 1. Be5+!? Bxe5 2. Qh6+, hoping for 2. ... Kg8 3. Qh7 mate, fails to 2. ... Kf6! (3. Rf1+ Bf4!). The winning shot is 1. Qxd4+, removing the defender of the long dark diagonal. 1. ... cxd4 (or 1. ... Nxd4) 2. Be5+ Kg8 The rook on b7 prevents 2. ... f6. 3. Rh8 mate.

The other line is 1. ... Kg8 2. Qh8 (or 2. Rh8) mate. 7) A combination is a series of forcing moves which lead to a big advantage. A forcing move is a capture, a check, or a threat to mate or win material. Forcing moves limit the defender's possible replies and allow the attacker to control the course of the game. Most combos include a sacrifice, but in this position, White wins with forcing moves alone.

1. Nxc6 Rxc6 Now the bishop on a5 is unprotected. 2. Bxf6 removes the guard of the black h-pawn. 2. ... Qxf6 3. Qh5 The two threats are Qxa5 and Qxh7 mate. After 3. ... h6 (or 3. ... g6) 4. Qxa5, White is up a bishop. Things are trickier against 2. ... gxf6. Then 3. Qh5 f5! is fine for Black. But White still wins by 3. Qg4+! Kh8 4. Qh4 when Black must give up their queen to stop mate with 4. ... f5 5. Qxe7. 8) The white knight is stuck in a nasty pin. 1. g4? loses to 1. ... exf3 2. Qxf3 Bg6, but there is a way to unpin safely. 1. Rxd7 Qxd7 (1. ... exf3? 2. Rxe7 or 2. Qd2 is great for White.) Now 2. Ne5? would be good if the white rook were not on f1. But here, 2. ... Bxe2 3. Nxd7 Bxf1 4. Kxf1 costs the Exchange. 2. Qd2! A useful unpinning tactic. After 2. ... Qxd2 3. Nxd2, the game is level. Other equal lines are 2. ... Qe7 3. Nd4 Qg5 4. Kh1! and 2. ... Qd3 3. Qxd3 exd3 4. g4. 9) Even when far advanced, a pawn is usually no match for a queen. 1. Qd2+ 1. Qh2+ also wins but 1. Ke5? lets Black draw. For example, 1. ... a2 2. Qb6+ Ka1 3. Kd4 stalemate. 1. ... Kb1 Black also loses after 1. ... Ka1 2. Qc2! a2 3. Qc1 mate or 1. ... Kb3 2. Qc1! a2 (2. ... Kb4 3. Qc2) 3. Ke5 Ka4 4. Qb2. 2. Qb4+ Ka2 3. Ke5 Ka1 4. Qxa3+. 10) 1. d4 c5 2. Na3 cxd4 3. b3 Qc7 4. Kd2 Qc3 mate. The moves can be played in different orders. 3. b4 also works. ♦

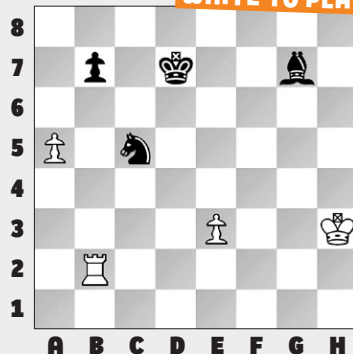
Igor's DOUBLES

BY IM IGOR KHMELNITSKY

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

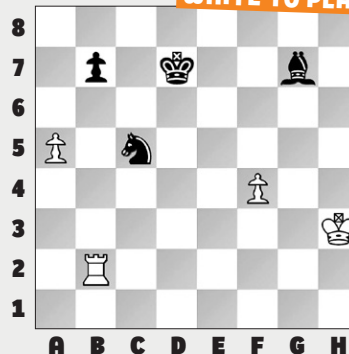
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WHITE TO PLAY



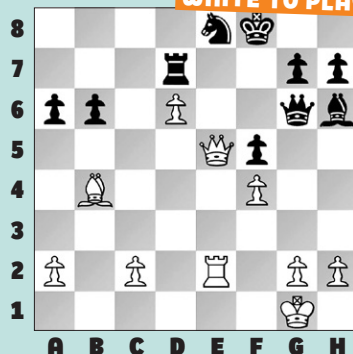
1b

WHITE TO PLAY



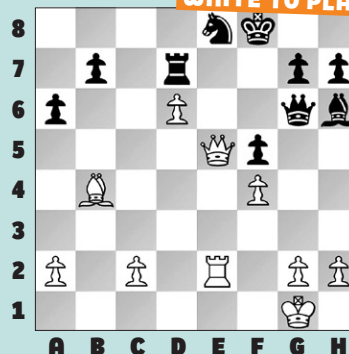
2a

WHITE TO PLAY



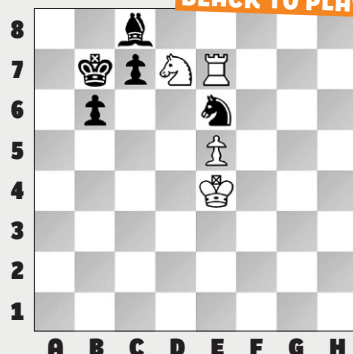
2b

WHITE TO PLAY



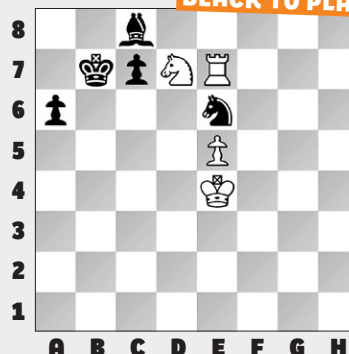
3a

BLACK TO PLAY



3b

BLACK TO PLAY



TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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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 • chess-tour.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 • chess-tour.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 • chess-tour.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 • chess-tour.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/ILOpen26

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

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 • chess-tour.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

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 • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2026 PA State Game/60 Championship - West

SEPTEMBER 19, 2026 — PA TLA# 56740
Site: William Pitt Union, Univ. of Pittsburgh Address: 5th Ave. & Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15213 Overall Prize Fund: \$695 GP Pts: 6 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Tom M Martinak • martinak_tom_m@hotmail.com • 412-908-0286 • pscfchess.org/clearing-house

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

Thomas Bergquist Memorial 87th WV State Championship

SEPT. 19-20, 2026 — WV TLA# 57794
Site: Harrison County Senior Citizen Center Address: 500 W. Main Street, Clarksburg, WV 26301 Overall Prize Fund: \$500 GP Pts: 6 FIDE: N Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Harrison County Chess Club • greerlaw@aol.com • 3046419241

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 • 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

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 • chess-tour.com

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Lafayette Open 2026

OCTOBER 10-11, 2026 — LA TLA# 58119
Site: Discovery Inn and Suites Address: 120 E Kaliste Saloom Rd., Lafayette, LA 70508 Overall Prize Fund: \$1,600 GP Pts: 20 FIDE: Y Accessible: N Residency: N Org: Tommy LeBlanc • 337-981-1821 • lafayettechessclub.org

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

4th Gulf Coast October Open

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
Site: Embassy Suites by Hilton Address: 10450 Corkscrew Commons Drive, Estero, FL 33928 Overall Prize Fund: \$10,000 GP Pts: 50 FIDE: Y Accessible: Y Residency: N Org: Boca Raton Chess Club • jon@bocachess.com • 561-302-4377 • bocachess.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 • chess-tour.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 • chess-tour.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 • chess-tour.com

GRAND PRIX

Thanksgiving Open 2026

NOVEMBER 13-15, 2026 — MO TLA# 55379
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-tour.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)

PLEASE NOTE

DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

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

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 • chesstour.com

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

Regional

ALABAMA

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

ARKANSAS

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

CONNECTICUT

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

DELAWARE

NOVEMBER 21-22, 2026 — DE TLA# 57406
Delaware Capital Open
Site: Delaware Agricultural Museum **Address:** 866 North Dupont Hwy, Dover, DE 19901 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,500 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Delaware Chess Association • aa.legolas@gmail.com • 410-219-3179 • delawarechessassociation.org

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

MARCH 13-14, 2027 — DE TLA# 57324
New Castle County Delaware State Championship
Site: Ramada Inn **Address:** 280 Chapman Road, Newark, DE 19702 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,500 **GP Pts:** \$3,600 **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Delaware Chess Association • aa.legolas@gmail.com • 410-219-3179 • delawarechessassociation.org

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 — VA TLA# 57655
Scholastic Tournament at the Meadowdale Public Library
See Virginia.

FLORIDA

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.

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

GEORGIA

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS

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 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

INDIANA

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 10, 2026 — KY TLA# 57373
The Butch Mosby Chess Classic 2
See Kentucky.

KENTUCKY

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10, 2026 — KY TLA# 57373
The Butch Mosby Chess Classic 2
Site: Roots101 Museum **Address:** 124 North 1st Street, Louisville, KY 40202 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$4,000 b/64 teams **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Corbin Seavers • urbanlouisvillechess@yahoo.com • 5023656369

LOUISIANA

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 10-11, 2026 — LA TLA# 58119
Lafayette Open 2026
See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND

MARYLAND CHESS TOURNAMENTS (North Penn Chess Club)
Maryland Chess runs 21+ annual K-12 tournaments every other Saturday from September through June & 12+ annual 1-day or multi-day open tournaments for adults & K-12 players on weekends. See www.MD-Chess.org for tournament announcements, registration for tournaments, updated wallcharts, live stand-

ings, sign up for K-12 & open e-newsletters, lists of coaches & clubs, camp announcements, & news. K-12 MD players who compete in the Varsity section (for players rated 1600+) of 1 of 8+ annual MD-Sweet-16 Qualifiers can qualify for the \$48,000+ scholarship to the University of Maryland, Baltimore County awarded annually. UMCB is a perennial top-10 contender for the collegiate national chess championship.

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

MASSACHUSETTS

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2026 — MA TLA# 57128
85th New England Open
See Grand Prix.

MISSISSIPPI

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

MISSOURI

SEPTEMBER 4-7, 2026 — TN TLA# 56592
2026 Peter P Lahde TN Open and State Championship
See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

SEPTEMBER 12-13, 2026 — CA-N TLA# 55953
Sacramento Chess Club Weekend Swiss #26
See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

NEW YORK

MONTHLY ON SATURDAYS — DC 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

SEPTEMBER 27, 2026 — NY TLA# 57527
12th Annual New York State Magnus High School and Junior High Chess League: Season 12 Kickoff!
Site: Columbia Grammar and Prep., High School Library **Address:** 4 West 93rd Street, New York, NY 10025 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$800 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Chess Center of New York • director@magnusleague.org • www.chesscenter.cc

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

NOVEMBER 14-15, 2026 — NY TLA# 57478
10th Annual New York State Girls Championship!
Site: Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School **Address:** 4 West 93rd Street, New York, NY 10025 **Overall Prize Fund:** \$1,000 **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Chess Center of New York • director@chessgirls.win • 347-201-2269 • chessgirls.win

NORTH CAROLINA

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 — VA TLA# 57655
Scholastic Tournament at the Meadowdale Public Library

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

PENNSYLVANIA

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

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

SOUTH CAROLINA

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

TEXAS

AUGUST 28-29, 2026 — TX TLA# 57389
Lufkin Piney Woods Open
Site: Lufkin Parks and Recreation **Address:** 500 E. Kerr Ave, Lufkin, TX 75901 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** N **Residency:** N **Org:** Rita Paxton Frenzel • ilufkinchess@gmail.com • 2146979886

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

VIRGINIA

HERITAGE EVENT • STATE CHAMPIONSHIP
EVENT

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2026 — VA TLA# 57313
87th Virginia Closed
Site: Hilton Garden Inn Innsbrook **Address:** 4050 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA 23060 **Overall Prize Fund:** see online TLA **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Michael E Hoffpauir • mhoffpauir@aol.com • 7578464805 • vachess.org

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 — VA TLA# 57655
Scholastic Tournament at the Meadowdale Public Library
Site: Meadowdale Public Library **Address:** 4301 Meadowdale Blvd, North Chesterfield, VA 23234 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** N **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Michael E Hoffpauir, NTD/IA/SI • mhoffpauir@aol.com • 7578464805 • vachess.org

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

WASHINGTON

NOVEMBER 7-8, 2026 — WA TLA# 57649
21st Susan Polgar Foundation National Open for Girls and Boys
Site: Hilton Bellevue **Address:** 300 112th Ave SE, Bellevue, WA 98004 **Overall Prize Fund:** n/a **GP Pts:** n/a **FIDE:** Y **Accessible:** Y **Residency:** N **Org:** Josh Sinanan • WashingtonChessFederation@gmail.com • 206-769-3757 • spfn.com

WISCONSIN

SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2026 — IL TLA# 55517
2026 Illinois Open
See Grand Prix.

OCTOBER 16-18, 2026 — FL TLA# 57519
4th Gulf Coast October Open
See Grand Prix.

Solutions

PAGE 17 TEST YOUR TACTICS

- (1) We begin with a royal fork! **17. Ne6+! Kf7 18. Nxd8+ Bxd8 19. Bf3** and Black resigned. (Impack1 – khansae, *Lichess.org*, 2026)
- (2) White wins with a double attack: **7. Qa4+ Bd7 8. Qxe4** and they're up a piece for a pawn. (magalang8888 – DVManesh33482, *Lichess.org*, 2026)
- (3) White wins material with a discovered attack on the queen: **14. Bxh7+ Nxh7 15. Rxd8.** (bilou02 – Bodlja, *Lichess.org*, 2026)
- (4) This is a very common tactic in the Bishop's Opening. The undefended e5-knight is the signal. **6. ... Qa5+! 7. Nc3 Qxe5.** (Chayma23 – SikeBlondie, *Lichess.org*, 2026)
- (5) Remove the guard with **12. Bxf6! Qxf6 13. Qxg4.** (ThePriestley – APalaciosT, *Lichess.org* analysis, 2026)
- (6) King on an open file? Look for a discovered check! **7. ... Nxc3+ 8. Be3 Nxd1.** (Nich_Nicols – StoneGrate, *Lichess.org*, 2026)
- (7) This is another common Ponziani idea for White: **7. Bb5+! c6 7. ... Bd7 8. Bxd7+ loses the queen. 8. dxc6! bxc6 9. Nxc6** and White wins material. (Ser2209 – dlap, *Lichess.org*, 2026)
- (8) The bishop has no safe squares after **6. ... a4! 7. Bc4 b5.** This is the point of 5. ... a5 in the Bishop's Opening! (turbok – AtomicApple, *Lichess.org*, 2026)
- (9) Black rips open the king's defenses with **7. ... Bxe3 8. fxe3 Qh4+** and now the key idea is **9. g3 Nxg3! 10. Nf3 Qh6.** A typical tactic to know! (limehero – KirillG, *Lichess.org*, 2026)
- (10) This is a toughie. The undefended c5-knight is a target, but

we need a tempo to win it. So Black can play **16. ... e4! 17. Nd4 Qd6!** and now White can't save the knight and also stop mate. (NICO121 – sergeiprokofiev, *Lichess.org*, 2026)

PAGE 20 IGOR'S DOUBLES

#1 (Easy)

Difference: In #1A, the white pawn is on e3; in #1B, it is on f4.

Significance: Access to the d4-square is critical for Black. Black is threatening 1. ... Bxb2. The material is balanced and if Black can improve the coordination of their three pieces, they will have a draw for sure and maybe more. At this moment, though, the black pieces are misplaced: The king and the bishop are lined up along the 7th rank, so skewer tactics are in the air. Knights and sometimes kings have big trouble stopping a passed pawn on a rook file, even if they are both very close to the pawn, even if the pawn is two moves from the promotion square. After **1. Rxb7+ Nxb7** (if the king moves, White wins the bishop with 2. Rxg7) **2. a6**, the threat is a6-a7. The black knight can't stop the pawn, and also blocks his king from getting to it. In #1A Black can't do anything and is lost. In #1B, Black has a saving move: **2. ... Bd4** stopping the a-pawn. After **3. axb7 Kc7** or 3. ... Ba7 the game ends in a draw. White doesn't have to take on b7 in #1B, but the position remains balanced.

Conclusion: White is winning in #1A after **1. Rxb7+**. In #1B the position is balanced, and **1. Rxb7+** leads to an immediate draw.

#2 (Intermediate)

Difference: In #2A the black b-pawn is on b6; in #2B, it is on b7.

Significance: Access to the b6-square is critical for Black. Black

has a significant material advantage — a bishop for a pawn. However, Black's king is in danger, their bishop is out of play and White's d-pawn is dangerous. In #1A, White executes a nice combination: **1. Qe7+ Rxe7 2. d7.** The d-pawn can't be stopped, and White will get the queen back, while the black rook can't be saved. White will be up the Exchange after either **2. ... Nf6 3. Bxe7+** and 4. d8=Q or **3. d8=Q+ Qe8 4. Bxe7+ Kf7 5. Qxe8+ Nxe8 6. Ba3.** In #1B the story changes because the black queen can use the b6-square. After 1. Qe7+?? Rxe7 2. d6, Black plays 2. ... Qb6+, refuting the tactics and obtaining a winning position. For example, if 3. Kf1 Nd6 (or the computer's choice, 3. ... Qxb4), Black's advantage is decisive. In #2B, White has to play 1. Qd4, which gives them practical chances, but Black is better.

Conclusion: White is winning in #2A. In #2B White is worse.

#3 (Intermediate)

Difference: In position #3A, the black pawn is on b6; in #3B, it is on a6.

Significance: Access to the b6-square is critical for Black. Black has a bishop and a pawn for a rook. White's last move 1. Rh7-e7, seems to have given Black an instant opportunity to win material after **1. ... Bxd7**, since **2. Rxd7** is met with **2. ... Nc5+**. However, winning the rook will not be enough if the knight can't stop the pawn from promoting! In #1A

White can give up the rook with **3. Kf5!!** (the white king must prevent the knight from reaching f6) **Nxd7 4. e6!** The threat is 5. e7. If **4. ... Nf6** (what else?) **5. Kxf6 Kc8 6. e7 Kd7 7. Kf7** and White gets the queen and is winning. If Black wants to prolong the fight, they shouldn't go in for these tactics. Objectively, White has a significant advantage. In #1B, the black knight can successfully catch the pawn after **1. ... Bxd7 2. Rxd7 Nc5+ 3. Kf5 Kxd7 4. e6 Nb6!!**. Now the knight is moving away from his target only to catch it at the last moment. Now White can play **5. e7**, or else Black catches the pawn with 5. ... Nc8, but Black has **5. ... Nc8!** anyway, planning to go to d6 and fork the newly promoted piece and the king (5. ... Nc4 also works). White has one nice try left: **6. e8=N**, and it would work if Black didn't have the pawn on c7, but here Black simply transposes into a winning pawn endgame after **6. ... Nd6+**. Therefore, in #3B, White must accept the loss of the knight and not capture the bishop on d7. After 2. Kd5 Nf8 Black has winning chances.

Conclusion: White is winning in #3A if Black tries to win material with 1. ... Bxd7, 2. ... Nc5+, and 3. ... Nxd7, and still has a solid advantage if Black plays differently. In #3B, Black wins the knight after 1. ... Bxd7. White can't play 2. Rxd7 and must fight for a draw down in material.

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The King's Small Chess Set

COMBOKNGSM-BR

\$59.95

This set brings a touch of European tradition to the classic Staunton pattern, with King and Queen crowns hand-crafted from different wood types. Its charming details raise it above mass-produced travel sets and make every game a pleasure.



The Large Burgundy Magnetic Chess Set

COMBOMAGLG-BU

\$99.95

Every piece features a magnet in its base, ensuring the set's beauty is matched by functionality. The vintage flair in the rank and file labels, along with richly hand-stained details, would draw the eye of any collector who appreciates design.



The Consul Chess Set

COMBOCON-BK

\$109.95

Few sets can compete with the diverse appeal of the Consul, which boasts ornate details in the rank and file but also a traditional Staunton pattern for ease of use. It's built for rigorous games but also looks gorgeous on display.



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