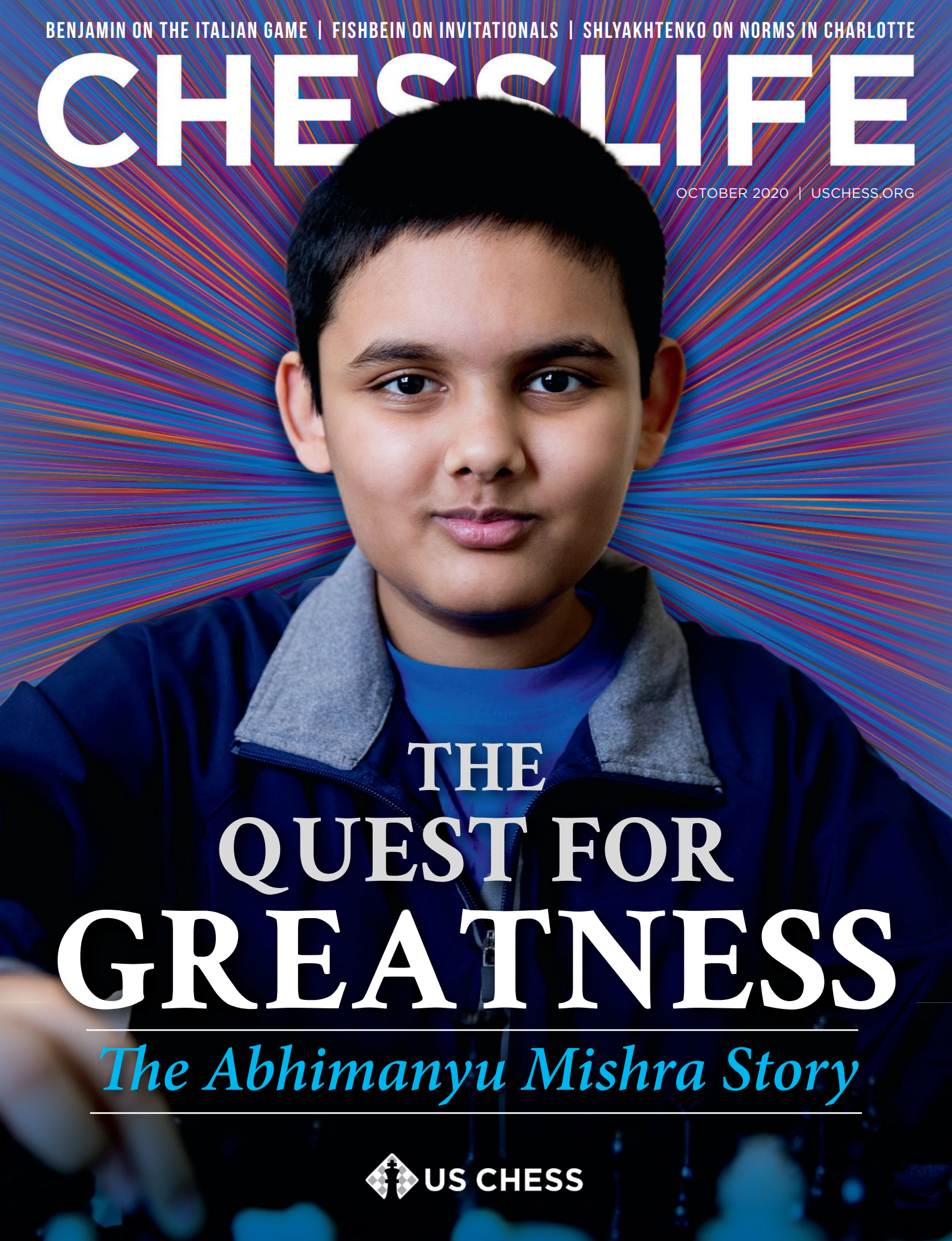


BENJAMIN ON THE ITALIAN GAME | FISHBEIN ON INVITATIONALS | SHLYAKHTENKO ON NORMS IN CHARLOTTE

CHESSLIFE

OCTOBER 2020 | [USCHESS.ORG](https://uschess.org)

A portrait of a young boy, Abhimanyu Mishra, with dark hair and a slight smile, wearing a blue jacket with a grey collar. The background is a vibrant, abstract pattern of radiating lines in shades of blue, purple, and red.

THE QUEST FOR GREATNESS

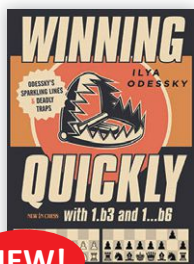
The Abhimanyu Mishra Story



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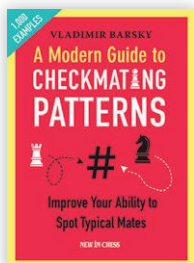
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NEW!

Odessky's Sparkling Lines and Deadly Traps *Ilya Odessky*

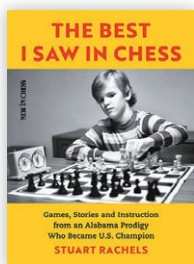
Russian IM Ilya Odessky is the world's leading expert on the 1.b3 and 1...b6 opening systems. Despite their apparent calm, they can get extremely sharp. Odessky presents his findings and achievements of recent years. His baffling traps will help you crush your opponents in the opening, with both White and Black. A highly unusual opening book full of ultra-romantic chess.



Improve Your Ability to Spot Typical Mates *Vladimir Barsky*

This is not just another book full of chess puzzles: it's a brilliantly organised course based on a Russian method that has proven to be effective. More often than you would expect, positions that look innocent at first sight, turn out to contain a mating pattern.

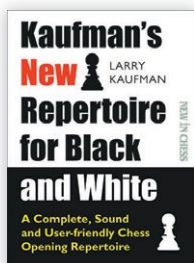
"A really important book, set out very clearly, extremely well organized." – GM Daniel King



Games, Stories and Instruction from an Alabama Prodigy Who Became U.S. Champion *Stuart Rachels*

"The most enjoyable book I've read in a decade. This is what an autobiographical chess book should be: entertaining, honest and instructive." – GM Andy Soltis

"This book was a blast to read. It is fresh, entertaining, but it also offers a lot of serious, deep chess analysis." *Arne Kaehler, ChessBase News*

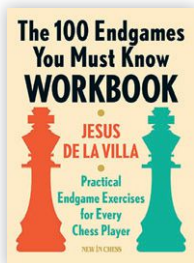


A Complete, Sound and User-friendly Chess Opening Repertoire *Larry Kaufman*

"His recommendations are well-conceived, and I was impressed with how much Kaufman was able to stuff into these pages." – John Hartmann, *Chess Life*

"Kaufman does an outstanding job." – IM Gary Lane

"A good starting point for anyone wanting to give their openings a major overhaul." – *CHESS Magazine*



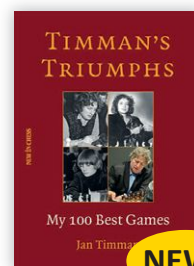
Practical Endgames Exercises for Every Chess Player *Jesus de la Villa*

"I love this book! In order to master endgame principles you will need to practice them." *NM Han Schut, Chess.com*

"The perfect supplement to De la Villa's manual. To gain sufficient knowledge of theoretical endgames you really only need two books." *IM Herman Grooten, Schaaksite*

My 100 Best Games *Jan Timman*

Covers a career of more than 50 years and includes wins against Karpov, Kasparov, Kortchnoi, Smyslov, Tal, Bronstein, Larsen, Topalov, Spassky and many others. The annotations are in Timman's trademark lucid style, a happy mix of colourful background information and sharp, crystal-clear explanations. Another instant classic by Jan Timman!

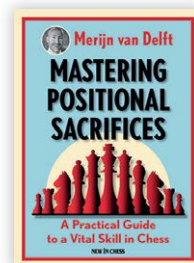


NEW!

A Practical Guide to a Vital Skill in Chess *Merijn van Delft*

Anyone who wants to become a candidate master, needs to understand the positional sacrifice. IM Van Delft has created a unique thematic structure for all types of positional sacrifices, shows lots of examples and adds carefully selected exercises.

"Masterfully discusses a vital topic, to bring your chess to the next level." – GM Karsten Müller

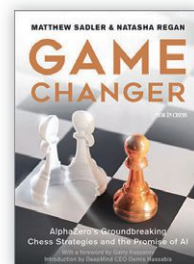


AlphaZero's Groundbreaking Chess Strategies and the Promise of AI *Matthew Sadler & Natasha Regan*

**2019 Averbakh-Boleslavsky Award
ECF 2019 Book of the Year**

"Quite inspirational." – Magnus Carlsen

"Once you experience the power of these ideas in your own game, you realise how much we can learn from the playing style of AlphaZero." – IM Stefan Kuipers

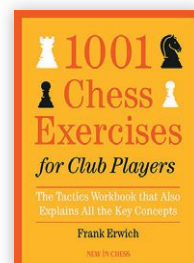


The Tactics Workbook that Also Explains All the Key Concepts *Frank Erwich*

"One of the better exercise books to come out in recent years." – IM John Donaldson

"An extremely useful training manual. Many club players will benefit." – IM Herman Grooten, *Schaaksite*

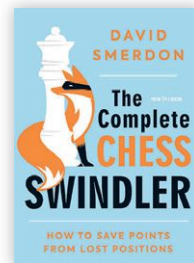
"I was very impressed by the range of positions that Erwich selected." – GM Matthew Sadler



How to Save Points from Lost Positions *David Smerdon*

"Smerdon is the first to treat the subject of swindling in a logical and systematic manner, but it is his choice of examples, well-known and obscure, that make the book shine." – GM Ian Rogers

"A thrilling guide. Smerdon takes care to emphasize that the best practical chance in a bad position may well differ from the numerically 'best' move favoured by chess engines." – GM Luke McShane, *The Spectator*



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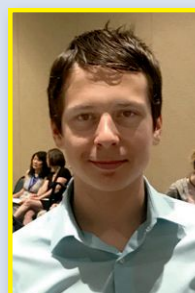


GM Maurice Ashley

GM Maurice Ashley has impacted chess as a coach, author, commentator, iPhone app designer, puzzle inventor and motivational speaker. Maurice is well known for providing dynamic live tournament coverage of world class chess competitions and matches for the Grand Chess Tour and the U.S. Championships. He has received multiple community service awards from city governments, universities, and community groups for his work. In recognition of his immense contribution to the game, he was inducted into the U.S. Chess Hall of Fame in 2016 and the Brooklyn Technical High School Hall of Fame in 2018.

GM Joel Benjamin

GM Joel Benjamin is a three-time U.S. Champion and participant on many U.S. national teams, including the gold medal-winning 2018, 2019, and 2020 World Senior teams. He is the author of *Liquidation on the Chess Board: Mastering the Transition into the Pawn Endgame* and *Better Thinking, Better Chess: How a Grandmaster Finds his Moves*. His newest book, *World Champion Chess for Juniors: Learn from the Greatest Players Ever*, is due for release this fall.



FM Robert Shlyakhtenko

FM Robert Shlyakhtenko is ranked one of the top 100 players in the U.S. In 2019, he became the youngest ever Southern California state champion, was co-champion of the Barber K-8 Tournament of Champions, and won the Southern California Open. His previous article for *Chess Life Online* won a 2020 Chess Journalists of America award for "Best Instruction."

GM Alex Fishbein

GM Alex Fishbein won the first Denker Tournament of Champions in 1985. He became a grandmaster in 1992 and over the years has won clear or equal first in many national events like the World Open, Chicago Open and National Open. Although Fishbein has worked in finance for more than 25 years, he continues to actively compete and is now writing his fourth chess book. He is the current New Jersey state champion.

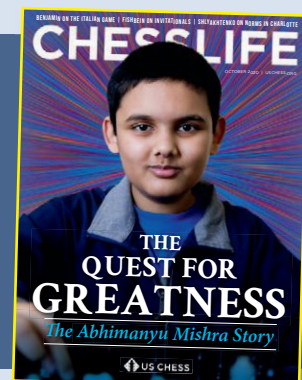


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ON THE COVER

IM Abhimanyu Mishra may be a terror at the board, but he's also just a kid who loves chess. Our cover story shows both sides.

COVER PHOTO BY
JUSTIN N. LANE.



Chess Life

OCTOBER

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PHOTOS: TOP, JUSTIN N. LANE; INSET, DAVID LLADA.



ABHIMANYU MISHRA

David Llada's iconic and fierce photo of Abhi—seen here at right—has become definitive to many chess fans. GM Maurice Ashley met a much more complex young man in his reporting.

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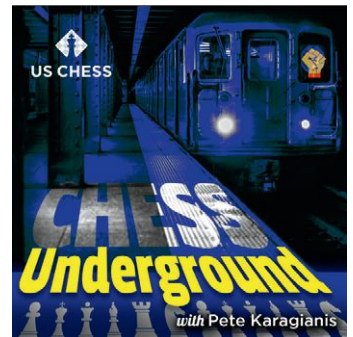
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CHESS LIFE ONLINE

OCTOBER PREVIEW



Tune in and listen to our podcasts at uschess.org

COVER STORIES WITH *CHESS LIFE*

For the October edition of Cover Stories, available on the first Tuesday of the month, *Chess Life* editor John Hartmann will talk with GM Maurice Ashley about his profile on IM Aghibmanyu Mishra, the world's youngest international master who is on a quest to break the record for world's youngest grandmaster.

ONE MOVE AT A TIME

One Move at a Time highlights people around the country who are advancing our mission to "empower people, enrich lives, and enhance communities through chess." One Move is hosted by Senior Director of Strategic Communication Dan Lucas and is available on the second Tuesday of each month.

LADIES KNIGHT

Ladies Knight is hosted by Women's Program Director Jennifer Shahade and features conversations with community members who are advancing women's chess. For the second year in a row, Ladies Knight was awarded best overall podcast by the Chess Journalists of America, and also won best individual podcast for the episode with the artist Juga. Ladies Knight drops on the third Tuesday of the month.

THE CHESS UNDERGROUND

Hosted by Assistant Director of Events Pete Karagianis, The Chess Underground explores the subculture (and occasionally, subversive culture) that is chess—all of its eccentricities, peculiarities, and theoretical novelties. The Chess Underground is available the fourth Tuesday of the month.

USCHESS *Streaming*

NEW VIDEO PROGRAMS FOR MEMBERS

LEVELLING UP

Chess Life / *Chess Life Online* Editor **John Hartmann** takes a look at games between players rated under 1400. By understanding typical mistakes at that level, newer players young and old can "level up" more quickly.

THE TD SHOW

FIDE Events Manager and National Tournament Director **Chris Bird** and guests help explain everything you could ever want to know about US Chess rules and tournament direction.

CLASS IN SESSION

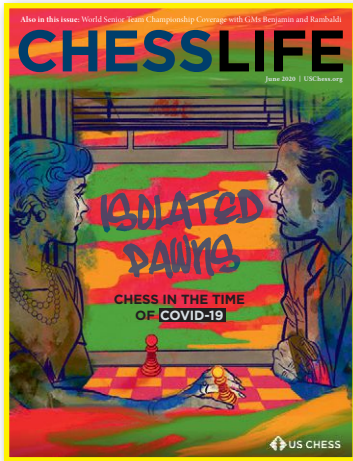
US Chess Women's online programming, created by **Jennifer Shahade**, is growing: in addition to our weekly "Girls Club Zooms" with the top players in the country, we are expanding our offerings to adult Ladies Knights, teenager college prep discussions, and beginner classes.

Sign up to these playlists on YouTube!



SOCIALIZE Join us on **Instagram** @US_Chess and **Twitter** @USChess as well as on our accounts @USChessWomen. And be sure to bookmark and visit uschess.org/clo to ensure you catch the latest news on our digital presence.

Letters: *OK, Boomer?*



NOT A BOOMER

Given how online chess has continued to bloom, and with the [conclusion of the inaugural] Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour (*an online quick and rapid event featuring top grandmasters and a \$1M prize fund ~ed.*), I wanted to write about how and why the article by GM Jesse Kraai (June 2020, pg. 30) was important to me. I also wanted to reflect on that in light of recent chess developments.

Early in his article, GM Kraai made the incredibly prophetic statement that “If we make the game any faster we will cheapen it into a video game. We will make chess an esport.” This is exactly what has and is happening as we speak. Matches with faster time controls are being played for huge prize funds and social media bragging rights, tarnishing the play of great players. The Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour saw many blunders that grandmasters would not ordinarily make in a classically timed over-the-board format. Some players, like GM Ding Liren, had to suffer the additional anxiety of wondering whether their internet would disconnect at any moment. And it’s all being done for the sake of “entertainment.”

A growing number of people have voiced their opinions that more blunders are “good for the game” because it makes chess at the elite level more entertaining for spectators. I think this is absolute garbage. I pay attention to grandmaster chess to stare in wonder at things I may not understand in an effort to constantly learn and get better. I do not watch these games waiting for someone to blunder.

And now: Enter the *Chess.com* POG championships. In these events, Twitch gamers whose ratings are not even 1800 are shoved into chess tournaments and given attention simply because they have a gamer following. Chess is becoming cheap entertainment for the masses and this is supposed to be good?

Which brings me to my next point of concern: With online chess booming (thanks to faster time controls), websites like *Chess.com* and chess24 are constantly harping on [how they are helping to] “Grow the game” or “Impact chess.” Their message is that they are altruistically trying to get more people turned onto chess for “growth.” In reality [I believe] that what they are going for are more people who will potentially buy premium memberships to their websites. Commentators for these tour broadcasts constantly remind viewers to buy a premium membership, immediately following some social media banter about “growing the game” or “impacting chess.” It’s not about growing chess in a healthy way.

To cap off this disturbing phenomenon, World Champion GM Magnus Carlsen recently commented that the current format of the World Chess Championship (WCC) doesn’t truly decide who the best chess player is, saying that a solely classical tournament does not determine the “best” chess player. But this is in direct conflict with the truth: classical chess is the only format we have where players are truly able to give their absolute BEST moves because they have time to think about strategy and dynamics.

Fast time controls are nothing more than an optical test of what has been memorized. This is a very important point that GM Kraai makes in his article.

The final kicker is that chess24 and GM Carlsen have announced a new Magnus Tour that will start in November and continue into next year. The article announcing this tournament says that the tour will “crown the best chess player in the world.” So, the WCC doesn’t matter anymore? Carlsen’s rapid tournament full of blunders and possible disconnects is what should crown the best chess player in the world? If this is how arguably the most popular world champion in history feels about chess, then what is to become of classical over-the-board play over the next year and further in my time?

With a growing base that no longer wants to play long games, this could effectively end classical time controls and worse yet, create a trend towards more tournaments based online rather than in real life. It could be absolutely devastating for the tradition of chess play and its quality.

Austin Burnette Mitchell
via email

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Linda Diaz, our July 2020 My Best Move columnist, for winning National Public Radio’s (NPR) 2020 Tiny Desk Contest! Her winning song, “Green Tea Ice Cream,” was selected over more than 6,000 entries sent in from every state in the country.

In announcing Diaz’s win on their website, NPR called her video “a perfect Tiny Desk Contest entry,” citing “Diaz’s top-notch musicianship and songwriting skills, as well as her angelic voice and the warmth her entry radiated.”

“Linda stood out in a crop of thousands of talented musicians, but I knew early on that she was the one to beat,” Tiny Desk producer and contest judge Bobby Carter said. “Her tone, her message and the band’s overall musical presentation were simply undeniable.”

In her July My Best Move column, Diaz credits chess for helping to shape her as a musician: “As many former competitive players will tell you, the skills that I learned in chess have guided me in my adult life in more ways than I can count, especially in terms of dedication to my craft through diligent practice and in my understanding of how individual responsibility coincides with teamwork.”

Tiny Desk Concerts is a video series of live concerts hosted at the desk of NPR’s All Songs Considered host Bob Boilen. The concerts began in 2008 and have drawn renowned musicians from every genre. The Tiny Desk contest was born in 2014, giving musicians from around the country the opportunity to play a Tiny Desk concert. Contest winners are selected by a distinguished panel of musicians and one NPR staff member.

To read more about Diaz and to hear her winning entry, visit npr.org and search “Linda Diaz.”

Austin's concerns about the direction of modern chess are not uncommon, if our mailbag is any indication of the general zeitgeist. And—speaking for myself, and not for US Chess—I share some of them. For this issue I thought I might take the liberty to add my two cents to the conversation.

Chess Life readers are a fairly self-selective lot. Many of us are long-time members who came to the game in a very different era. I started playing right before the internet took hold of the world—I remember playing on the first Internet Chess Server via Telnet and with a wooden board—and, honestly, it's hard to imagine now what a pre-internet chess world was like. US Chess ratings were updated monthly. Games took months to appear in the magazine. Watching elite grandmasters play and stream blitz would have seemed like a fanciful dream.

There are very real benefits for modern-day chess fans in living in an interconnected world. As I am writing these words, I can click a link on a website and watch live games from around the world, some of which (shudder) are even being played over-the-board. I can find gigantic databases of games to mine and study. And YouTube offers a bounty of educational videos by titled players, all free to view, should I want to try to improve my chess.

But there are downsides, too. The internet is not built for slowness or deliberation—it's immediacy, reaction, speed. Nor is it the socialist or libertarian panacea that some of its creators thought it would be. People often quote Stewart Brand, the founder of the Whole Earth Catalog, as saying that "information wants to be free." But they leave off the second part of his statement: "... information also wants to be expensive."

We're seeing this dual movement play out right now in the chess world, and a real economic disruption is obviously underway. Chess.com and chess24 are both burning a lot of capital to fight for supremacy in the online chess marketplace, while lichess is humming along, hosting thousands of players through voluntary donations. Suddenly chess is a hustle, a side-gig, and Twitch is littered with dozens of masters streaming to literally no one.

It is strange that thousands of dollars in prizes, along with more in production costs, are being thrown at beginners simply for their being B-list Twitch celebrities. It is a little disheartening to see blunder-filled blitz games deciding lucrative online events between the best players in the world. I absolutely sympathize with Austin—I too worry for the future of the World Championship cycle, one of the great traditions of our game—but I also know that we have a hand in shaping what is to come.

There will always be classical time control tournaments, because there will always be people who want to challenge themselves to find the best moves in optimal one-on-one battle. Some thought that the rise of the engine would kill serious chess, and now those same people are proclaiming the death of the game because of the Internet. Well, we're still here after Deep Blue and Alpha Zero, and I'd wager good money that we'll survive the server wars too. We might even end up with some converts, and new members, in the process. ~John Hartmann, ed.

READING PANDO

Bruce Pandolfini's (pictured below) September column is provocative.

According to Jeff Sonas' very useful database *Chessmetrics.com* (who will volunteer to update it?) Alexander Konstantinopolsky, rated 11th in the world in 1945, was a bit stronger than the dangerous Nezhmetdinov.



Today the standards for GM have been drastically lowered, thanks to Campomanes' FIDE.

In the U.S., I nominate IM George Orlov of Seattle for the captioned title. He should be a GM by any standard. I have the scars to prove it.

IM Anthony Saidy
via email

CHECKING PANDO

On Page 47 of the September issue, Problem V, there is a mate in one! Black has 1. ... Rg6, mate.

John Homer
via email

Brsuce replies: Thanks for catching! If I were grading, I'd give A+ plus extra credit!

ERRATA FOR SEPTEMBER



We neglected to print the solution to Andy Soltis' mate-in-three problem on page 11. That solution is: 1. e8=B! Kxf6 2. g8=R! Ke6 3. Rg6 mate. Or 1. ... Kxd6 2. c8=R!.

Our spellchecker went a bit haywire in our cover story on Charlie Gabriel. Apologies to Kyle Roussel (page 17, caption) and Chancellor Bennett and Martin Krusche (page 18) for mangling their names at various points in the text.

ANDY SOLTIS IN 1981.

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Rochelle Wu, 2017
National Girls Tournament of
Champions winner

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Membership Appreciation

Meet the Last Frontier Chess Foundation, the most recent US Chess affiliate and a 2019 MAP winner.

By CAMI MALCHOFF, PRESIDENT, LAST FRONTIER CHESS FOUNDATION

LFCF BOARD WELCOMES MICHAEL ABRON (CENTER) TO ALASKA!

Looking at the Alaskan fireweed, you might not know this flower is like the phoenix: it is reborn in areas scorched by summer wildfires. Alaska's state affiliation history in the "Last Frontier State" is one that has been singed, but like the fireweed, always returns.

Throughout the past 60 years, Alaska's US Chess affiliation has been ignited by the passionate efforts of various US Chess members. Remnants of previous organizations—tales of their legacies—could be heard by those who had played but who had since moved on from the game. Still, the fiery love of the game could always be found by those inspired and willing to teach the next generation of Alaskan players: in local coffee shops, bookstores, libraries, and afterschool programs across the state.

Our journey began on a January afternoon in 2019, in a classroom of one such scholastic afterschool program. Five individuals were unknowingly playing on the same chessboard and, like each chess piece, brought with them different strengths and abilities. These key members came together to form the first Last Frontier Chess Foundation (LFCF) Executive Board: Camilla Malchoff, president; Blaine Webb vice president; Alex Zmijewski, secretary; Drea Ferrell, treasurer; and Jonathon

Singler, state delegate.

Connected by their passion for chess and service with Alaska Pacific Chess, a collegiate program at Alaska Pacific University, the new board's goals were to foster an open community location for competitive chess

... LFCF picked up where past affiliates left off: sharing the same love of chess and wanting to expand the Alaskan chess community.

and to connect with "Pingnatuk," a scholastic program, thereby inspiring the creation of more scholastic programs in the Anchorage School District. In addition, partnering with troops from Girl Scouts of Alaska aided in promoting chess in Alaska.

Rising from the ashes, LFCF picked up where past affiliates left off: sharing the same

love of chess and wanting to expand the Alaskan chess community. LFCF, cautiously stepping into unknown territory, recognized the need for a unifying governing body that other established Alaskan chess clubs, entities, and individuals could turn to for assistance and guidance. Operating as an overall support system to established clubs and programs throughout the state allowed LFCF to be flexible in its focused efforts on resource support while providing educational events and encouraging the development of new clubs and tournament directors.

LFCF's mission was to provide opportunities for Alaskans, no matter the skill level, to come together to learn, teach, and play casual and competitive chess in US Chess rated local and state tournaments, both over the board and online. With this mission, LFCF succeeded in generating US Chess memberships that stemmed from our first major tournament event: 2019 National Chess Day.

We created a family-friendly weekend dedicated to the community. Players only needed an annual US Chess membership to play. At this inaugural event, we also celebrated the completion of a great chess quest. Mr. Michael Abron a.k.a. "The Chess Pioneer" became the first African American to play in a US Chess rated tournament in all 50 states (see

May 2020 *Chess Life* for more about Abron).

LFCF is proud to celebrate this achievement and looks forward to many more, with Alaskan chess enthusiasts coming together to connect over a board, sharing strategies and experiences. 

Here are the top three 2019 MAP winners from each category. Thanks to all of our members and affiliates who help support our membership growth!

GRAND PRIZE

Continental Chess Association (NY)

ADULT MEMBER

First place: Continental Chess Association (NY)

Second place: Saint Louis Chess Club (MO)

Third place: San Diego Chess Club (CA)

SCHOLASTIC AND YOUTH

First place: Bay Area Chess (CA)

Second place: Paperclip Pairings (TX)

Third place: The Berkeley Chess School (CA)

SMALL STATE AFFILIATE

First place: John Bapst Memorial

High School Chess Club (ME)

Second place: Metro Area Chess (DC)

Third place: All Saints Catholic School Chess Club (ME)

STATE PERCENTAGE GAINED

First place: Last Frontier Chess Foundation (AK)

Second place: DC Chess League (DC)

Third place: Montana Chess Association (MT)

STATE CHAPTER AFFILIATE

First place: Maryland Chess Association (MD)

Second place: Michigan Chess Association (MD)

Third place: Washington Chess Federation (WA)

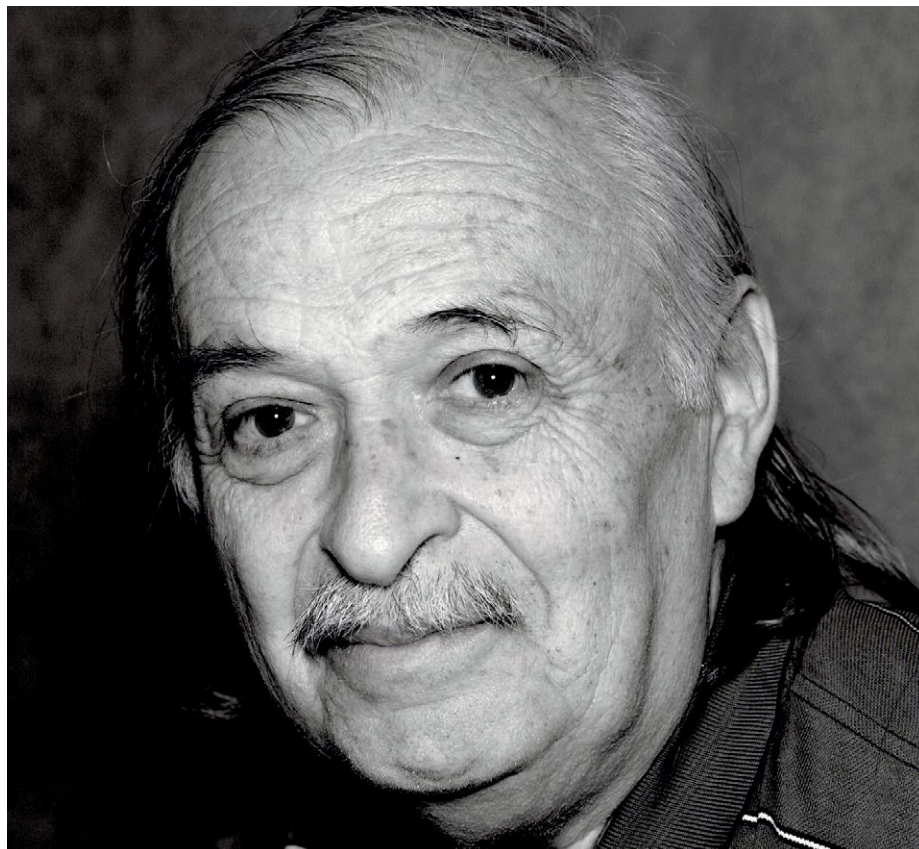
MEMBER STANDINGS

First place: Tim V. Campbell

Second place (tie): Timothy A. Tusing

Second place (tie): Todd W. Wolf

The Membership Appreciation Program (MAP) is a year-long membership drive that provides prizes and recognition for affiliates and members who sign up new or renewing US Chess members. To learn more about how you can participate, visit uschess.org/go/MAP. For the most current standings, go to uschess.org/datapage/MAP-standings.php.



GM Miron Sher (1952-2020)

Bruce Pandolfini remembers a great teacher and a true mensch

By BRUCE PANDOLFINI

The chess world is united in mourning the loss of Miron Sher. After a long illness, Grandmaster Sher passed away on August 20th at the age of 68. The Ukrainian-born grandmaster became an IM in 1988 and a GM in 1992. Among his triumphs were winning the Belgorod tournament of 1990, tying for first in the same event in 1991, sharing first at Arhus in 1993, and being clear winner of the 1993-94 Hastings classic. But most of us knew Miron through his teaching.

I can still see Miron in the Dalton room at the Nationals, calmly sitting and reviewing games, perhaps nodding an acknowledging smile of hello, but never breaking from his immediate task of preparing novice and serious students alike for their next games. And that's how I will always envision him, loyal and steadfast,

an uncompromising mentor seeking truth and perfection to the end.

Indeed, it's as a dedicated coach Miron Sher will be most remembered. GMs Fabiano Caruana, Peter Heine Nielsen, and Robert Hess, along with IM Keaton Kiewra and FM Justus Williams are just a select few of the



TEAM DALTON, L TO R: WGM ALLA GRINFELD, ADIA ONYANGO, NELSON DUNN, DAVID MACENULTY, WIM BEATRIZ MARINELLO, GM MIRON SHER, AND NM JERALD TIMES. PHOTO COURTESY MACENULTY.

outstanding students Miron nurtured and inspired. I don't think I've ever met a trainer better than Miron Sher.

Sher became an educator in the late 1970s. By 1981, he had been appointed as coach to the prestigious Russian national team, a post he kept through 1985. Yet perhaps his greatest teaching attainments would arise in the United States.

Coming to America in 1997, Miron started coaching fulltime in New York, the mecca of U.S. chess programs. From his early involvement with Bruce Alberston for Chess in the Schools, to his work with Jerald Times at the Harlem Children's Zone, to his classes with Elizabeth Spiegel at IS 318, to his camps and teaching positions with Shernaz and John Kennedy at the Trinity and Browning Schools, to his later, long-term association with David MacEnulty and Beatriz Marinello at the Dalton School, where he fostered and guided many champions, Miron Sher established himself as a preeminent trainer.

If there was a key game for which to prep a student, Miron was top gun. His quick sight of the board was extraordinary. He could seize upon a weakness and in no time provide the perfect line to get a surprise advantage. His opening knowledge seemed to border on sorcery.

Through the years, I gained greatly from Miron's advice, discernment, and wisdom. Whether explaining principles at private schools or providing life lessons to kids in the inner city, Miron Sher always performed fully and at his best. He treated everyone equally, with fairness, justice, and boundless heart, and he was humble.

Miron was of the chess elite, but he never acted that way. It struck me how he was always willing to do the grunt work of cleaning up after class. A grandmaster, he'd

still pick pieces off the floor, bag and box them, wipe down the blackboard, straighten the tables, and lug everything back to where it had to be.

Miron Sher gave everything he could to his students. That included vast knowledge, constant support, and endless passion for the game of chess. Even during the worst of the pandemic, while suffering with cancer, Miron would rise at 6am, review critical games from around the world, and prepare his lessons for the day. To his very last moments, nothing could shake his indomitable spirit.

Miron Naumovich Sher was laid to rest at Mount Carmel Cemetery in Queens, New York on August 23rd. Present were his wife Alla Grinfeld, son Mikhail Sher, friends, colleagues, parents, and adoring students.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B66)

GM Andrei Kovalev

GM Miron Sher

Ostrava, 1993

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 Nf6 4. Nc3 cxd4 5. Nxd4 Nc6 6. Bg5 e6 7. Qd2 a6 8. O-O-O h6 9. Be3 Bd7 10. f4 b5 11. Bd3 Qc7 12. Rhe1 Na5 13. e5 dxe5 14. fxe5 b4 15. Ncb5 axb5 16. Nxb5



16. ... Nb3+, White resigned. ♠

FACES ACROSS THE BOARD

By AL LAWRENCE



DAN FLEETWOOD

BRENTWOOD, TENNESSEE

Correspondence GMs don't drop stuff!

Fleetwood is a grandmaster who understands what the rest of us are up against. That's because he's both a correspondence GM and an over-the-board amateur. "I don't think I'll ever be an OTB master, just because I drop stuff. In correspondence, you don't drop stuff."

Don't assume that Dan's success is all about computers. *Informant* published a win of his from 1990. He won the U.S. Absolute Championships in 1993, the year that U.S. champs led by Joel Benjamin crushed the best computers 27-9 at the Harvard Cup. Fleetwood went on to become only the eighth U.S. correspondence grandmaster. "It only took 33 years."

Dan picked up chess moves from neighborhood kids. "Then one of my uncles beat me 24 straight games. He didn't believe in losing to boost my self-esteem," Dan laughed. "So he loaned me his copy of Fred Reinfeld's *The Complete Chess Player*. I won four out of the next nine games." Dan had lots of other interests. As a high school senior, he pitched a perfect no-hitter in a conference baseball game, striking out 17 of 21 batters.

Dan began playing correspondence while living in a small town with no chess club. He never received chess training or lessons. "It probably shows." In the old days of mailing moves between countries, games were costly to play and slow to finish. A Peruvian opponent dragged out a certain loss with postponements. "It took seven years to win." Dan's victory was never even reported!

Dr. Dan didn't need chess to make his mark. He was a distinguished research scientist at Sandia National Laboratories, Albuquerque, New Mexico, for 15 years, and then a professor of electrical engineering at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, for 21 years, the last 17 as department chair. He has garnered too many academic honors to mention.

Dan hopes to be competing in top level correspondence championships for a long time. "It's the one chance in the world I have to be world champion of something. That's hard to give up!"



2020 NATIONAL K-12 GRADE CHAMPIONSHIPS

December 11-13
Rosen Shingle Creek | Orlando, FL



REGISTER AT www.uschess.org/tournaments/2020/k12/
or mail your entries to: US Chess, Attn: 2020 K12, PO Box 3967, Crossville, TN 38557.
Check our tournament website for up-to-date information about the effect of COVID-19 on this event.

STAY AT HOME • IMPROVE YOUR CHESS



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Sign up,
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or make
a donation at
uschess.org



US CHESS
FEDERATION

Safeguard the services you enjoy • Help us fulfill our educational non-profit mission

2020 Chess Journalists of

US Chess writers, columnists, photographers, and videographers took home the lion's share of awards presented by the Chess Journalists of America (CJA) for 2019-2020. Among the most important of these are two wins in the so-called "Top Three," the three most prestigious awards given by the CJA.

Former US Chess Executive Director and current *Chess Life* columnist Al Lawrence took home top honors for his December 2019 cover story on "80 Years of US Chess." This is far from the first win at the CJA for Lawrence, who has been named Chess Journalist of the Year three times, most recently in 2019. He also won this year for his "Faces Across the Board" column (honorable mention) and for Best Historical Article.

TOP THREE

CHESS JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR, WINNER:
John Hartmann

BEST STORY OF THE YEAR, WINNER:
Al Lawrence, "80 Years of US Chess"
(December 2019)

BEST STORY OF THE YEAR,
HONORABLE MENTION:
Jon Crumiller and GM Lev Alburt,
"May I Have the Envelope, Please?"
(February 2020)

BEST COLUMN, HONORABLE MENTION:
Al Lawrence, "Faces Across the Board"



PRINT

BEST FEATURE ARTICLE, WINNER:
Jon Crumiller and GM Lev Alburt,
"May I Have the Envelope, Please?" (February
2020)

BEST NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL
TOURNAMENT REPORT, WINNER:
WGM Tatev Abrahamyan,
"A Spectacular Finish" (October 2019)

BEST REVIEW, WINNER:
John Hartmann, "Lessons Learned" (December
2019)

BEST HUMOROUS CONTRIBUTION, WINNER:
Menachem Wecker, "Did This Man Save the 1972
World Championship?" (January 2020)

BEST HISTORICAL ARTICLE, CO-WINNER:
Al Lawrence, "80 Years of US Chess" (December
2019)

BEST HISTORICAL ARTICLE, CO-WINNER:
John Hartmann, "Lost and Found"
(May 2020)

ONLINE

BEST OVERALL WEBSITE, WINNER:
US Chess

BEST PODCAST, WINNER:
WGM Jennifer Shahade, "Ladies Knight"

BEST PODCAST, HONORABLE MENTION:
Dan Lucas, "One Move at a Time"

BEST SINGLE PODCAST EPISODE, WINNER:
Jennifer Shahade, "Ladies Knight"
(March 2020)

BEST NEWS WEBSITE, WINNER:
Chess Life Online

BEST INTERVIEW, WINNER:
John Hartmann / GM Jacob Aagaard, "Aagaard on
the Candidates—Post-Postponement"

BEST TOURNAMENT REPORT, WINNER:
GM Jacob Aagaard, "Aagaard on the Candidates"

BEST STATE TOURNAMENT REPORT, WINNER:
IM John Watson, "The 2019 Denver Open"

BEST INSTRUCTION, WINNER:
FM Robert Shlyakhtenko, "Shlyakhtenko
on Winning at Dreaming King"

BEST ANALYSIS, WINNER: IM Carissa Yip,
"Yip Annotates Thrilling World Women's Finale"

BEST HUMOROUS CONTRIBUTION,
HONORABLE MENTION:
Eric Vigil, "The Five Barber Bishop Brouhaha"

BEST PERSONAL NARRATIVE, WINNER:
Michael Buss, "Time To Take Up Correspondence
Chess?"

BEST NON-INSTRUCTIVE VIDEO, WINNER:
WGM Jennifer Shahade and Jenny Schweitzer,
"Magic of Chess"

BEST TWITTER FEED, WINNER:
US Chess

PHOTOS AND CREDITS ON PAGES 10-11, L TO R:
John Watson (John Brezina); John Hartmann
and Al Lawrence (courtesy subject);

FACING PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: *Chess
Life Benko Cover* (Frankie Butler / Patrick
Morales-Lee); Christopher Yoo (courtesy subject);
Carissa Yip (Noah Robertson); Michael Buss
(courtesy subject)



America Awards

Following in Al's footsteps is first-time Chess Journalist of the Year award winner John Hartmann. Hartmann, who has worked with *Chess Life Online* since February 2019 and was named *Chess Life* editor on June 1, 2020, also won in the Best Review and Best Interview (with GM Jacob Aagaard) categories. He was also a co-winner for Best Historical Article alongside Al Lawrence.

Here is the full list of the awards won by US Chess. Congratulations to all.

VISUAL ARTS

PHOTOJOURNALISM ARTICLE, WINNER:
WFM Maria Emelianova, "Cote d'Ivoire through a Newcomer's Lens" (August 2019)

BEST SINGLE CHESS PHOTO, WINNER:
Myles Katherine Photography, "Jennifer Yu" (January 2020, cover)

BEST CHESS ART, WINNER:
James Osos, "Scholastics Nationals" (August 2019)

BEST SINGLE MAGAZINE COVER, WINNER:
Francesca Butler (creative director) and Patrick Morales-Lee (artist), "Pal Benko" (November 2019)

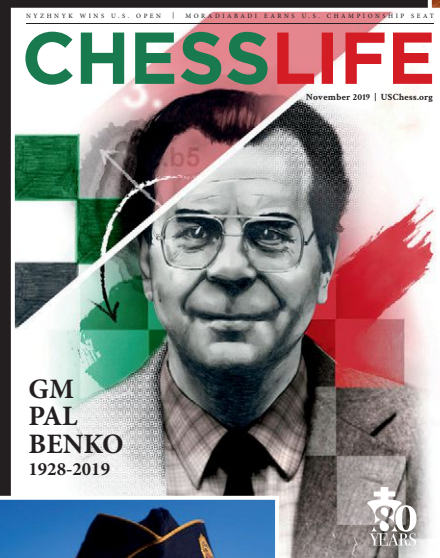
BEST CARTOON, WINNER: Dan Lucas / Matt Sattel, "You Say Rad2, I Say R2-D2" (February 2020)

JUNIOR

BEST ONLINE ARTICLE, WINNER:
IM Christopher Yoo, "Christopher Yoo Goes Online at Sunway Sitges"

BEST ONLINE ARTICLE, HONORABLE MENTION:
Jonathan Martinez, "Tuscon's Carlos Botero Wins 2019 Amateur West Championship"

BEST PERSONAL NARRATIVE, WINNER:
IM Carissa Yip, "Chess Adventures with WGM Carissa Yip" (*Chess Life Kids*, February 2020)



Call for Nominations

The US Chess Federation (US Chess) will hold an election in 2021 for three at-large positions on the US Chess Executive Board. The top two finishers will be elected for term a term of four years expiring in 2025. The third place finisher will be elected to a term of two years expiring in 2023.

Any current US Chess member who is not a current US Chess employee or designated contractor (as defined in the US Chess bylaws) may be nominated for election to the Executive Board.

Nominations must be made by petition containing the signatures of fifty (50) or more members of US Chess who are either registered or eligible to register to vote, and by payment of a filing fee of \$100 to the US Chess Federation.

The members signing the nomination petition must include at least fifteen (15) US Chess delegates representing at least five (5) states. (Signatures of alternate delegates do not count toward this requirement.) The petition to nominate a candidate and the filing fee must be postmarked by Wednesday, December 30, 2020. Send petitions and the filing fee to: US Chess Federation, ATTN: Governance Coordinator, P.O. Box 3967, Crossville, TN 38557-3967. Petitions may also be submitted electronically to governance@uschess.org.

The nomination petitions must contain the dated signature, printed name, and US Chess ID number of each signer, and should contain the following text:

"We, the undersigned members of the US Chess Federation, nominate _ (candidate name goes here) _ as a candidate for election to the US Chess Executive Board in the 2021 election. We also consent to having our names and US Chess ID numbers published as having signed this petition."

A sample nomination form will be made available on the US Chess website.

Candidates must consent to be on the ballot either by signing their own nomination petition or by separate notice to US Chess.

A voting member for this election is any current US Chess member (active as of May 4, 2021) whose membership expires on or after June 30, 2021, who will be age 16 or older as of June 30, 2021, and who registers to vote by May 1, 2021. Members with memberships of less than one year duration at their start are not eligible to become voting members.

Ballots will be distributed to voting members who are registered to vote as of May 1, 2021. Ballot distribution will occur around June 10th and returned ballots will be counted in July. The terms will begin at the conclusion of the 2021 delegates' meeting.

2021 Annual Samford Fellowship

The Frank P. Samford Jr. and Frank Samford III Chess Fellowship is pleased to announce its 35th consecutive annual award. The Fellowship was created by the late Frank P. Samford Jr. of Birmingham, Alabama to advance the game he loved by identifying and assisting the most promising young chess masters in the United States.

Since its inception in 1987 the Samford, under the leadership of Frank Samford III, has been successful in promoting the chess careers of close to three dozen young Americans, many of whom have gone on to become grandmasters, members of the U.S. Olympiad chess team, and United States chess champions. Four of the five members of the 2018 silver-medal winning U.S. Olympiad team were Samford Fellows.

This Fellowship is open to American chessplayers who are under the age of 25 at the start of the Fellowship, July 1, 2021, and have been permanent residents of the U.S. for at least one year prior to that date. Leadership of the Fellowship program is provided by Mr. Samford Jr.'s grandson, Paul Samford of Atlanta, Georgia, with the able help of Al Lawrence of the US Chess Trust.

The 2021 Samford Fellow will receive a stipend for training by leading chess coaches, chess books, computer equipment, and other study materials as well as opportunities to travel and compete in tournaments and matches at the highest levels. The value of the Fellowship (including stipend, training, study materials, and

tournament travel) is \$30,000. It is given for a one-year term. Individuals may apply more than one year and are eligible for maximum funding up to but not exceeding \$82,000.

The 2021 Samford Fellow will be selected by the Samford Chess Fellowship Committee ("Committee"), consisting of Paul Samford, Grandmaster Yury Shulman and International Master John Donaldson. Each applicant must be able to demonstrate talent, achievement, and commitment to chess. He or she must be willing to make the effort required to become a leading grandmaster and possible challenger for the world chess championship. For further details and an application form write to:

*John Donaldson, Secretary
Samford Chess Fellowship
1623 ½ Martin Luther King Junior Way
Berkeley, CA 94709
Or: (510) 644-1285 and imwjd@aol.com*

Also visit uschesstrust.org for more information.

Completed applications for the 2021 Fellowship must be received no later than May 15, 2021. The Committee expects to announce the winner in June, 2021. All decisions by the Committee will be final.

The 2020 Samford Fellows



NICOLAS DE T. CHECA



CARISSA YIP



AWONDER LIANG



CHRISTOPHER YOO

New Top 100 Categories

US Chess has added new Top 100 categories for **Online-Regular**, **Online-Quick**, and **Online-Blitz** ratings to reflect our growing online presence. These lists have both "USA-only" and "All Member" versions, as do our other Top 100 lists.

The new categories are:

**OVERALL
UNDER AGE 18
AGE 18-49
50 AND OVER**

**OVERALL WOMEN
GIRLS UNDER AGE 18
WOMEN AGE 18-49
WOMEN AGE 50 AND
OVER**

Because the Online-Regular ratings system has only been active for a few months, not all of the categories will be filled. Visit uschesstrust.org and select the "Community" drop down menu for the complete lists.

ACROSS THE BOARD

By **MIKE HOFFPAUR**

PRESIDENT, US CHESS EXECUTIVE BOARD



I'm honored to have been elected as president by the Executive Board. You have my pledge that I will give my all to this work. It's important, and I know it.

The past eight or so months under COVID-19 conditions have been downright heartbreaking. Over-the-board play has all but ceased, although I've heard there are a few places where it's still happening. More importantly, some of us have lost family, and I'm sure every one of you knows someone who has been impacted by the virus. We grieve together, and we move on together—

in our Special Delegates Meeting (SDM) in August. As I write this note we are preparing for another SDM on September 26th where the delegates will vote to elect six members to the new US Chess Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will play a key role in identifying talent from across our membership for possible future Board service. Nominating committees are common to many non-profit organizations. They are another indicator of the delegates' commitment, as your representatives, to best practices as we endeavor to improve

catching players who abuse the system. If you have not seen the new Chapter 10 (Rules for Online Tournaments and Matches) in the *US Chess Federation's Official Rules of Chess*, I encourage you to download a free copy from the US Chess home page at <https://new.uschess.org/news/7th-edition-rule-book-chapters-now-available-download>.

I'd be remiss if I don't let all of you know that our past president, Allen Priest, is continuing his service to the organization. He brought his talents to us as a CPA and was absolutely instrumental in restoring the financial health of the organization. He recently helped Executive Director Carol Meyer modernize our entire financial system. Thank you, Allen!

To wrap things up, I hope this note finds you, your family, and those you cherish, safe and healthy. Until my next article—it's your move! ♠

The 2020 Special Delegates Meeting: A Summary

2020 ELECTION RESULTS CERTIFIED

The 2020 Executive Board (EB) election results were certified, and new EB members were seated at the conclusion of the Special Delegates Meeting.

2020-2021 BUDGET

A budget for 2020-2021 was adopted.

BYLAWS

The US Chess Bylaws were modified to simplify the organization's membership structure (taking effect June 1, 2021).

The structure of the EB was also modified, to include eight elected members (currently seven) who will serve four-year terms (currently three years). This moves US Chess toward a biannual election cycle.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

A policy was adopted to form a Nominating Committee for candidates to the EB. The committee will consist of eight members, six appointed by the Delegates, and two appointed by the EB.

I encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunities to drink at the fountain of chess by playing in online events.

as families and as the US Chess community.

I want to begin by giving a shout-out to our Olympiad team, who made it through to the semi-finals, and to the Saint Louis Chess Club for their sponsorship of our team. Team Captain John Donaldson reported how hard the team fought and narrowly missed making it to the finals. He noted, "We faced Russia in the semi-final and were underdogs on all but Wesley's [So] and Jeffery's [Xiong] boards, but competed very well and were unlucky to lose by the narrowest of margins 2½-3½, 3-3. In the latter match all six games were decisive. With just a bit of luck we could have been in the final. Instead we shared third with Poland." We're so proud of our team of Wesley So, Sam Shankland, Ray Robson, Carissa Yip, Anna Zatonskih, Tatev Abrahamyan, Jeffrey Xiong, and Annie Wang.

To those of you who are US Chess delegates, I thank you for your participation

our governance processes.

At this point in the chess year it is unclear when over-the-board play will resume in a manner that somewhat resembles pre-pandemic conditions. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunities to drink at the fountain of chess by playing in online events. I know, I know—you're concerned about cheating in online play. We are too! As you may know, US Chess has been working with online play service providers to examine their Fair Play methodologies. The procedures used by *Chess.com* and ICC already have been endorsed by US Chess, and we're talking with other vendors.

Because US Chess members have the option to play rated games online, we're taking every possible measure to ensure that service providers, event organizers, and tournament directors have access to proven techniques and procedures for deterring and

Clouded Crystal Ball

The next world champion? Look for a talented 12-year-old.

By GM ANDY SOLTIS

FIVE YEARS AGO A REMARKABLE booklet dared to predict who would be the next world champion.

After Magnus listed the 10 players most likely to become the 17th undisputed world champion. It was well written by GM Anish Giri, a potential future champion himself, who was becoming the world's most entertaining annotator.

But one year later GM Magnus Carlsen was nearly dethroned in a championship match in New York, by someone who wasn't on that list—GM Sergey Karjakin.

Now, it could turn out that one of Giri's 10 does become the next champion. Or at least the challenger in what will be our first COVID-era world title matches.

But the forecast for our crystal ball is always cloudy.

This was underlined by a chat GM Yasser Seirawan had during a 1988 tournament with fellow grandmaster Predrag Nikolic.

Nikolic was the world's sixth-rated player at the time but admitted he was too old to become world champion.

"You're my age," objected the 28-year-old Seirawan, who nursed his own championship hopes.

"You have no chance either," Nikolic replied with a laugh. "Probably the next world champion will be some 12-year-old that we don't even know at the moment."

His point was that no elite player at the time could defeat GM Garry Kasparov, who was still in his long, prime years. It would take some unknown player to oust him.

Nikolic's comment sounded like a wild guess. But it turned out to be astonishingly prescient:

The next world champion was, in fact, a 12-year-old schoolboy when Nikolic spoke. Vladimir Kramnik had never won any event of significance. Here is how he played at the time at a tournament near his Black Sea home.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B21)

Vladimir Kramnik
Andrey Chjumachenko
Gelendzhik, Russia, 1987

1. e4 c5 2. f4 b6 3. c4 Bb7 4. Nc3 e6 5. Nf3 d6 6. d4 cxd4 7. Nxd4 Nf6 8. Bd3 Nbd7 9. Qe2 Be7 10. O-O O-O 11. Kh1 Qc7 12. f5 e5?

White has engineered a favorable version of the Maroczy Bind and now creates an even more favorable pawn structure.

13. Ndb5 Qd8 14. Nd5! Nxd5 15. exd5 a6 16. Nc3 Bf6? 17. Be3 Rc8 18. Ne4 Nc5 19. Bxc5! bxc5 20. Qd2!

White's knight is a super hero who will help threaten a decisive g2-g4-g5.

20. ... Rb8 21. a3 a5 22. g4 h6 23. h4! Bxh4 24. f6!



Now 24 ... Bxf6 25. Rxf6 gxf6 26. Qxh6 is over.

24. ... Bc8 25. Qh2 Rb3

Here 25. ... g5 26. Qe2 sets up 27. Nxg5! followed by Qe2-e4-h7 (mate).

26. Bc2 Rxb2 27. Qxh4 Rxc2 28. g5 Qd7 29. fxg7 Qh3+ 30. Qxh3 Bxh3 31. gxf8=Q+ Kxf8 32. Rf2, Black resigned.

When it comes to predicting world championship-class players, we have a few clues to work with, such as rapid rating growth:

After Carlsen began playing tournament chess at age nine, he gained about 1,000 points, to reach 1900 in roughly one year.

That's comparable to GM Hikaru Nakamura. His first posted US Chess rating was 684 in January 1995, when he was seven years and two months old. By July 1996 it was 1500.

GM Fabiano Caruana's first rating was 454 in May 1998 when he was five years and 10 months old. He gained nearly 1,000 points in the next 18 months.

But after reaching a certain point, aspirants for the world's highest chess title typically go through a long period of apprenticeship.

GM Boris Spassky became a championship Candidate at age 18, an amazing feat at the time. But he did not become champion until 13 years later. GM Bobby Fischer was a Candidate at 16 but also had to wait 13 years to take the next big step.

For long-range forecasting it is hard to top the prediction of British newspaper columnist Leonard Barden. In 1975 he wrote that an 11-year-old Baku student would become world champion in 1990.

He was wrong—only because it didn't take that long. That student, Garry Kasparov, won the championship title in 1985.

QUIZ FOR OCTOBER

When Maxim Dlugy became a grandmaster at age 20 he was the youngest American to earn the title since Bobby Fischer. This month's quiz features the games of Dlugy, one of America's stars of the 1980s and 1990s—and still a tournament competitor in 2020. In each of the six diagrams you are asked to find the fastest winning line of play. This will usually mean the forced win of a decisive amount of material, such as a rook or minor piece. For solutions, see Page 59.

PROBLEM I.

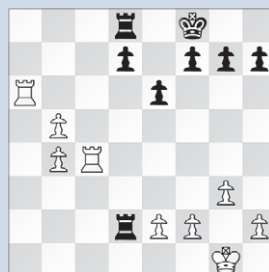
IM Jack Peters
IM Maxim Dlugy



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM II.

GM Maxim Dlugy
GM Petar Popovic



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM III.

GM Maxim Dlugy
Friso Nijboer



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM IV.

GM Maxim Dlugy
GM Dmitry Gurevich



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM V.

GM Maxim Dlugy
GM Susan Polgar



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM VI.

GM Larry Christiansen
GM Maxim Dlugy



BLACK TO MOVE

Kasparov is one of four players who won a Candidates tournament or match series on the first try.

You might be able to guess two of the others, GMs Mikhail Tal and Anatoly Karpov. But the other name is virtually forgotten today.

RUY LOPEZ, STEINITZ DEFENSE DEFERRED (C76)

GM Andrei Sokolov

GM Vassily Smyslov

Candidates tournament, Montpellier, 10.12.1985

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 d6 5. c3 Bd7 6. d4 g6 7. Bg5 f6 8. Be3 Nh6 9. h3 Bg7 10. Nbd2 Qe7 11. b4 exd4 12. cxd4!

Now 12. ... Nxb4 13. Bxd7+ Qxd7 14. Rb1 favors White.

12... O-O 13. O-O f5? 14. Bg5 Qe8 15. Bb3+ Kh8 16. Re1 Qc8 17. e5! dxe5 18. dxe5 Be6 19. Bxe6 Qxe6 20. Nb3! Nf7 21. Nc5 Qc4? 22. Rc1 Qxb4 23. Bd2 Qa3?

(see diagram top of next column)

GM Vassily Smyslov had his own meteoric rise. He didn't play chess outside his home until he was 14. But in six years he was one of the world's top 10 players. Here he was having a bad day and is losing his queen.



24. Re3! Qxa2 25. Rc2, Black resigned.

The winner of that game, GM Andrei Sokolov, is the only world-class player born in the Arctic Circle. No one could have predicted how he went from promising master to the world's number three player in a few years. He should have played Kasparov in the world championship of 1987 but various factors denied him the chance.

The paths of meteors are hard to predict and so are meteoric chess careers. Sokolov's peak period was brief. He still plays but is no longer among the world's top 1,000 rated players.

During Sokolov's surge a 21-year-old American, GM Maxim Dlugy, saw him as a future rival. Dlugy had won the World Junior Championship when he was interviewed in *New in Chess* magazine.

Dlugy predicted that Sokolov and Kasparov would still be among the world's top players in 10 years. The others would be GMs Nigel Short, Kiril Georgiev, Jeroen Piket, Ferdinand Hellers, and Dlugy himself.

But only two of those names, Kasparov and Short, were in the top 25 in the January 1997 FIDE rating list. Dlugy's was not the only crystal ball that failed to see the rise of GMs Viswanathan Anand, Kramnik, Vasyl (as he now prefers to be called) Ivanchuk, Veselin Topalov, and Gata Kamsky.

Dlugy went on to a great career, as this month's quiz testifies to, and his greatest victory may have been being elected president of US Chess.

If you search back for chess news in 1997 you'll find that the biggest story featured another 12-year-old. It was in a match that was described as being "between the world's greatest chess player—and Garry Kasparov."

And like a meteor, the match winner quickly disappeared. It was Deep Blue. ♠

For more about one of our up and coming young stars, be sure to see page 30 of this issue for GM Maurice Ashley's profile on 11-year-old IM Abhimanyu Mishra, the world's youngest international master who has his sights set on breaking the world's youngest grandmaster record.

Maximum-Gain Workouts

Practice what's probable.

By **GM LEV ALBURT** and **AL LAWRENCE**

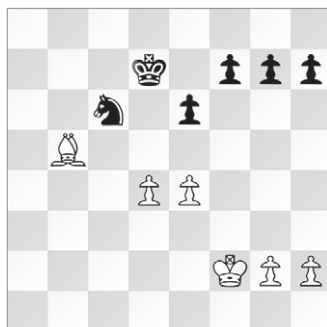
TO GET IN BETTER PHYSICAL SHAPE, IT'S smart to choose the most beneficial exercises, to be "scientific" about effort and reward, and to make the best use of your time and energy. Likewise, to get better results in chess, it's important to study the ideas that are most likely to come up in your games. If you're rated under 1800 and poring over the bishop-and-knight checkmate, we'd suggest a different workout. (That is, unless you're having fun. Whenever you can, combine learning chess with fun!) In hundreds of games, you may never need to deliver that most difficult checkmate.

Simple tactics can win nearly all amateur chess games. Pins are among the most common tools for creating tactics. So this month, let's exercise your pin pectorals. The pin by a bishop is fairly common, freezing a less valuable enemy piece to (usually) a more valuable one along the diagonal.

Or maybe not. There are few absolutes in chess other than mate ends the game.

WHEN IS A PIN A WIN?

"Pin it and win it!" is perhaps the oldest line in chess trash-talk. When you have a piece pinned, try to attack it with a pawn:

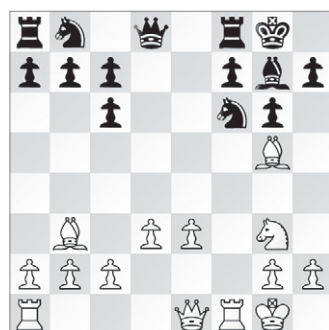


WHITE TO PLAY

White to move exploits the pin and wins a piece after:

1. d5! exd5 2. exd5

"Piling on" is another way to exploit a pin.



WHITE TO PLAY

Black's knight on f6 is pinned to his queen. So far, the number of attackers and defenders are equal, two each. But White now wins the pinned piece by simply adding more attackers than Black can muster defenders.

1. Ne4 Nbd7 2. Qh4

And the piece falls. But here's an example with a touch of wit. Sometimes the scorpion-sting of the pin can be felt not at the head but in the tail of the combination:

THE STINGER

Edward Lasker
Avalla
New York, 1947

(see diagram top of next column)

1. Qa4+ Qc6

If 1. ... Kf8 2. Bh6+ Kg8 3. Qe8 mate. Or if 1. ... Nc6, 2. Qxc6+! Qxc6 3. Rd8 mate.



WHITE TO PLAY

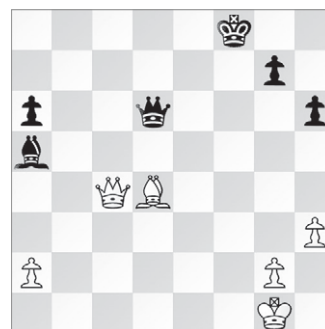
2. Rd8+!

Creating an *absolute* pin—meaning a piece is pinned to its king. The intervening piece can't legally move, because it would expose its liege to check.

2. ... Kxd8 3. Qxc6

That was just a little two-mover that wins with a bit of imagination and an eye for the power of the pin.

Now heft the following, weightier position. What's White's next move?



WHITE TO PLAY

1. Bc5!

That part was an easy lift, right? It establishes an absolute pin of the queen to the king. Perhaps the “!” even looks like too much credit for hoisting a five-pound dumbbell. But now find Black’s best.

1. ... Bb6!

Aha! “Not dead yet!” A counter-pin, again absolute, pinning the pinner.

2. Qf4+!!

The white queen’s timely sidestep attacks both the black king and his queen, normally powerful but here immobilized by the power of the absolute pin. (The double-attack is another basic tactic that tends to win a lot of games. *Tactics work together to make a combination.*)

WHEN IS A PIN A SIN?

But sometimes a tempting pin is a blustering blunder. Here’s the most famous example, “Legal’s Mate,” named after the French champion Sire de Legal, who was a top player in the 1730s and taught chess to the now famous François-André Philidor. Legal, unlike his monarch, Louis XVI, kept his head in a tricky position, even though Legal’s original application may have depended too much on his opponent’s greed. But the idea is something you should know.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 d6 4. Nc3 Bg4 5. h3

If instead 5. Nxe5?, as is often given, 5. ... Nxe5! wins by capturing White’s knight while protecting Black’s bishop. If, hypnotized by greed, Black plays 5. ... Bxd1?!, White mates as shown below. But never count on your opponent to play his worst move.

5. ... Bh5?



5. ... Bxf3 was best, ceding White the bishop pair and a long-term edge after 6. Qxf3.

6. Nxe5 Bxd1??

Contrary to Gordon Gekko, greed is not always good. We prefer the great Chinese warrior-general Lao Tzu’s caution: “The ever-wanting soul sees only what it wants.”



6. ... Nxe5 limits Black’s loss to a pawn. The alert little combo White plays to stay on top is worth remembering— 7. Qxh5 Nxc4 8. Qb5+!, picking up the loose knight and staying a pawn ahead.



7. Bxf7+ Ke7 8. Nd5 mate.



This haunting position, a cautionary tale of unbridled chess gluttony, is also an example of a “pure mate.” Each square prohibited to the king is guarded by only one piece. Economy in punishment.

Here’s an example of a single-move pin-blunder that has caused hundreds of head-slaps:

BUDAPEST GAMBIT (A51)

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e5 3. d5

White should capture on e5, when Black has a choice of 3. ... Ne4, aiming for wild complications, or the more respected 3. ... Ng4, playing to recover the pawn with a solid position.

3. ... Bc5

Temptation! On the surface, pinning with 4. Bg5 looks attractive. But whenever a bishop tickles your f2 (or f7), make sure that it doesn’t unleash a laugh fest for your opponent.

4. Nc3

Not taking the bait yet. So Black makes it look even tastier.

4. ... d6

Now that Black can’t withdraw his dark-square bishop to block on e7, many find the “natural” pin just too tantalizing to resist the reflex.

5. Bg5?



5. ... Bxf2+! 6. Kxf2 Ng4+ 7. Ke1 Qxg5

White is already lost. He’s down a pawn, and one simply can’t forfeit castling privileges with so much power on the board in a fluid pawn structure. If 8. Nf3, Black has 8. ... Qe3 on tap.

“THE KNOWN UNKNOWN’S”

Our main theme this month is to study what you are likely to use. Bishop pins are an example. It’s also true that we chess players need to realize what we don’t know. Sometimes it pays to avoid your unknown—like a tricky opening variation you haven’t studied. Sometimes you can even use what you don’t know.

As illustration, we’ll close by circling back to the start, with a tip about that knight-and-bishop mate. If you’re ever facing a certain loss in the ending and have a chance to trade off all the pieces and pawns, leaving your opponent with only king, bishop, and knight—do so and make the other player demonstrate the mate. Keep your king in the center as much as you can, and if pushed, run to the corner not controlled by the opponent’s bishop. And be sure to claim the draw if 50 moves pass without a capture or pawn move!

A little knowledge is sometimes a useful thing! ♠

Did you know you could read archival copies of “Back to Basics” (and all other columns and features)? Go to uschess.org click on “Chess Life Magazine,” and then “Archives.”



Visit us online to learn more about our current exhibition, *Power in Check: Chess and the American Presidency*. *Power in Check* showcases a variety of politically-themed chess sets from the World Chess Hall of Fame's permanent collection. This redux of 2012's exhibition offers a look at how the "royal game" of chess has fascinated American presidents for over 200 years.

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- Oct. 25: Rest Day
- Oct. 26-29: U.S. Championship
- Oct. 29: Online Closing Ceremony



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We all Speak Italian Now

The resurgence of the “quiet Italian” explained

By GM JOEL BENJAMIN

Many readers will have fond memories of the Giuoco Piano from their youth. The opening has grown from the slashing weapon of Wilhelm Steinitz into a mature system of sophisticated maneuvering. In the last few years the Italian Game has quite possibly surpassed the Ruy Lopez as the weapon of choice against 1. e4 e5 among the world's elite. Here I will try to make sense of this development, answering three questions: 1) Why? 2) What are the important wrinkles GMs have discovered? and 3) How does this relate to our games?

The first question is the easiest to answer. For most of my career, you would most often see Black try versions of the Closed Ruy Lopez like the Chigorin, Breyer, and Zaitsev Variations— all solid defenses for sure, but against which White can count on a vibrant game. Today's Ruy Lopez players face two major obstacles, both of which are proving difficult to solve.

Vladimir Kramnik revived the ancient Berlin Defense (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6) in 2000 and used it to shut Garry Kasparov out of the win column in their World Championship match. As the classic endgame (4. 0-0 Nxe4 5. d4 Nd6 6. Bxc6 dxc6 7. dxe5 Nf5 8. Qxd8+ Kxd8) became less feared for Black, grandmasters played tamer continuations like 4. d3.

And then there's the Marshall Attack. You would think the Marshall (1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 0-0 8. c3 d5) would produce a lot of decisive games, but these days the main lines of the gambit lead to very drawish positions. In avoiding the gambit White often plays

sedately with d2-d3.

That's where the Giuoco Piano comes in. The strategies in the “quiet Italian” are similar to what the big boys are using in the Ruy Lopez. Plopping the bishop down on c4 might offer better chances for producing something a bit more original and lively. In the last few years grandmasters have injected a number of new wrinkles into the theoretical discussion.

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

GM Ian Nepomniachtchi (2773)

GM Alexander Grischuk (2772)

Moscow FIDE GP Moscow (4.4), 2019

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6

Choosing a move order is Black's first decision. The text invites the alternative lines 4. Ng5 and 4. d4. Those are a bit more work than White's options after 3. ... Bc5. Unless you really want to play against those moves, or want to develop the bishop to e7, I recommend 3. ... Bc5. I would especially advocate that move to lower-rated children.

4. d3 Bc5 5. c3 d6 6. a4



This is the key move, and one we shall see at some point in most contemporary top level games. White prepares a queenside pawn advance that will be useful in different situations.

6. ... a6 7. h3 Ba7 8. 0-0 h6 9. Re1 0-0 10. Nbd2 Re8 11. b4 Be6 12. Bxe6 Rxe6 13. Qc2

We have reached one of the many “tabiyas” for this opening. You'll find nearly 100 games in the database, almost all played by strong grandmasters.

13. ... Qd7

13. ... d5 is a bit early as White gets a new option for his knight: 14. Nb3! Ne7 15. exd5 Qxd5 16. c4 Qd6 17. Nc5 Bxc5 18. bxc5 Qxc5 19. Ba3 Qa5 20. d4 Ng6 21. Bb2 gave White good play in GM Ian Nepomniachtchi – GM Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Moscow 2016.

14. Nc4!?



“Nepo” came primed for this game with a fresh idea. Previously grandmasters had played 14. Nf1, when there are a couple of prominent examples: 14. ... d5 15. Be3 Bxe3



GM MAGNUS CARLSEN TRIES THE QUIET ITALIAN AGAINST GM WESLEY SO AT THE 2019 SINCUEFIELD CUP. (PHOTO SLCC / C. FULLER)

(15. ... d4 16. cxd4 Nxd4 17. Bxd4 Bxd4 18. Nxd4 Qxd4 19. Qxc7 Qxd3 20. Qxb7 Qd8 21. Rd1 Qb8 22. Qxb8+ Rxb8 23. f3 Rxb4 24. Ne3 with a nagging pull in the endgame, GM Anish Giri – GM Levon Aronian, Saint Louis 2019) 16. Nxe3 Ne7 17. a5 Ng6 18. g3 Rd8 19. Kg2 Qc6 20. Nf5 Ne7 21. Nxe7+ Rxe7 22. c4 (GM Ding Liren – GM Magnus Carlsen, Magnus Invitational 2020). Though the position is equal, Ding took advantage of a Carlsen blunder to win.

14. ... d5

Grischuk takes the bait, but probably the more prudent course is to shift the knight to the kingside as well, i.e. 14. ... Ne7 15. Be3 Bxe3 16. Nxe3 Ng6 (or 16. ... d5 as in Ding-Carlsen).

15. exd5 Qxd5 16. Ne3



16. ... Qd7?

Here, and the next time around (on move 18), Black should chop the knight: 16. ... Bxe3

17. Bxe3 Rd8 with equality.

17. Nc4 Qd5 18. Ne3 Qd7 19. b5 Na5

The knight is offside here, but otherwise the e5-pawn will drop when the knight returns to c4.

20. c4 Bd4 21. Rb1 axb5 22. axb5 Ree8 23. c5 Nd5 24. Nxd5 Qxd5 25. Nxd4 exd4

A lesser evil, but still unpleasant, was 25. ... Qxd4.

26. Rxe8+ Rxe8 27. Bf4 Re7 28. Qa4 b6 29. c6

White is already winning. The difference in the minor pieces is decisive.

29. ... Kh7 30. Rb4 Qe6 31. Rxd4 f5 32.

Be3 g5 33. Qb4 Rg7 34. Rd8 Nb3 35. Bd4 Re7 36. Qxe7+, Black resigned.

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (2779)

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2777)

chess.com 5m+1spm (2.8), 2018

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. c3 Nf6 5. d3

The theory has not really changed on the old school 5. d4 exd4 6. cxd4 Bb4+. The positions after 7. Bd2 Bxd2+ (or 7. ... Nxe4) 8. Nbx2 d5 are still considered innocuous, and 7. Nc3 Nxe4 8. 0-0 Bxc3 9. d5 Bf6 10. Re1 Ne7 11. Rxe4 d6 12. Bg5 Bxg5 13. Nxc3 h6 14. Qe2 hxc3 15. Re1 Be6 16. dxe6 f6 rebounds on White.

GM Levon Aronian adopted 6. e5 a few times. I like this for lower-rated students because 6. ... d5 is forced here, but after 7. Bb5 Ne4 8. cxd4 Bb6 9. Nc3 0-0 10. Be3 Bg4 11. h3 Bh5 12. Qc2 Nxc3 13. bxc3 f6 14. exf6 Qxf6 Black shouldn't have any problems.

5. ... d6 6. 0-0 0-0 7. Re1 a5!?

Why is this idea so new, when the logic is so clear? Black takes away White's queenside advance, limiting the strategies available to White.

8. Nbd2

This move order is slightly provocative, as Black can try 8. ... Ng4 9. Re2 Kh8 10. h3 Nh6 followed by ... f7-f5. Now 8. h3 Be6 9. Bb5 Ne7 10. d4 Bb6 is solid for Black, as 11. dxe5?! dxe5 12. Qxd8 Raxd8 13. Nxe5? Nxe4 backfires.

8. ... Be6 9. Bb5 Qb8!?



This maneuver is one of the oddest twists of the new-fangled Italian. Here too Black can go for the very standard plan of 9. ... Ba7 10. Nf1 Ne7.

10. Nf1 Qa7 11. Be3 Bxe3 12. Nxe3 Ne7 13. Ba4 h6 14. Qc2 Ng4

One idea not yet tried by Nakamura in several games against MVL is the computer suggestion 14. ... c5!?, looking to deter White's ambitions in the center. The position would

be equal after 15. Rad1 Qa6 16. Bb3 Bxb3 17. axb3 Qc6. In the game, the players drew in 36 moves.

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2882)

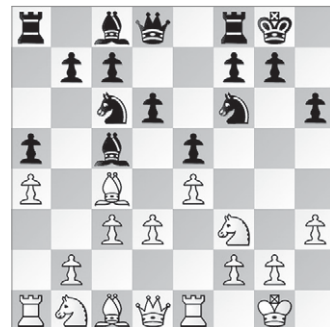
GM Wesley So (2776)

Sinquefield Cup, Saint Louis (10.4), 2019

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. 0-0

A-pawn mania ruled in GM Jorden Van Foreest – GM Hannes Stefansson, Prague 2020, when play continued 4. d3 Nf6 5. a4! 0-0 6. a5! a6 7. 0-0 h6 8. c3 d6 9. h3 Ba7 10. Be3 Ne7 11. Bxa7 Rxa7 12. Re1 Ng6 13. Nbd2 Re8 14. d4 Be6 15. Bf1 Qc8 16. b4, and with the bishop on f1 flexibly placed, White is poised to advance on the queenside. But one feels Black should have played for ... d5 somewhere.

4. ... Nf6 5. d3 0-0 6. c3 d6 7. h3 h6 8. Re1 a6 9. a4 a5



Okay, this dance of the a-pawns must look a little strange, so I will try to explain it. Black's ... a7-a6 prepared a cozy retreat for his bishop, but also created a threat to go after White's bishop with ... Nc6-a5. The old school way to meet that was to retreat the bishop with Bc4-b3. While this fits fine with playing for d3-d4, the new method keeps open ideas of playing on the queenside. Finally, the Black pawn comes to a5 to kill the plan of queenside expansion we saw in game one. But why not just push the pawn directly to a5?

10. Nbd2 Be6 11. Bb5 Na7

That's the reason for provoking the White pawn to a4. White will have to trade his bishop.

12. d4 Nxb5

MVL has already had this position four times, trying both captures twice each.

13. dxc5

Here 13. axb5 exd4 14. Nxd4 Bd7 15. Nf1!? is an interesting pawn sacrifice. In Vachier-Lagrave – Grischuk, Leuven 2018, White had good compensation after 15. ... Bxd4 16. cxd4 Bxb5 17. Ng3.

13. ... Na7 14. b3 Re8 15. cxd6 Qxd6

Black is left with weaknesses on the d-file after 15. ... cxd6 16. c4.

16. Ba3 c5 17. Nc4!



A profound novelty! 17. Qe2 b6 18. Nc4 Bxc4 19. Qxc4 Rad8 led to a win in GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave – GM Sergey Karjakin, Saint Louis 2018, but Black controls the d-file while the bishop remains a bit shut out. Black looks pretty okay.

17. ... Qxd1 18. Raxd1 Bxc4 19. bxc4

The pawn structure is deceiving. Doubled isolated pawns look ugly, but White has great pressure on the b-file and can look forward to sinking his knight on d5 while Black does not have a corresponding outpost. Carlsen goes on to win in classic Botvinnik style.

19. ... b6 20. Nh4 Rad8 21. f3 g6 22. g3 Nh5 23. Kf2 Nc6 24. Bc1 Kg7 25. Be3 Rxd1 26. Rxd1 Rd8 27. Rb1 Rb8 28. Ng2 Nf6 29. Ke2 Ne8 30. Bf2 Nd6 31. Ne3 Ne7 32. Nd5 Nxd5 33. cxd5 Rb7

Black has a great blockading knight, but his pawns are big targets.

34. Kd3 f5

This attempt at counterplay weakens the e5-pawn, but f3-f4 will create the same problems.

35. c4 fxe4+ 36. fxe4 Rf7 37. Rxb6 Rxf2 38. Rxd6 Rf3+ 39. Ke2! Rc3 40. Re6 Rxc4 41. Rxe5 Rxa4 42. Re7+ Kf6?

After a subtle error by Carlsen—39. Kd2! should have been played—Black actually has chances to hold with 42. ... Kf8.

43. d6, Black resigned.

Now 43. ... Rd4 44. e5+ Kf5 45. d7 a4 46. g4+ (46. e6?? a3) 46. ... Kf4 47. e6 a3 48. Rf7+ is clearly winning.

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

GM Jan Krzysztof Duda (2731)

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2749)

Champions Showdown (rapid), Saint Louis (7.2), 2019

**1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. c3 Nf6
5. d3 d6 6. O-O**

It's possible to play 6. Bg5 even here. Normally White waits for Black to castle, but as long as White hasn't castled kingside, he doesn't have to fear a pawn storm. In GM Alexander Grischuk – GM Anish Giri, *chess24.com* 2020, play continued 6. ... h6 7. Bh4 a5 8. Nbd2 Ba7 9. h3 g5 10. Bg3 0-0 11. Qe2 Kg7 12. 0-0-0 Bd7 13. Bb5 Qe7 with a double-edged position.

If Black wants to completely cut out the Bc1-g5 strategy, he can try 5. ... h6. Is it ever too early for this move? A few years ago I tried to tell my star student John Burke that there was no need for an early ... h7-h6, but there's a reason he became a GM as a teenager.

6. ... 0-0

Here 6. ... h6 is quite common, preferred by COVID-era Nakamura. The Ding-Carlsen game referenced earlier also used this move order.

7. Bg5 h6 8. Bh4 a6 9. a4 g5 10. Bg3

In the old books this bishop would be described as “biting on granite.” White sacrifices the activity of the bishop in hopes of freeing it with counterplay in the center, perhaps fueled by a queenside pawn storm.

10. ... Ba7 11. Nbd2 Kg7



This flexible move, getting off the bishop's diagonal and giving the rook extra options, has received increasing attention. 11. ... Nh5? is typical in this structure but it is refuted by 12. Nxe5. Black can prepare it with 11. ... g4, but 12. Bh4 creates a long-lasting pin, whether Black takes the knight or not. It's probably more practical to avoid that possibility.

The most serious alternative is 11. ... Nh7. A game between Duda and GM Vladimir Kramnik (Wijk aan Zee, 2019; Vlad's last tournament before his “retirement”) continued 12. h3 h5 13. d4 h4 (after 13. ... g4 14. hxg4 hxg4 15. Bh4 Black has to play the awkward 15. ... Qd7, but perhaps it is still okay) 14. Bh2 g4 15. hxg4 Bxg4 16. dxe5 dxe5 17. b4 h3 18. b5 Ne7 19. gxh3 Bxh3 20. Nxe5 when White was much better and went on to win.



GM JOEL BENJAMIN (PHOTO SLCC / C. FULLER)

12. Re1 Nh7 13. h3

Sensible prophylaxis, since 13. b4 h5 14. h4?! g4 15. Nh2 Ne7 is just bad for White.

13. ... h5

It might look logical to open the f-file with 13. ... f5, but after 14. exf5 Bxf5 15. d4 exd4 16. Nxd4 Nxd4 17. cxd4 White is a little better because f2 is securely guarded and Black's king is a bit exposed. And after 17. ... Bxd4?! 18. Ne4 White gets a strong initiative.

14. b4

Duda also tried immediate central action with 14. d4. He and Nakamura (playing Black) had an absolutely crazy game in the same event: 14. ... g4 15. Bh4 (15. Nh4!?) 15. ... f6 16. hxg4 hxg4 17. Nh2 Ng5 18. Be2 Rh8 19. Bxg5 fxg5 20. Bxg4 exd4 21. Ndf3 dxc3 22. bxc3 Qf6 23. Qd2 Rxh2 24. Nxh2 Ne5 25. Bxc8 Rxc8 26. Rab1 Rh8 27. Rxb7 Rxh2 28. Rxc7+ Kg6 29.

Rxa7 Rxg2+ 30. Kxg2 Qf3+ 31. Kf1 Qh3+ 32. Ke2 Qf3+ 33. Kf1 Qh3+ 34. Ke2 draw.

14. ... h4 15. Bh2 g4 16. hxg4



16. ... Nf6!?

Nakamura finds a clever alternative to the obvious recapture 16. ... Bxg4. Then after 17. b5, it isn't clear to me if the knight should go to e7 or a5.



GM GREGORY KAIDANOV AGAINST GM JOEL BENJAMIN AT THE 2019 U.S. SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIP, IN A REMATCH (WITH REVERSED COLORS) 20 YEARS IN THE MAKING. (PHOTO SLCC / C. FULLER)

17. g5

White could well start with 17. b5 as 17. ... Nxg4 18. bxc6 Nxf2 19. Qe2 looks unsound.

17. ... Ng4 18. Re2 f6 19. b5 Ne7 20. gxf6+ Rxf6 21. d4 Ng6 22. Nf1? Nxb2?

The immediate 22. ... h3 would have been crushing, but now White can limit the damage by recapturing with one of the knights.

23. Kxh2? h3 24. dxe5 Rf8

Also strong is 24. ... hxg2 25. exf6+ Qxf6 but there's no need to risk anything. Naka's attack crashes through from here.

25. Ng3 hxg2 26. Nf5+ Bxf5 27. exf5 Rxf5 28. Kxg2 Rxf3! 29. Kxf3 Qh4 30. Bf7 Nxe5+ 31. Rxe5 Qxf2+ 32. Kg4 dxe5 33. Bh5 Rf8 34. Qd7+ Kh6 35. Kh3 Qe3+, White resigned.

A fine attacking game that really showcases the kill or be killed nature of the Bg5 lines.

What about the more traditional Giuoco plans with Bc4-b3(-c2), Nb1-d2-f2-g3, and the like? Back in the day I myself played the line with Bc4-b3

a couple of times against the Giuoco specialist Gregory Kaidanov. While it is currently out of favor, it may well make a comeback when the big boys tire of the 21st century approaches. Older treatments often have surprise value while most players are focused on the emerging theory.

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

GM Joel Benjamin (2579)
GM Gregory Kaidanov (2611)
USA-ch Gr-B Salt Lake City (4), 1999

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. c3 Nf6 5. d3 d6 6. O-O O-O 7. Nbd2 a6 8. Bb3 Be6 9. Nc4 Ba7 10. a4 h6 11. a5 Ne7 12. Re1 Ng6 13. Be3 Bxc4 14. Bxc4 Bxe3 15. Rxe3 c6 16. d4 d5 17. exd5 e4 18. Nd2 cxd5 19. Bf1 Ne7 20. f3 Nf5 21. Re1 Re8 22. fxe4 dxe4 23. Nc4 Qc7 24. Be2 Nd5 25. Qd2 Nh4 26. Bf1 Rad8 27. Qf2 Ng6 28. Qf5 Nf6 29. Ne3 Ne7 30. Qf2 Ned5 31. Nf5 g6 32. Ne3 Nxe3 33. Qxe3 Rd5 34. Be2 Kg7 35. b4 Rdd8 36. c4 Qd6 37. d5 Qxb4 38. Reb1 Qe7 39. Rb6 Qe5 40. Rf1 Ng8 41. Rxb7 Ne7 42. Qg3 Nf5 43. Qxe5+ Rxe5 44. g4 Re7 45. Rxe7 Nxe7 46. Rb1 Kf6 47. Rb6+ Ke5 48. Rxa6 Nxd5 49. cxd5 Rxd5 50. Kf2 Rc5 51. h4 Rc2 52. g5 hxg5 53. hxg5 Ra2 54. Ra7, Black resigned.

SUMMARY

This new use of the a-pawns is one of the main themes of the contemporary Italian. White's a2-a4 is necessary to preserve the Italian bishop if White wants to avoid the traditional retreat Bc4-b3. That move doesn't fit in with plans of queenside expansion, and doesn't support the Bc1-g5 idea. In that case, White needs the counterplay from the queenside pawns, and often needs to bring the light-squared bishop back to the kingside.

From the Black side, practice has shown that ... a7-a5 is a viable alternative to the traditional one-box advance. It holds up White's queenside pawns without a significant downside.

Given the solid nature of the positions under discussion here for both sides, it remains very difficult to get any edge against a player with good understanding of the opening. The one exception is when White plays Bc1-g5. Here Black is almost compelled to sharpen the game by advancing his pawn to g5. The resulting positions are difficult to judge even with an engine running, but the more skilled player can often come out on top. If Black players find that stuff a little too sharp for their tastes, they can keep things strategical with an early preventative ... h7-h6.

Memorize this: Don't try to memorize all these moves! Both players have flexible positions with many move order options. You will do better to try to absorb the concepts from these games and work out problems as they arise on your board. ♠

Getting Back to Business



FM ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO, SAFELY MASKED, IN ROUND EIGHT ACTION

Three norms earned at Charlotte Chess Club Invitationals

By FM ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO

The Western Class Championships in California was my last tournament for five months.

One week later (March 13-15) I was scheduled to play the Super States K-12 tournament, a Southern California qualifier for the GM Arnold Denker National Tournament

of High School State Champions.

Then, as literally everyone knows, COVID-19 hit. All in-person tournaments and other events were canceled. For months the situation remained stagnant, and it generally remains so even at the time of this writing.

In late August, the Charlotte Chess Center

and Scholastic Academy (CCCSA) went ahead with plans to host a real in-person event: two GM/IM Norm tournaments from August 19-24, promising nine rounds of tough games against strong opponents, and, crucially, an opportunity to earn a coveted title norm.

There were many safety precautions in place

at the chess center. All participants donned masks prior to entry, were required to pass a temperature check before each round, and spectators were not admitted. Hand sanitizer was placed on each table and each board was placed on a separate table. It worked. To my knowledge—knock on wood!—no one so far has fallen ill.

In these unusual circumstances, how does one get ready for an event of this caliber? Indeed, how can any player try to maintain his form without playing over the board for five months?

For me, preparation for this event started essentially before I was even invited. Staying home all day, with only occasional online events, allowed for a significant amount of time to work on my chess. Because all events were held online, games from even the most minor blitz tournaments found their way onto the internet, allowing me to heavily enrich and update my opening repertoire. To stay in shape, I scheduled training games with friends and worked extensively on my calculation skills.

I received an invitation in early July to play in Charlotte. True preparation began soon after. For the first two weeks of August, I traveled to Omaha, Nebraska in order to visit my grandparents and get ready for the tournament.

For the chess aspect of my preparation, I was given invaluable help over several lessons with my coach, GM Alex Stripunsky. He ensured that I had a plan going into each game, both for the opening and in general.

The other aspect of my preparation was physical. I've learned from past experience that no amount of opening preparation can make up for being in poor physical condition for the tournament. I therefore spent most days biking, playing tennis, and avoiding the computer screen (read: playing blitz on my phone at 1:00 a.m.). Looking back, I think the latter part was a key reason for my good performance in this tournament, as I was able to maintain concentration even after three or four hours of play.

I flew to the venue two days early in order to get a feel for the area and adjust to the time zone. We stayed at a hotel in Pineville, a small city within 10 minutes of the chess club. The birthplace of former U.S. President James Polk, today the town boasts a large shopping center and many food options. Notably absent were sidewalks—we drove to a park each morning in order to get some fresh air.

Usually, a norm tournament consists of three types of players. First, there are the titled players, who have nothing to gain in terms of ratings or norms and are there purely for the chess—meaning that they won't necessarily try to crush you from the very first move. Second, there are a few players who are in

good form and are actively contending for the norms. Finally, there are invariably one or two players who simply aren't having their best tournament and finish near the bottom of the standings. This sort of stratification normally leads to a large number of draws, and in my experience norm tournaments are usually quite peaceful events.

This tournament was different. After five months of no over-the-board chess, every single

... how does one get ready for an event of this caliber? Indeed, how can any player try to maintain his form without playing over the board for five months?

player was in a fighting mood. In fact, the first six rounds in the IM section saw only seven draws, and many of those were very exciting games. Fortunately, the atmosphere remained very friendly and relaxed away from the board.

Given that there were so many decisive games, it was surprising that three (!) players earned norms. In the GM section, IM Craig Hilby took clear first place with 6½/9 and bagged a GM norm, finishing an amazing 1½ points ahead of the field. IM Zurab Javakhadze, FM Jason Liang, and I shared first place in the IM section with 6/9, and both Jason and I earned an IM norm. Last but not least, Richard Francisco received the FM title by pushing his FIDE rating over 2300.

None of the winners of the IM section escaped without a loss. Particularly commendable was the fighting spirit of IM Zurab Javakhadze, who finished with nine decisive games and not a single draw!

Here is a selection of some of the exciting games played in Charlotte.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED TARRASCH VARIATION (BY TRANSPPOSITION) (D30)

IM Zurab Javakhadze (2454)

FM Robert Shlyakhtenko (2343)

CCCSA Summer IM 2020, 08.20.2020

In the first round, my opponent's flight was delayed and he showed up precisely 59 minutes late for the game—one minute before the forfeit time! Despite several inaccuracies, the time advantage was on my side and I won the game. This game was played in the second round and proved key to my tournament success. As the critical stage of the game was played in time pressure, there are some errors, but nevertheless the game is quite interesting.

1. Nf3 d5 2. g3 c5 3. Bg2 Nc6 4. d4 e6 5. O-O Nf6 6. c4 Be7 7. cxd5 exd5

By transposition, we have reached the Rubinstein Variation of the Tarrasch Defense.

8. dxc5 Bxc5 9. Nbd2

My knowledge of this plan consisted of the very modern game GM Igor Bondarevsky – GM Paul Keres, Parnu 1951! According to Kotronias, it shouldn't be that dangerous for

Black as placing the white knights on f3 and d4 will not exert much pressure on Black's center.

9. ... O-O 10. Nb3 Bb6 11. Nbd4 Re8 12. b3 Ne4

Instead, the Keres game continued 12. ... Nxd4 13. Nxd4 Bg4 14. Re1 Ne4 15. Bb2 Qg5 16. Qd3 h5 17. e3 h4 18. f3 Nc5 19. Qd2 Bh5 20. g4 Bg6, and Black had excellent counterplay in Bondarevsky-Keres.

13. Bb2 Qf6 14. e3 Bg4



Black's minor pieces all stand on their most active posts, so there is no reason why he should be worse.

15. Qc2

Black is close to winning after 15. h3? Bxf3 16. Bxf3 (16. Qxf3 Bxd4 17. exd4 Qxf3 18. Bxf3 Nd2 and Black has a serious edge) 16. ... Nxg3! 17. fxc3 Rxe3 18. Bg2 Qe5, due to White's open king and cross-pinned knight on d4.

It looks like 15. Qc1! was the best move, the point being that the queen is less of a target on c1 than on c2. For example, after 15. ... Rac8 16. Nxc6 Black can no longer play 16. ... Rxc6 since the queen on c1 is defended. Compare to the comment on Black's 15th move.

15. ... Nb4

More natural and better was 15. ... Rac8 16. Nxc6 Rxc6! 17. Bxf6 Rxc2 18. Bd4 Bxf3 19. Bxf3 Bxd4 20. Bxe4 (20. exd4 Nd2 is winning for Black) 20. ... dxe4 21. exd4 and Black is clearly better.

16. Qb1 Qh6 17. Nh4?!

Overly ambitious. 17. a3 Nc6 18. Qd3 would have minimized White's disadvantage.

17. ... Bxd4?

I "trusted" my opponent when objectively there was nothing to fear by going 17. ... Nd2 18. Ndf5 (18. Qe1 Nxf1 19. Qxb4 a5 20. Qb5 Nxe3 21. fxe3 Qxe3+ and Black is winning) 18. ... Qg5 19. Qe1 Nxf1 20. Qxb4 (20. Nxe3! 21. fxe3 Nxe3 wins for Black.) 20. ... Bxf5 21. Nxf5 Qxf5 22. Rxf1 and Black is much better.

18. Bxd4 Rac8 19. h3?

It's probably better not to include this move, since now ... g7-g5 will be very strong.

19. Rc1 is mainly what I calculated during the game: 19. ... Rxc1+ 20. Qxc1 Nd3 21. Qc7 Ndx2 22. Rf1 and now Black should play 22. ... Qa6!. Here White can't take on f2 twice because of ... Qa6-e2+ at the end, and after 23. h3 Rc8 24. Qe7 Bxh3 25. Rxf2 Nxf2 26. Kxf2 Qxa2+ White's position is very difficult.

19. ... Bd7

It's also possible to include 19. ... g5!? first.

20. Qd1 g5 21. Nf3 Bxh3 22. Bb2

It looks like White may be getting counterplay on the a1-h8 diagonal, but everything is under control.

22. ... Rc2! 23. Qd4 f6 24. Rac1

Avoiding 24. Qxb4, which loses to 24. ... Bxg2 25. Kxg2 g4 26. Nh2 Qxe3 27. Nxe3 Qxg3+.

24. ... Rec8??

A very strange thing happened here. I'd calculated the winning variation in my head while walking around, and then promptly forgot about it when I returned to the board. After this White has a draw in several ways.

Black wins after 24. ... Bxg2 25. Kxg2 g4 26. Nh4 Rd2! 27. Qxb4 Qxe3.

25. Bxh3?

Fortunately for me, my opponent was in time pressure as well. White could draw in multiple (albeit non-obvious) ways, as the following lines illustrate.

a) 25. Qxb4 Bxg2 26. Kxg2 g4 27. Nh2 Qxe3 28. Rxc2 Rxc2 29. Qd4 Qxg3+ 30. Kh1 Nxf2+ 31. Rxf2 Rxf2 32. Qxd5+ and White gives perpetual check.

b) 25. Qxa7 Rxb2 26. Rxc8+ Bxc8 27. Qd4! with a double attack on the rook and the knight. After 27. ... Nxe3 28. fxe3 Rxe3+ 29. Kxg2 Bh3+ 30. Kf2 Bxf1 31. Kxf1 the position is objectively equal.

c) 25. Rxc2 Rxc2 26. Ba3! Nc3! 27. Qxb4 Ne2+ 28. Kh1 Nxe3+ 29. Kg1 and Black has nothing better than a perpetual beginning with 29. ... Ne2+.

25. ... Qxh3 26. Nxe5 Nxe5 27. Qxf6 Ne6

The only move, but Black covers everything.

28. Rxc2 Rxc2 29. Be5?

The last chance to resist was 29. Rd1, with some residual compensation.

29. ... Nc6 30. Ba1 Rc5 31. b4 Nxb4 32. Be5 Nc6 33. Qh8+, and White lost on time.

Winning this game moved me to 2/2. In the next game (against now-FM Richard Francisco) I tried to take a solid approach with White but I took too many risks in a slightly better position, miscalculated and eventually lost!

Following this game, I tried not to think too much about getting a norm and instead focused on simply enjoying the process of playing in a real tournament. This approach worked more or less successfully. I proceeded to beat FM Vincent Tsay, draw IM Alexander Matros (ruining a won position in time pressure), and beat FM Robby Adamson, leaving me with a 4½/6 score going into round seven.

I had won all my games with Black, but managed only an even score with White. This trend continued in round seven: playing White against FM Justin Paul, I won a pawn and transitioned into a much better endgame, but my opponent's highly resourceful defense and the looming time pressure forced me to eventually allow a repetition.

With 5/7, I had a half-point lead going into the final day and needed two draws to norm. Directly behind me was FM Jason Liang, who had scored two consecutive wins in rounds four and five (against IM Javakhadze and FM Paul) and drawn rounds six and seven.

In round eight, I played Black against Ian Zhao of Canada, another norm contender who had been having a tough event. I will freely admit that I got completely outplayed in this

game. After a passive opening, I finally found counterplay, ruined it all with 10 minutes on the clock, and ended up in a lost endgame. But any good tournament performance requires luck—often a lot of it!—and this time fortune favored me. My opponent's pawn got all the way to c7, ready to promote, but I managed to set up the threat of a perpetual. With 30 seconds left my opponent missed the only winning variation; I captured the pawn and drew the game.

This allowed Jason to catch up with a nice win against Vincent Tsay.

FRENCH DEFENSE (C11)

FM Jason Liang (2340)

FM Vincent Tsay (2310)

CCCSA Summer IM 2020 (8.2), 08.23.2020

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. f4 c5 6. Nf3 Nc6 7. Be3 cxd4 8. Nxd4 Qb6 9. Qd2 Qxb2 10. Rb1 Qa3 11. Bb5 Nxd4 12. Bxd4 a6 13. Bxd7+ Bxd7 14. Rb3 Qe7

Not 14. ... Qa5? 15. Bb6.

15. Rxb7 Rc8 16. O-O Qd8

This move has essentially replaced 16. ... Qa3 on the top level. Now Jason plays a rare move in a still-theoretical position.

17. Qf2!?

The most common move 17. Qe3, and it was tested in two correspondence games as follows: 17. Qe3 Rc4 18. Rfb1 Be7 (18. ... Ba3 19. Nxd5 exd5 20. Qxa3 Rxd4 21. Rxd7) 19. f5 Bg5 20. Qd3 0-0 21. Ne4 Bc8 22. Bb6 Be3+!! 23. Qxe3 Qh4 24. Nf6+ gxf6 when Black appears to be doing okay. As we will see, both choices have their pluses and minuses.

17. ... Rc4!?

17. ... Rxc3!? is one way to try and exploit 17. Qf2, since the knight on c3 is poorly defended. From a theoretical perspective, this might be Black's best try. 18. Bxc3 Qc8 19. Rb3 Ba4 20. Bd4 Bxb3 21. axb3 with a slight edge (GM Maksim Chigaev – GM Ivan Popov, St. Petersburg 2016).

18. Rfb1**18. ... Qa5?**

(a) Inferior is 18. ... Bc8?! 19. Ra7 Bb4 20. Bb6! Qxb6 21. Qxb6 Bc5+ 22. Qxc5 Rxc5 23. Na4 Rxc2 24. Rb8 when White has a big plus.

(b) A complex position arises after 18. ... Ba3 19. R1b3 Be7 20. f5 exf5 21. Qg3! Bc8 (21. ... Rxd4 22. Qxg7 Rf8 23. e6! winning) 22. Qxg7 Rf8 23. Qh6! Rg8 24. Qxh7 Rf8 25. Qh6 Rxd4 26. Qc6+ Bd7 27. Qxa6.

(c) Another option is 18. ... g6!?

19. f5!

Now White crashes through.

19. ... exf5

The main point is that 19. ... Rxd4 loses to the intermediate move 20. Rb8+!. More resistance is found with 19. ... Be7, though after 20. R1b3 it's still not clear how Black can complete his development.

20. Rxd7!

Suddenly Black is completely lost.

20. ... Bc5

White has his pick of wins after 20. ... Kxd7 21. Qxf5+ Kc7 22. Qxf7+.

21. Bxc5

Slightly faster is 21. Qxf5 Bxd4+ 22. Kh1 0-0 23. Rb8.

21. ... Rxc5 22. Qxf5 0-0 23. Rb8!

A nice shot, preventing any further resistance.

23. ... Rcc8 24. Rxc8 Qb6+ 25. Kf1, Black resigned.

As a result, both Jason and I needed only one more draw to norm. Coincidentally, we were playing each other, so the only question was whether to play five moves or six. In the end, we played seven.

I should also mention the exceptional result of FM Justin Paul, who performed well above his pre-tournament FIDE rating of 2231 and scored 5/9. Had he won his last game he too would have gotten a norm, but with Black against an IM this turned out to be impossible.

This was my third IM norm event and my first "successful" one. While there were a lot of deficiencies in my play, I was happy to have been able to play eight games worth analyzing. (We won't count the last one!)

In the GM section, IM Andrew Hong started out with a powerful five points in the first seven rounds. Critical was his round four game against GM Titas Stremavicius:

PIRC DEFENSE (B08)

IM Andrew Hong (2444)
GM Titas Stremavicius (2529)
CCCSA Summer GM 2020 (4.4),
08.21.2020

1. e4 d6 2. d4 Nf6 3. Nc3 g6 4. Be3 c6 5. Qd2 Nbd7 6. Nf3 Bg7 7. Bh6 0-0 8. h4 Bxh6 9. Qxh6 Ng4 10. Qd2 h5 11. Ng5 e5 12. f3 Ngf6

Andrew had clearly prepared this entire variation in advance, as this was already the second time that Stremavicius had reached this position.

13. 0-0-0

Instead 13. a4 Qa5 14. dxe5 dxe5 15. Qd6 Qc5 16. 0-0-0 a5 was seen in GM Nijat Abasov – GM Titas Stremavicius, Riga 2019. The game was drawn in 33 moves.

13. ... Qa5

Maybe Black should have kept his queen closer to the kingside with 13. ... Qe7!?, though it already seems to me that White has won the opening battle. For example: 14. Be2 b5 (else it's not clear how to develop active counterplay) 15. dxe5 dxe5 16. Qd6! Qxd6 17. Rxd6 and White is for choice.

14. Kb1 b5 15. dxe5 dxe5 16. g4! Kg7 17. Qd6 b4



18. Ne2

The computer points out the nice blow 18. Na4!! Now Black can't expel White's queen with ... Qa5-c5, and after 18. ... Qxa4 19. gxf5 Nxf5 20. Bc4 Black's uncoordinated pieces cannot fight off the attack, with Qd6-e7 and various sacrifices on f7 being the main ideas.

18. ... Qc5 19. Qd2 Rh8 20. Ng3 Nf8 21. b3

Played in order to give the bishop a home on c4. But even stronger was the direct 21. gxf5 Nxf5 (21. ... Be6 22. hxxg6 Nxxg6 23. Bh3! gives Black no respite) 22. Nxf5+ Rxf5 23. Qd8, threatening Qd8-e8 or Qd8-c7.

21. ... Be6 22. gxf5 Nxf5 23. Nxf5+ Rxf5 24. Be2 Qf2 25. f4!

Opening more lines.

25. ... Rxh4 26. Rhf1 Qg3 27. f5 Bd7 28. f6+ Kg8 29. Bc4

Another way to win is 29. Nxf7 Kxf7 30. Bc4+ Ke8 31. f7+ Ke7 32. Qd6+ Kd8 33. Qxd7+!.

29. ... Be8 30. Rg1 Qc3 31. Qd6 Rh2 32. Rc1 Rd2 33. Qe7 Rd7



It looks like Black might be holding on for the time being, but now White plays a beautiful combination.

34. Qxf8+! Kxf8 35. Rh1 Kg8 36. Rh7, Black resigned.

And Black simply has no defense against Rh7-g7+ followed by Ng5-h7 or Rc1-h1, depending on where Black's king goes. A very impressive win by Andrew, one where it's not immediately clear where his opponent went wrong.

The norm requirement for the GM section was 6½/9, so Andrew needed 1½/2 points to finish. Hot on his heels was Craig Hilby (4½/7), the only other player who could still make a norm. In the final two rounds the results of these players were dramatically different: Craig won both of his games to take first place and the norm, whereas Andrew sadly lost both of his final rounds and had to settle for shared second.

When confronted with a must-win situation, many players try to seek a complicated position from the first moves to put maximum pressure on their opponent. This approach can backfire: sometimes you take unreasonable risks and end up losing. From this point of view, Craig's approach to his final round game was very instructive. Playing Black against IM Kevin Wang, he calmly traded queens in the opening and duly outplayed his opponent from a slightly better endgame.

MODERN DEFENSE (B06)

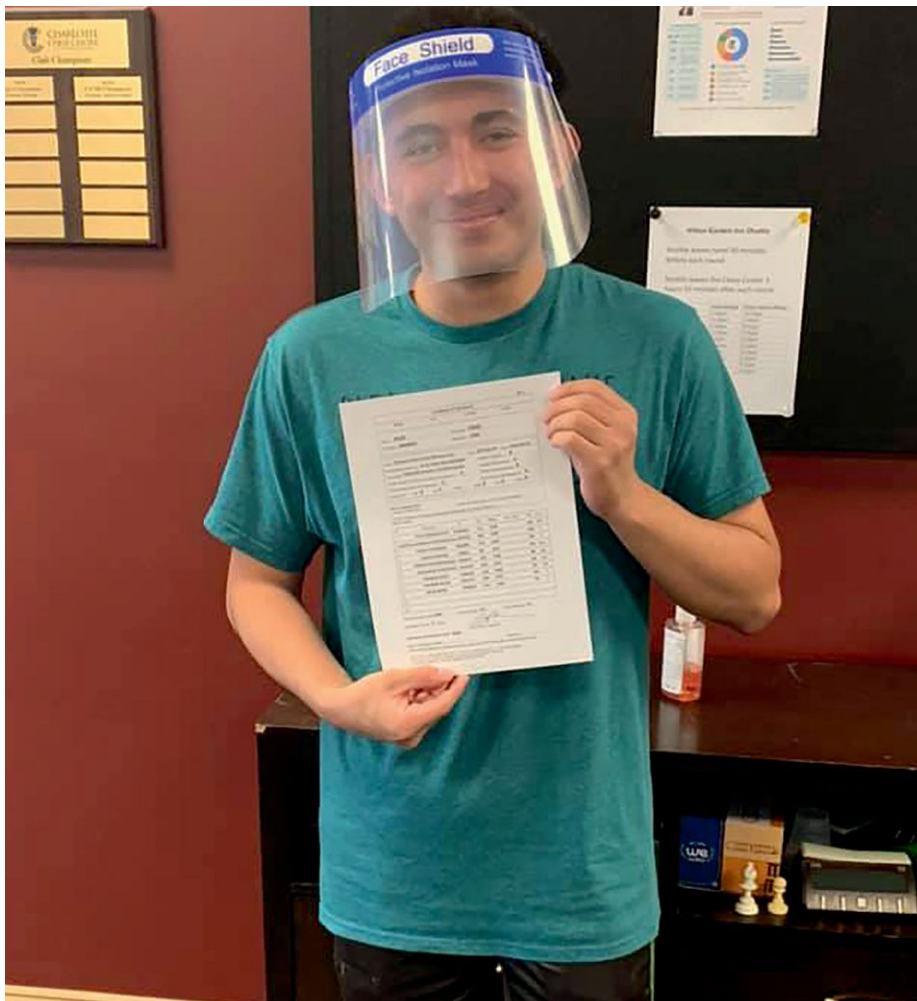
IM Kevin Wang (2402)
IM Craig Hilby (2433)
CCCSA Summer GM 2020 (9.2),
08.24.2020

1. e4 g6 2. d4 Bg7 3. Nc3 d6 4. Be3 a6 5. Qd2 b5 6. f3 Nd7 7. h4

Black has several ways to respond to this move: 7. ... Ngf6, 7. ... h6, and 7. ... h5. The latter move is the most common and also what happened in the game.

7. ... h5 8. Nh3 Nb6

A rare move, this has been tried by several



IM CRAIG HILBY PROUDLY HOLDS HIS GRANDMASTER NORM PAPERWORK

strong players, including GM Almeida Quintana, an expert on the Modern Defense.

9. Ng5 Nf6

Instead Almeida Quintana played 9. ... c6, while after 9. ... f6?! 10. Nh3 e5 11. dxe5 dxe5 12. Qxd8+ Kxd8 White's position was better in GM Rauf Mamedov - GM Ivan Saric, Almaty 2016.

10. a4 b4 11. Nd1 a5 12. b3

This weakens the dark squares on the queenside. Instead 12. c3 bxc3 13. Nxc3 c6 is a different approach, and the resulting structure is somewhat reminiscent of the Sämisch King's Indian.

12. ... Nfd7?! 13. Nb2 c5 14. Bb5

Better was 14. 0-0-0, with some attacking chances after 14. ... Qc7 15. Bb5 cxd4 16. Bxd4 Bxd4 17. Qxd4 0-0 18. g4 Nf6.

14. ... Ba6 15. Bxa6 Rxa6 16. 0-0 Qc7

Black has fully equalized. The question now is how to play for a win.

17. Rad1 cxd4 18. Bxd4 Bxd4+ 19. Qxd4 Qc5!?

All the chances are with Black in this Sicilian-like ending, with an extra pawn in the center and the c2-pawn as a target.

20. Qxc5 Nxc5 21. Nd3 Nbd7 22. Nxc5 Nxc5



In the long-term, Black's position is better. He just needs a few moves to finish coordinating his pieces, after which White will be condemned to a long defense. I think White missed a serious chance here to gain counterplay.

23. Rfe1

Dramatically changing the course of the

game is 23. e5! dxe5 24. Rd5 Rc6 (24. ... Nd7 25. Rfd1 is a nasty pin. White can even start playing for a win after 25. ... Ra7 26. Ne4! with ideas of Ne4-c5 or Nd2-c4) 25. Ne4 Nxe4 26. fxe4. Because the rook on h8 is still out of play, Black cannot hold everything. The extra pawn will be lost and the position will be completely equal.

23. ... f6 24. Nh3 e5!

Stopping all counterplay and preparing an assault on the dark squares with ... Nc5-e6-d4.

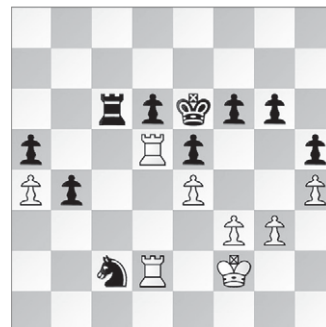
25. Nf2 Ne6 26. Rd2 Nd4 27. Nd1 Rc6 28. Ne3 Ke7 29. Red1 Ke6 30. Nc4

Instead of letting Black sacrifice the Exchange, White could have tried to do the same: 30. Kf2 Rhc8 31. Rxd4 (31. Rc1? Nxb3) 31. ... exd4 32. Rxd4 when Black still has a lot of work to do.

30. ... Rc5 31. Kf2 Rhc8 32. Rd3 Rxc4!

A very typical Exchange sacrifice, simply breaking down White's defenses. At this point I do not think White's position can be held.

33. bxc4 Rxc4 34. R1d2 Rc6 35. g3 Nxc2 36. Rd5



36. ... b3!

I'm pretty sure Craig had calculated up to the end of the game when he played this move.

37. Rxa5 Rb6

This is the point. White can't stop the pawn...

38. Rb5 Rxb5 39. axb5 b2 40. Rd1 Na3 41. b6 Kd7!, White resigned.

... but Black can stop this one!

I think I can speak for all the players when I say that it was a true pleasure to play an over-the-board event again. I am very thankful to Peter Giannatos and Grant Oen at the Charlotte Chess Center for organizing and running this event so smoothly, in spite of the difficult times we are currently facing. With another GM/IM norm tournament already announced for early October, I think we can all be hopeful that better days are just around the corner. ♠

THE QUEST FOR GREATNESS

The Abhimanyu Mishra Story

Story by **GM MAURICE ASHLEY** | Photos by **JUSTIN N. LANE**

ONE OF THE GREATEST WARRIORS IN THE ANCIENT Sanskrit epic, the *Mahabharata*, is the 16-year-old Abhimanyu, whose immense bravery and incredible skill at the battle of Kurukshetra forced an entire army to stop everything and focus entirely on destroying him. Despite facing impossible odds, the young gladiator remained unfazed. Even after his charioteer and horses had been killed and his weapons laid to waste, he fearlessly continued to battle until his very last breath. In spite of—and perhaps due to—his tragic end, his name conjures up the image of someone who is brave, heroic, confident, and never hesitant to take up any challenge.

It is no wonder that even today, over two millennia after the story of Abhimanyu was written, his name is still very much in use by devout followers of Hinduism. Hemant Mishra, the father of IM Abhimanyu Mishra, one of the brightest young talents in U.S. chess in many years, admitted that he knew early on that he wanted to give his future son this legendary appellation.

“It just captured my imagination,” says Hemant through a Zoom call from the family home in Englishtown, New Jersey. “I always told my wife that if we had a son, this is the name he should have.”

For those like Hemant, who believe names give power and promise, his 11-year-old chess wunderkind has already more than lived up to expectations. The records have fallen like dominoes: youngest expert in U.S. history at seven years and six months; youngest master in U.S. history at nine years and two months; youngest player to ever receive an IM norm at 10 years and six months; and the youngest international master in history at 10 years, nine months, and three days—17 days faster than another young phenom, GM Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa, whose accomplishment was seen by some as maybe too steep to be bested for a long time to come. Next up for Abhi, as he is affectionately called, is the record for the youngest GM of all time—12 years and seven months—now held for over 18 years by former world championship challenger GM Sergey Karjakin. The deadline to accomplish that feat is

seared into the young competitor’s brain.

“September 5, 2021,” he replies, when asked if he knew the date by which he had to get all three GM norms if he is to topple the record. “I’m trying to break it by more than a day.”

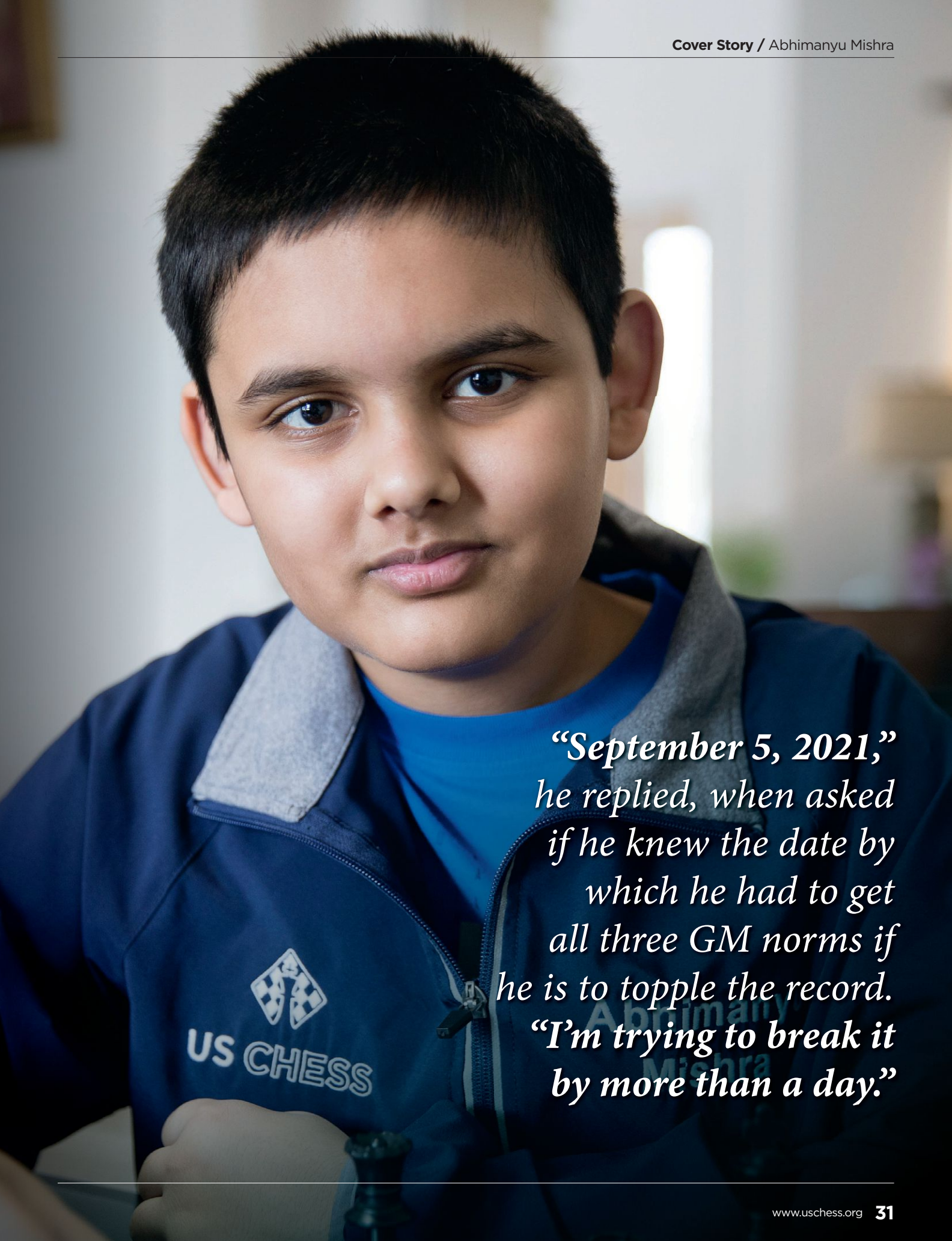
Abhi’s intense determination is matched, and no doubt buttressed, by his unparalleled work ethic. While most kids his age are going to school, hanging out with friends, watching television, and playing video games, he spends a minimum of seven to eight hours daily working on improving his skills. Incredibly, he has kept up this workhorse schedule since the age of six, going to school two days a week and being homeschooled by his parents the rest of the time. That leaves little space for much else, a fact not lost on his mother Swati, who is the backbone keeping the family’s home life together while her son and husband head to norm tournaments around the world.

“Everything in our house revolves around his chess,” she replies, her normally cheerful voice taking on a more serious tone. “He doesn’t have any social life. I feel bad sometimes, but he enjoys it. Whatever limited time he gets, he enjoys doing other things to the fullest. And he never complains.”

Abhi himself can’t recall a time before chess, which makes sense given that Hemant, in a bid to make sure his son developed analytical skills early on, first started teaching him the game when he was just two and half years old. Unsurprisingly, it was slow going for the toddler in the beginning, taking him over two months to learn how to set up the pieces correctly, and then another year and a half to learn the full basics. All the while Hemant avoided teaching him the actual names of the pieces, preferring to keep things more playful than rigorous.

“Actually, I never told him that this was a knight (or) rook,” Hemant recalls. “He just thought that there is a horse which can jump around, there is a camel, there is an elephant, so that he could get connected to the pieces as an individual and some stories about all that.”

By the age of five and a half, things seemed to click, and Abhi’s

A portrait of a young boy, Abhimanyu Mishra, with short dark hair and a serious expression. He is wearing a blue zip-up jacket with a grey collar and a blue t-shirt underneath. The jacket has a diamond-shaped logo with a chess knight and the text "US CHESS" on the left chest. He is holding a black chess piece in his right hand. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a window.

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training entered a new phase involving a consistent diet of chess books. Moving from the elementary at first, and slowly to the more advanced, the youngster seemed to be swallowing the information whole.

“We’ve gone through 75-100 books, first page to last,” Hemant says proudly. “It was my job to set up the position...We completed *Silman’s Complete Endgame Course* end to end by the time he was six and a half.”

Soon after, when Abhi had started to defeat him regularly, Hemant decided it was time to enlist the aid of seasoned professional coaches. He searched for and found WFM Anuprita Patil and then quickly added GMs Magesh Chandran Panchanathan and Arun Prasad Subramanian, who each worked with Abhi an hour a week on all aspects of the middlegame and endgame as well as on building a broad opening repertoire. The investment quickly paid off when, within a year, Abhi skyrocketed past the expert title. Less than two years later he rose to the title of national master, a mere two months after his ninth birthday. All the while, Hemant remained a consistent force, admitting that the entire experience transformed him in ways he could not have imagined.

“It has changed me completely, there is no doubt about it. For the last seven years or so, there is no social life as such. Everything is all about completing the office work and then what we can do to make him better. I do spend about 25-30 hours a week with him even now in some form or the other.”

This absolute dedication to his child’s competitive excellence harkens back to another well-known chess story from the mid-1980s, when Hungarian educational psychologist and chess teacher Lazslo Polgar made it his full-time mission to turn his three daughters into chess champions. At the time, he was castigated in many circles for keeping the girls out of a traditional school setting and for claiming that geniuses were made, not born. His insistence that he “could turn any healthy child into a prodigy” had some detractors calling him Dr. Frankenstein. Many wondered if he would inflict permanent damage on the natural psychological development of the girls. Despite the withering criticisms, he never relented, and the results seem to have validated his theories.

Susan, the oldest, became the women’s world champion and a U.S. hall-of-famer; Sophia, the middle child, had fantastic results on the way to the IM title; and Judit, the youngest, broke Bobby Fischer’s long-standing record for the youngest GM in history and was one of the world’s top ten players for many years. Significantly, from the point of view of the early naysayers, all three women have had rich social lives while also leaving their indelible marks on chess history. Many chess parents have since followed in Laszlo’s footsteps, though the Mishras insist that it’s more about their inner drive and desire for excellence than trying to copy anyone else.

“As parents we are very competitive,” says Swati. “Growing up, we strive to excel. Results are not in our hands, but we can always do hard work and we can excel in that. And I can see that hard work in Abhimanyu.” Hemant agrees wholeheartedly. “As a family we understand that these are the growing years for him, and if he can spend time in the right way, it will help him in all aspects of life...[It’s] not just preparation or working hard. At the end of the day when we are in front of the board, we have to be 100% committed to that.”

The pressure of high expectations is a feeling that Abhi seems to not only embrace, but even relish. At the board, he has the look of a caged gladiator intent on “crushing opponents without physically hurting them,” but away from the board he smiles easily, likes homemade pizza, watches *All Hail King Julien*, reads, and plays the video game *Brawl Stars* in his spare time. However, the idea of making history has infused him with an ever-present ambition to work intensely, and he readily admits that his desire to become world chess champion is an objective he lives and breathes.

“I’m kind of on a mission,” he replies, contradicting the alternative of seeing his journey as a fun ride. “I will have so much joy being the

only one at that moment at the top.” And as for why him and not other amazing chess talents? “I see myself getting ahead of them because I work very hard. Eight hours a day ... I want it so badly because I’ve already spent so many hours, I’ve been through so much pain with all those positions, so I feel like I should get it. I can’t quit now!”

It’s a goal that Hemant readily admits to dreaming about as well. “After he becomes a GM, I’ll let him decide whether he really wants to go (for it), whatever he wants to do, but I would love to see him (become) the world champion one day.”

Despite being 300 rating points ahead of Magnus Carlsen at age 11, Abhi’s projection is that the title of world’s best player will still take him another 10-15 years to acquire. In the meantime, he and the family are laser-focused on the task of becoming the youngest GM of all time. Even with a once-in-a-century virus shutting down norm opportunities for the foreseeable future, he has kept up his blistering pace of eight-hour study days and regular GM lessons. During the summer, he took multiple online camps with legendary players such as GMs Viswanathan Anand, Vladimir Krammnik, and Boris Gelfand, along with seminars led by world-class GM trainers Pavel Eljanov, Vladimir Chuchelov and Jacob Aagaard. Even COVID-19 seems like just another obstacle along the path.

“It’s very frustrating,” he replies as to how he feels about the pandemic delaying his assault on the record. “But we’re using this time wisely. We’re working a lot ... I would be very disappointed (if I didn’t get a shot), but I know that things are probably going to open in the next few months and by then I’m gonna be completely ready, tournament ready, and ... whatever few opportunities will be okay, I’ll go and just crush them.”

His youthful self-confidence is based on recent experience, as he acquired all three IM norms in just three months. Being hand-picked to participate in Kasparov’s prestigious Young Stars program and play in a norm-invitational tournament at the world-famous Saint Louis Chess Club has also been a huge boost. Still, while he might see the GM title as almost a foregone conclusion, his parents have tried to stay focused and calm, hoping that the current health situation will turn in his favor.

“We sincerely hope that ... the norm events will start to happen,” says Hemant. “We are just working for that day. The last four or five months there has been a lot of intense training. He understands very clearly that norms will come, it’s all about strength. Once you get to that level it’s just a matter of playing tournaments ... We are even more motivated now with less time.”

“If he doesn’t get the record because of COVID, then it is completely out of our hands,” adds Swati. “We can’t do anything. I can’t feel despondent over that. But if you’re given a chance and you’re not able to make it, then I would feel disappointed.”

It’s a philosophical approach that the family feels dovetails with their Hindu beliefs. There is a prayer before each game, not to seek a positive result, but instead to try to stay connected and focused for the four or five hours it might take, to fight to be the last person standing. During games Abhi uses the breathing exercises he has been taught to facilitate his concentration over the long hours. And, of course, there is the steady mantra about losing not being important if you have given your best. Still, even as they try to keep him settled and relaxed when he is playing, his parents admit to being a bundle of nerves during every game.

“I’m not able to concentrate on anything,” says Swati with a laugh. “I have butterflies in my stomach, I’ll be so stressed. Since we have two kids, I can’t always travel with him ... I’m not able to concentrate on anything till the time I find out what happened (in the game).”

“It’s so much excitement,” adds Hemant. “Whenever he plays, I try and go and watch what he’s doing. I’m always outside the hall. [As a parent] it’s a great opportunity to work with the kids. It’s just a matter of time after that they will go to college and we will not have this luxury. I

A man in a blue shirt is playing chess. His hand is visible, hovering over the board. In the foreground, a black king piece stands prominently on a dark square. To its right, a black rook and a white pawn are also visible. The background is blurred, showing the man's face and the chessboard.

*I want it so badly
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just want to spend as much possible time with him.”

Abhi’s meteoric rise belies the challenges, real and self-imposed, that the family has accepted in order to succeed. Swati recalls a time recently when she didn’t see Abhi or her husband more than three or four days a month while he was away chasing norms. The high costs of training, traveling to events, online camps, and everything else that goes into making a modern-day chess champion have been an enormous strain, compelling the family to set up a Gofundme page to ask for help to offset all the fees. The late nights spent at chess tournaments have relegated some important moments to the back of the line.

“There have been times on his birthday where we used to come in late at night from some tournament and cut the cake at midnight, 2 a.m., whatever,” Hemant recalls. “It has to be your lifestyle, you should love that.”

Whether it’s his incredible passion or force of will, both parents seem in awe of their own child. Separately, they related a story about his attempt at a second IM norm in a tournament all the way

on the West Coast.

“He had to play black against the top seed, a 2650 GM,” says Hemant. “Before the event, I told him that practically he would have few chances if he didn’t focus on how to cope with jetlag, given that we would be arriving on the same day. We prepared for 10 full days in that time zone, staying up till 3:30 a.m., walking outside when he was too tired to practice. It was painful for me also because I had to work each day. He ended up drawing the game.”

Swati fondly remembers the days when her little five-year-old would resign a tournament game because it got too dark outside or win games in order to be rewarded with BeyBlade spinning and battle tops. Those days seem like ages ago now. When asked what she is most proud of about her son, she pauses before replying: “I’m just proud of everything (laughing). I’m just proud of him as a person actually ... As a parent, everybody is proud of their kid. Whenever I look at him, my heart fills with pride. Even though I couldn’t tell him that (laughing). There’s something good I’ve done.”

CARO-KANN DEFENSE (B12)

Abhimanyu Mishra (2353)

GM Yaroslav Zhrebukh (2695)

2019 U.S. Masters and North Carolina
Open (1), 08.21.2019

Abhi considers the following his favorite game to date. In it, he displays both positional and tactical mastery beyond his years.

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Nf3 e6 5. Be2 Nd7 6. O-O Ne7 7. Nbd2 h6 8. Nb3 Bg6

8. ... g5 is popular here.

9. Bd2 Nf5 10. a4 Be7 11. a5 O-O

White was ready to play against 11. ... a6 12. g4 Nh4 13. Nxh4 Bxh4 14. f4 Be4 15. Be3 0-0 16. c3 Be7 17. Nd2 Bh7 18. b4 with control in all sectors of the board.

12. c4

Not worrying about the d5 square since Black's knights would have to go through contortions to get there. Still, 12. g4 Nh4 13. Nxh4 Bxh4 14. f4 is more in the spirit of the position.

12. ... Rc8

The move 12. ... dxc4 13. Bxc4 c5 was a viable alternative.

13. Rc1 b6 14. cxd5 cxd5



15. Bc3

Not a natural move for a 10-year-old. Abhi felt that he didn't want to trade because of his space advantage. This doesn't lead to any real advantage, but it shows that he's already displaying deeper positional awareness.

15. ... Nb8!

A nice redeployment. The knight finds a better square on c6.

16. Qd2 Nc6 17. Ra1

More positional depth. There is no need to fight for the c-file when the opponent can't use it. White is not better, but it's moves like this one that signal to the opponent that one is playing against someone without prejudice.

17. ... Rb8 18. axb6 Qxb6 19. Na5

Offering a trade for the good knight on c6.

19. ... Nb4

A poor decision. Black must have seen a little 10-year-old in front of him and thought there was no need to simplify to equality. However, this boy is no average 10-year-old. 19. ... Nxa5 20. Rxa5 Bb4 would have led to equality.

20. Ra4! h5 21. Rfa1 Rfc8 22. Nb3 Nc6 23. Nc1!

2600+ GMs aren't the only ones who can make sophisticated knight maneuvers. The steed is headed to f4.

23. ... h4 24. h3 Bh5? 25. Nxh4!

Winning a pawn.

25. ... Bxh4

It doesn't help to play 25. ... Bxe2. After 26. Nxf5 exf5 27. Nxe2 White is just up a pawn for nothing.

26. Bxh5 Be7



27. Bg4!

Small nuances like this one are the sign of a mature player.

27. ... Nh6 28. Be2! Nf5

White simply stole a tempo.

29. Bd3! g6

Of course 29. ... Nfxd4 fails to 30. Bxd4 Nxd4 31. Rxd4 Qxd4 32. Bh7+.

30. Ne2 Nh4 31. Qf4

Black has nothing to queenside so White turns his attention to putting his extra h-pawn to good use.

31. ... Kg7 32. g3 Nf5 33. Kg2 Rh8 34. Qg4 Rh5

(see diagram top of next column)

35. h4!

Abhi saw through the trap that began with 35. Nf4? Rg5 36. Qd1 (36. Qf3?? Nh4+) 36. ...



Rxg3+!! 37. fxg3? Ne3+

35. ... Bxh4!?

With a killer knight headed to f4, Black tries to land a desperate blow.

36. gxh4 Rxh4 37. Qg5 Nxe5!



The first ingenious point of the piece sacrifice.

38. Bxf5!

A massive turnaround would occur on 38. dxe5?? Rh2+! 39. Kxh2 Qxf2+ 40. Kh3 Rh8+ 41. Kg4 Ne3+ 42. Qxe3 Rh4+ (42. ... Qxe3? 43. Nf4) 43. Kg5 Rh5+ 44. Kg4 Qxe3, where with threats of 45. ... Qh3 46. Kf4 g5 mate and 45. ... Rg5+ 46. Kh4 Rg2! White's king is just getting mated. For example, 45. Nf4 Rg5+!! 46. Kxg5 Qg3 mate.

38. ... Rh2+!

The shark is fighting for his life ...

39. Kg3!

... but Abhi won't let him out off the hook. Obviously not 39. Kxh2? Nf3+.

39. ... exf5

Useless is 39. ... Rh5 40. Qe3 Rxf5 41. dxe5.

40. Ra6 Rbh8

Setting one last trap.

41. Nf4!, Black resigned.

A sad fate awaited 41. Rxb6?? R8h3+ 42. Kf4 Nd3 mate. Now Black will simply lose another piece when the queen retreats. ♠



The
2020
Tournaments
of State
Champions

No U.S. Open? No matter!

The invitationals go on—online!

By **GM ALEX FISHBEIN**

Grandmaster Arnold Denker came up with a brilliant idea in 1985. He decided to invite all the state high school champions to a national tournament to decide the Champion of Champions! And so the first annual GM Arnold Denker National Tournament of High School State Champions ran alongside the U.S. Open in Hollywood, Florida that year. Generally referred to now simply as “the Denker,” it’s been part of the U.S. Open festival ever since.

The Denker has remained a lasting tribute to a great American champion and even greater ambassador of our game, and especially of youth chess in America. In the 21st century, our current “Dean of Scholastic Chess” Dewain Barber has continued the legacy. He not only grew the Denker tournament into the prestigious invitational it has become, but also created the Dewain Barber National Tournament of Middle School State Champions (“the Barber”) for younger kids.

Today we now also have the WIM Ruth Haring National Tournament of Girls State Champions (“the Haring”), the John D. Rockefeller III National Tournament of Elementary School State Champions (“the Rockefeller”), and the National Tournament of Senior State Champions (“the Senior”) for players 50 years and older, all running concurrently. Anyone playing in these tournaments is a champion already.

This year, of course, there was no U.S. Open because of COVID-19. In its absence, how could these traditional tournaments take place? The US Chess Executive Board took a bit of a risk in June and approved holding these tournaments at the usual time, but in an online format. The reward was that chess fans witnessed some of the most competitive and stimulating scholastic invitationals in recent memory. GM Hikaru Nakamura headlined a list of popular commentators who streamed the action for thousands of people to follow.

As an old-timer who played in that first Denker, I will happily observe that the Denker legacy has survived the pandemic and stands prouder than ever. In what follows, I would like to share with you the best moments of these invitationals.

THE 2020 GM ARNOLD DENKER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

THIS YEAR’S DENKER FIELD WAS probably the strongest ever. The pre-tournament favorite was Grandmaster Nicolas Checa, who almost won the U.S. Junior Closed last year. If I am not mistaken, he is the first “sitting” grandmaster to play in the Denker, although of course many alumni became GMs later. Some fans even wondered whether it was good for someone that strong to play in this tournament. Well, of course it’s good! It raises the prestige of the tournament and the competitive spirit. And, as we shall see, he would find it challenging to meet the expectations.

Other top contenders were IMs Praveen Balakrishnan (already a two-time Denker champion), Andrew Hong, Carissa Yip and Ben Li, as well as last year’s Barber co-winner FM Robert Shlyakhtenko. To be in the running, you really had to bring your A game.

Andrew Hong, who calls himself “Speedoflight0” online, tried to set that kind of pace, winning his first four games, including against Balakrishnan in round four.

But in round five, he would meet his match in “Speedskater” Nicolas Checa, who was a half-point back at that point.

ENGLISH OPENING (A13)

GM Nicolas Checa (2644)

IM Andrew Hong (2533)

2020 Denker (5), 07.26.2020

1. c4 e6 2. Nf3 d5 3. g3

The grandmaster would like nothing more than a long game where his positional skills and experience might prevail, so he chooses a flexible opening. But we soon return to a theoretical discussion.

3. ... dxc4 4. Bg2 Nf6 5. Qa4+ Nbd7 6.

Qxc4 a6 7. Qb3 Rb8 8. d4 b5 9. Ne5 Nxe5

10. dxe5 Nd7 11. O-O

White sacrifices a pawn for the initiative and faster development.

11. ... Nxe5 12. Rd1 Bd6 13. Bf4 Qe7 14.

Nd2!

A game between GM Ding Liren and GM Sergey Karjakin (St. Louis rapid 2019) continued 14. Bxe5 Bxe5 15. Bc6+ Kf8, but the black king is safe there, and he has the two bishops. Checa introduces an improvement. He keeps the tension for now and tries to gain the two bishops for himself.

14. ... O-O 15. Ne4 Bb7 16. Nxd6 cxd6 17. Qb4!

The fruits of White’s novelty are evident, as, after the bishop trade, Black is having trouble on the f4–b8 and b4–f8 diagonals.

17. ... a5! 18. Qxa5 Bxg2 19. Kxg2 Nc4?

A tempting move, but an inaccurate move order. Black needed to first give check with 19. ... Qb7+, because then after 20. Kg1 he can play 20. ... Qe4! without the consequences that arise in the game.

20. Qb4 e5 21. Bc1 Qb7+ 22. Kg1! Qe4 23. b3!

This is the difference. The knight got in

Black's way at c4, and he has to lose a piece or other material.

23. ... Qc2 24. Re1 Nb6 25. Qxb5

Not bad, but even more decisive is 25. Qxd6, which not only attacks the e5-pawn, but also threatens Bc1-e3, and the knight is chased around some more.

25. ... d5 26. Qd3 Qc6 27. Bb2

White is up a clean pawn and you would expect him to win routinely here, but the tournament leader puts up an inspired defense.

27. ... Rfe8 28. Rac1 Qe6 29. Rc7?! d4! 30. Rec1 Nd5 31. R7c6 Qg4 32. Qc4 Nf4 33. f3 Qg5 34. Rc2 Nh3+ 35. Kg2 Nf4+ 36. Kf1 Ne6 37. Bc1?!

More circumspect was 37. Qd3 immediately.

37. ... Qf5 38. Qd3?! e4!



This changes the whole game, as White now must lose an Exchange.

39. Qxe4 Qh3+! 40. Kg1 d3! 41. Rxe6!

41. Qxd3 Rbd8 42. Rd6 Rxd6 43. Qxd6 Rd8 would turn the tables, while 41. exd3 also loses to 41. ... Nd4. Nico maintains his composure and comes out of this relatively unscathed.

41. ... Qxe6 42. Qxe6 fxe6 43. exd3 Rec8 44. Rc4 Rd8 45. Kf2 Ra8 46. a3 Rxd3 47. b4

White's two passed pawns are sufficient compensation for the Exchange, but not more, because his king is not supporting them. The ending is very complicated, and all three results are possible.

47. ... Kf7 48. b5 Rb3 49. a4 Rb1 50. Bf4 Rd8 51. g4 Rd3 52. Ke2 Ra3 53. Be5?



53. ... Ra2+?

The time control for all the junior invitationals was 70 minutes per game with a 10 second increment. Coming back from the brink of defeat in this game had cost Hong precious time, and he had only 30 seconds left here, to Checa's eight minutes. With more time, Andrew would have found 53. ... Rbb3! after which White would have to fight for a draw with 54. Kd1 Ra2! 55. Rc7+ Ke8 56. Rc8+ Kd7 57. Rc7+ Kd8 58. Rc2. But he forgets to cut off the white king, and the advantage again passes to Checa, and this time decisively.

54. Kd3 Rd1+ 55. Kc3 Ra3+ 56. Kb4 Rxf3 57. b6 Rb1+ 58. Kc5 Rfb3 59. Bc7

With the king and bishop chaperoning the white pawns to promotion, the result is no longer in doubt.

59. ... e5 60. Kc6 Ra3 61. Bxe5 g6 62. b7 Rab3 63. b8=Q Rxb8 64. Bxb8 Rxb8 65. a5 Rc8+ 66. Kd5 Rd8+ 67. Ke5 Ra8 68. Ra4 Ra6 69. Kd5 Ke7 70. Kc5 Kd7 71. Kb5 Re6 72. a6 Kc7 73. a7 Re5+ 74. Kb4 Re4+ 75. Kb3 Rxa4 76. Kxa4 Kb7 77. Kb5 Kxa7 78. Kc6 Kb8 79. Kd7 h5 80. g5 h4 81. Ke6 Kc7 82. Kf6 Kd7 83. Kxg6 Ke6 84. Kh7 Kf5 85. g6 Kg4 86. g7 Kh3 87. g8=Q Kxh2 88. Qg4 h3 89. Kh6, Black resigned.

After this seesaw game, Checa secured first place by defeating Andrew Zheng convincingly in the last round. Hong and Carissa Yip tied for second place with five points.

IM Carissa Yip is obviously a rising star in American chess. Second only to Irina Krush among women in the U.S., her next goal is the grandmaster title. We may also see her win the Denker in the future.

Yip is a solid player but prefers active play with attacking chances, as she shows here against Joshua Grabinsky:

FRENCH DEFENSE (C03)

IM Carissa Yip (2493)
Joshua Grabinsky (2315)
2020 Denker (5), 07.26.2020

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 a6 4. Ngf3 Nf6 5. e5 Nfd7 6. c4 dxc4

Although this move has been played by Topalov and other strong players, I don't think the chance to eventually occupy the d5-square compensates for White's advantage in space and time. I prefer 6. ... c5.

7. Bxc4 b5 8. Bd3 c5 9. Be4 Ra7 10. Nb3 c4 11. Bg5!?

An enterprising move and effectively a piece sacrifice, but it only succeeds if Black accepts it. Here, the most solid response would be 11.

... Be7.

11. ... f6?! 12. exf6 gxf6 13. Bf4! cxb3?

Josh should definitely not take the piece, although after 13. ... Bb4+ 14. Nbd2 f5 15. Bc2 White still has the initiative.

14. Nd2?!

The right idea, but the wrong execution. The knight can also be useful on f3, so in the interest of time she should castle: 14. 0-0!. For example: 14. ... Be7 15. Nh4! and Black's king remains stuck in the center, as 15. ... 0-0 loses to 16. Qg4+ Kh8 17. Ng6+ hxg6 18. Bxg6 with a quick mate.

14. ... Bb4 15. Qh5+ Ke7 16. 0-0 Qe8 17. Qf3



17. ... e5?

Sometimes even in a position with lots of pieces fighting for central squares, a pawn on the side is an important soldier. Black needed to eliminate the a2-pawn with 17. ... bxa2! with an unclear position. That pawn was threatening to displace the bishop from b4 in many variations. Now if 18. Qb3? a5! comfortably defends the bishop.

But taking a pawn like that while Rome seems to be burning might only occur to an engine. Josh's move accelerates the inferno.

18. Qxb3! Bd6

Carissa correctly ignored the attack on the bishop. If 18. ... exf4 19. Qxb4+ Kf7 20. Qd6 Kg7 21. Rac1, then White is nominally a piece down, but she knows that only her pieces are playing. After 21. ... Qd8 22. Qxf4 Re8 23. Rc3, threatening both the rook transfer to the kingside and doubling on the c-file, Black will have to give up the knight on b8.

19. Rae1 Qg8 20. Bd5! Qg7 21. dxe5 Nxe5

White is still a piece down, but it does not matter as the black king is too high-maintenance here.

22. Be3! Rc7 23. f4 Nbd7 24. fxe5 Nxe5 25. Ne4 Rf8 26. Rxf6! Rxf6 27. Bg5 Nf3+ 28. Qxf3, Black resigned.

PHOTO CREDITS: CLOCKWISE, STARTING TOP LEFT: ANNIE WANG (SLCC / LENNART OOTES); MARTHA SAMADASHVILI (JOHN HARTMANN); CARISSA YIP (SLCC); JASON LIANG (CHUNLEI LANG); ALICE LEE (JOHN HARTMANN)



ANNIE WANG



MARTHA SAMADASHVILI



CARISSA YIP



ALICE LEE



JASON LIANG

THE 2020 WIM RUTH HARING NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF GIRLS STATE CHAMPIONS

THE “GIRLS NATIONAL TOURNAMENT of Champions” was renamed in honor of WIM Ruth Haring, who sadly passed away in 2018. Haring was a five-time Olympian, as well as a US Chess President. Most importantly, Ruth loved chess and had a kind personality that inevitably left fond memories with people who had the chance to meet her.

This year’s edition featured a monster field, with U.S. Women’s Champion WGM Jennifer Yu, IM Annie Wang, and four other masters. Annie Wang stayed true to her top seeding, finishing with a perfect 6-0 score. The decisive game of the tournament, however, could have gone either way—just like in the Denker.

CRUNCH TIME

IM Annie Wang (2457)
WFM Martha Samadashvili (2340)
2020 Haring (5), 07.26.2020



WHITE TO MOVE

20. Bd4

Both rivals had perfect scores before this fifth-round game. White has a more pleasant position here, but she moves her bishop to a problematical square.

Instead, she should challenge her opponent’s bishop with 20. Ne3.

20. ... Ng5 21. Bf1 Rfd8 22. h4 Ne4 23. Bh3?

This was the last chance for 23. Ne3. Now Black is able to develop a powerful initiative.

23. ... e5! 24. Be3 b4!

I once heard Mikhail Tal say that the c6-square (or c3 if you are Black) is at least as good a square for a knight as d6.

25. Ne1 Nc3 26. Rdc1 Qb5 27. Nd3 Bf7 28. Bf1 a5! 29. Bd2 Ne4?

Black should already be looking for tactics to crown her strategical plan of gaining squares on the queenside. After 29. ... e4 30. Nf4 Qe5! 31. Bxc3 bxc3 32. Qxc3 Ba3! she would win an Exchange.

30. Be1 Rac8 31. Bh3 Rxc1 32. Rxc1 Rb8 33. Qc2



Annie has been on the defensive, but has now equalized. Having lost the thread but still trying to stay ahead on the clock, Martha commits a bad blunder, and her opponent capitalizes.

33. ... Qb6? 34. Nxe5! fxe5 35. Qxe4 Qd4 36. Qxd4 exd4 37. Rc7

Now White is winning, with a pawn up and a weak black pawn on d4. In spite of having less than four minutes left at this point, she convincingly concludes the game.

37. ... Bd8 38. Rd7 Bb6 39. Bd2 Bc5 40. Bf4 Re8 41. Rc7 Bf8 42. Kf1 a4 43. Bd7! Rd8 44. Bxa4 d3 45. exd3 Rxd3 46. Rc8 Be6 47. Rb8 Bg4 48. Bb5 Rd1+ 49. Kg2 Be6 50. Kf3 h5 51. Ke2 Rd4 52. Be3 Re4 53. Kd2 Re5 54. Bd4 Rd5 55. Ke3 Rf5 56. Bd3 Ra5 57. Bb6 Re5+ 58. Kf4 Rd5 59. Bc4 Rf5+ 60. Ke4 Rf6 61. Bd4 Rg6 62. Bc5, Black resigned.

Annie Wang finished a full 1½ points ahead of the field. Tied for second place, in tiebreak order, were Samadashvili, WIM Rochelle Wu, Yili Wen, and Gauri Menon.

In round four, the defending Haring champion Samadashvili defeated Alice Lee:

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E52)

Alice Lee (2200)
WFM Martha Samadashvili (2340)
2020 Haring (4), 07.26.2020

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 0-0 5. Bd3 d5 6. Nf3 b6 7. 0-0 Bb7 8. cxd5 exd5 9. a3 Bd6 10. b4 a6 11. Qb3 Nbd7 12. a4 Qe7 13. Ba3 Rfb8

This move sets a nice trap.

14. b5 Bxa3 15. bxa6 Bxa6 16. Bxa6 Rxa6 17. Rxa3?!

17. Qxa3 is approximately equal.



17. ... b5!

The Rules for Online Chess

This year’s invitationals were all played on the *chess.com* platform, with a Zoom call showing the players. Each player had to set up two unmuted Zoom cameras (one with a side view). No one else could be in the room where a participant was playing. I know that these rules were strictly enforced by the directors.

The thorny subject of fair play review always comes up in the context of online tournaments, and I would like to share my thoughts. As plausible as it is to assume that kids are more likely than adults to break the rules, kids occasionally perform far above (or below!) their usual level. If a talented youngster legitimately played like a super-grandmaster and defeated a much higher-rated opponent in one game, that is exactly the instance when you should not spuriously accuse the winner. How do you tell? That’s why all tournaments with any credibility must follow strict fair-play standards. Video and audio evidence can be as important as the accuracy of moves. We should wait for the facts before drawing conclusions about the impact of cheating on any given tournament.

I can report that the invitationals were a success in this regard. I applaud the arbiters for dealing with the issue fairly and efficiently. Of the 175 entrants in the four junior invitationals, only three were disqualified. Of the four tournaments, two were completely clean from fair-play violations.

I am sure Alice didn't expect this shot. She cannot take with the knight because it will be pinned, or with the pawn because it is already pinned. But she keeps cool and finds the best way out.

18. Ra2! bxa4 19. Qc2 a3 20. Rfa1 c5 21. Nb1?

Black is a pawn up, but the position is not so clear. An extra rook pawn that has to be defended from an organized attack on the file

is sometimes a weakness, as Benko Gambit players know. With 21. Qc1 c4 22. Nd2, White could hold her own. But trying to win back the pawn too quickly, she runs into serious trouble.

21. ... c4 22. Nxa3 Ne4!

Martha puts together a string of forceful positional moves, just as in the previous game.

23. Nb1 Rxa2 24. Rxa2 Qb4! 25. Nbd2 c3

White's back rank is weak, so 25. ... Nxd2 would win immediately after 26. Qxd2 (26. Nxd2 Qxd2!) 26. ... Qb1+! 27. Ne1 c3.

26. Nf1 Qb1 27. g3 Qxc2 28. Rxc2 Rb1 29. Kg2 f6

And here White played

30. Rd2

which is an obvious mouse-slip, and White resigned after her 49th move.

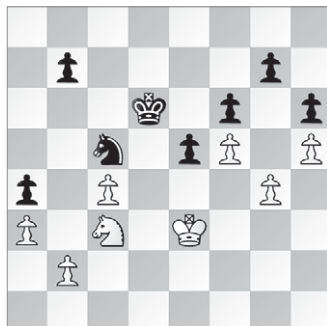
THE 2020 DEWAIN BARBER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

I THINK DEWAIN BARBER SHOULD BE proud of how prestigious his tournament has become. With the introduction of the Rockefeller (discussed below), the Barber now features players from grades 6-8, rather than K-8. This year's lineup featured IM Christopher Yoo, who at 2455 FIDE is already approaching GM level. But he was off form here, letting NM Bach Ngo jail his bishop in the corner. This allowed somewhat lower-rated (but also very strong!) contenders to shoot for the top. FM Jason Liang and Evan Park tied for first with 5½ out of 6, with Evan having the better tiebreaks.

Among young kids, you rarely see a quintessential positional style. But Jason Liang seems to prefer grinding out endgame wins to flashy mating attacks. Let's see how he beat a strong expert in round five:

THE GRIND

Michael Zheng (2178)
FM Jason Liang (2403)
2020 Barber (5), 08.02.2020



WHITE TO MOVE

It seems like Black should have the advantage here. He has a protected passed pawn and his pawn on a4 holds two. Take away the knights, and Black is winning; and, as is well known, knight endings are supposed to be like pawn endings. But the problem here is that that a4-pawn is attacked, and the black knight is tied down to its defense.

43. Nb5+ Kc6 44. Nc3 Kb6 45. Nd5+ Kc6

46. Nc3 Kd7

Black attempts a triangulation maneuver, to lose a tempo with the king for the coming ... b7-b5 break.

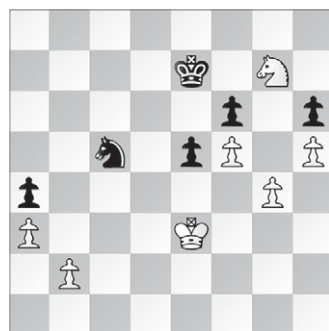
47. Nd5 Kd6 48. Nc3 Kc6 49. Nd5 Nd7 50. Nc3 Nc5

Jason repeats moves, perhaps in the hope of reinforcing in his opponent the dangerous feeling of an imminent draw.

51. Nd5 b5! 52. Nb4+ Kb6 53. Nd5+ Kc6 54. Nb4+ Kb7!

A second triangulation, this time to make sure the king can take on b5 in response to check.

55. cxb5 Kb6 56. Nd5+ Kxb5 57. Nc7+ Kc6 58. Ne8 Kd7 59. Nxg7 Ke7!



It looks like Black has succeeded in trapping the knight and winning the game, but White has just enough time in the coming pawn race: 60. Kd2! Kf7 61. Ne6 Nxe6 62. fxe6+ Kxe6 63. Kc3 f5 64. gxf5+ Kxf5 65. b4 axb3 e.p. 66. Kxb3 Kf4 67. a4 e4 68. a5 e3 69. Kc2 Kg3 70. a6 e2 71. a7 e1=Q 72. a8=Q with a drawn ending, although even here Jason would make his opponent show the perpetual. However, White, in a moment of panic, loses a crucial tempo and the game.

60. Ne6? Nxe6 61. fxe6 Kxe6 62. Kd3 Kd5 63. b4 axb3 e.p. 64. Kc3 e4 65. Kxb3 Kd4 66. a4 Kd3! 67. a5 e3 68. a6 e2 69. a7 e1=Q 70. a8=Q Qb1+, White resigned.

Evan Park's path to first place involved an intuitive Exchange sacrifice:

RUY LOPEZ YATES VARIATION (C91)

Evan Park (2305)
Bach Ngo (2222)
2020 Barber (6), 08.02.2020

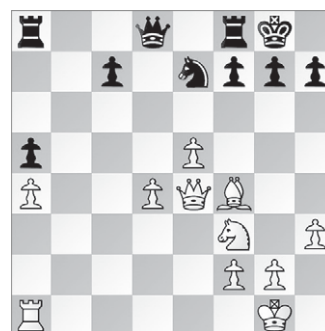
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. O-O Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 O-O 9. d4 Bg4 10. Be3 a5

An unusual response to the Yates variation. 10. ... exd4 followed by 11. ... Na5, or the immediate 10. ... Na5, are common.

11. a4 b4 12. h3 Bh5 13. Nbd2 bxc3 14. bxc3 exd4 15. cxd4 d5 16. e5 Ne4 17. Bc2!?

With this move, Evan is already planning an Exchange sacrifice. 17. Nxe4 dxe4 18. Qc2 exf3 19. Qxc6 would be a much more conventional way.

17. ... Bg6 18. Bf4 Bb4 19. Nxe4! Bxe1 20. Qxe1 dxe4 21. Bxe4 Bxe4 22. Qxe4 Ne7



White is down an Exchange for a pawn. As compensation, he has a well-supported center and attacking chances. Black's queenside pawns can be loose in the ending, as we shall see. Evan's willingness to enter a position with a material/positional imbalance, and his strong play there, indicate that he is someone to watch in the future.

23. Ng5! Ng6 24. Be3 h6?

A blunder that spoils an interesting position.

25. Nxf7! Rxf7 26. Qxg6

With two pawns for the Exchange, White is

winning. The e5-pawn makes it impossible for the black rooks to develop any activity.

26. ... Rb8 27. Qc6 Rd7 28. Rc1 Qe7 29. Qc5

More forceful was 29. Rc5, but White chooses a technical approach.

29. ... Qxc5 30. Rxc5

We now see that the a- and c-pawns are hard to defend. Black decides to trade down into a rook ending, but it is easily winning for White.

30. ... Rbd8 31. f4 Rxd4 32. Bxd4 Rxd4 33. f5! Rxa4 34. Rxc7 Rf4 35. g4 Re4 36. e6 a4 37. Kf2 Kf8 38. Kf3 Re1 39. Ra7 Ra1

40. Ra8+ Ke7 41. Rg8 a3 42. Rxc7+ Kf6 43. Ra7 a2 44. Kg2 Kg5 45. e7 Re1 46. Rxa2 Rxe7 47. Ra6 h5 48. Kf3 Rb7 49. Rg6+ Kh4 50. g5 Rb3+ 51. Kf4 Rb4+ 52. Ke5 Rb5+ 53. Ke6 Kxh3 54. f6 Kg4 55. Rg8 Rb6+ 56. Ke5 Rb5+ 57. Kd6 Rb6+ 58. Kc5 Rb7 59. g6 Kg5 60. f7, Black resigned.

BREWINGTON HARDAWAY



THE 2020 JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER III NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

SOME OF OUR TOP ELEMENTARY school players did battle in the inaugural John D. Rockefeller III Tournament of Elementary School State Champions.

While some may only recognize him for his famous last name, American chess fans know John D. Rockefeller V for his many contributions to our game. Rockefeller is a chess organizer and director in Maryland, focusing on scholastic chess. He is also chair of the US Chess Development Committee. The sponsor of the Rockefeller, John wanted to name this new tournament in memory of his grandfather, John D. Rockefeller III, who taught him how to play chess.

Not a man afraid to get his hands dirty, John was integral in the organization of all the invitationals and directed both the Barber and the Haring. His grandfather had wide-ranging philanthropic interests, and it is great to see John carry on that legacy in the chess community.

As you might imagine by now, the Rockefeller was also a hard-fought event. Favored to win were the two masters: Brewington Hardaway and Bryan Xie. They hail from the opposite coasts, "Brew" being from New York City, while Bryan comes from Southern California. They each have many fans, and they fittingly met in the decisive last

round. Brewington had a half-point less and needed to win.

SICILIAN DEFENSE (B34)

Brewington Hardaway (2234)

Bryan Xie (2203)

2020 Rockefeller (6), 08.02.2020

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. Be3 Nf6 7. Be2 O-O 8. O-O d5 9. exd5 Nxd5 10. Nxc6 bxc6 11. Nxd5 cxd5 12. c3

I played against Brewington in a G/60 game late last year. I played the Black side of a Sicilian, and he played unpretentiously (similar

to here), losing a few tempi here and there. Yet I didn't seem to get any advantage and in fact soon emerged with a worse position. I had to sacrifice a pawn and create an imbalance to turn the game in my direction.

Brewington plays quickly, but makes solid and strong moves and understands the position well.

12. ... Rb8 13. Qd2 Qa5 14. Rfd1 Rd8 15. a4 Be6 16. b4 Qc7 17. Bd4! Bxd4? 18. cxd4!



White has correctly assessed that his three pawn islands are stronger than Black's two pawn islands. He has a potentially passed pawn on the queenside, while the d4-pawn serves to block the d5-pawn and therefore constrict the black bishop.

18. ... Bf5 19. Rac1 Qb7 20. b5 Bd7 21. Rc5 Rdc8 22. Rdc1 e6 23. Qa5 Qb6 24. Qxb6?

If White keeps the queens on, he should be

able to push the pawns through. Bryan puts up a tough defense now.

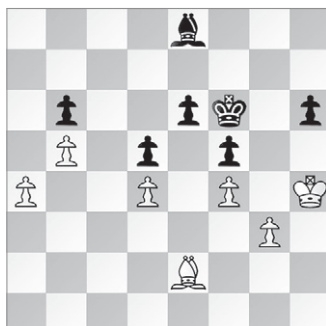
24. ... axb6 25. Rc7 Kf8 26. Kf1 Rxc7 27. Rxc7 Rc8! 28. Rxc8+ Bxc8 29. Ke1 Ke7 30. Kd2 f6 31. f4 Kd6 32. Ke3 Bb7 33. h4 Bc8 34. Bd3 f5?

But this is a serious mistake. Black needs to have some play in the center when White moves the king to the left to support his pawns. With 34. ... e5, he can hold the draw.

35. h5!

Excellent timing, as Black was threatening ... h7-h5 to lock everything up. Now White has enough space on the kingside to enter.

35. ... gxh5 36. Kf2 h4 37. Be2 Ke7 38. Bh5 Bd7 39. Kg1 h3 40. g3 Kf6 41. Kh2 h6 42. Kxh3 Kg7 43. Kh4 Kf6 44. Be2 Be8 45. Bd3 Bd7 46. Be2 Be8



47. g4?

This is where "Brew" spoils his winning chances. He needs to walk his king to the queenside and push through a5-a6, which would tie the black king or bishop to that pawn. Then the king can come back to the kingside and, facing only one defender instead of two, the g3-g4 break would succeed.

Brewington had plenty of time and needed to use it here, as with more thought he would have found this plan. He already senses chess strategy very well. When he becomes more patient with time management, he will greatly improve.

47. ... fxg4 48. Kxg4 Bd7 49. Kh5

Realizing he can no longer win by normal means, White desperately takes his king behind enemy lines. But this only leads to trouble.

49. ... Kf5 50. Kxh6 Kxf4 51. Kg7 e5 52. dxe5? Kxe5 53. Kf7 Kd6 54. Bd3 Kc5 55. Ke7 Bg4 56. Kd8 Bd1 57. a5 bxa5 58. Kc7 Bf3 59. b6 d4

Black has stopped the pawn, and his two pawns will easily win against the bishop. Bryan's persistent defense is rewarded in the end, and he becomes the first Rockefeller champion.

60. Bf1 a4 61. Bd3 a3 62. Bb1 d3 63. Bxd3 a2 64. Be2 Ba8 65. b7 Bxb7 66. Kxb7 a1=Q 67. Ba6 Qg7+ 68. Kc8 Kc6 69. Kd8 Qd7, mate.

Tied for second place, a half-point back, were Jason Chiang and Kevin Su.

THE 2020 NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF SENIOR STATE CHAMPIONS

FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW, the Senior was held alongside the junior invitationals. David Grimaud, the chair of the US Chess Senior committee, conceived this event in 2018. The format was the same as the juniors, although this year we old guys (age 50+) got an extra 20 minutes on the clock! The G/90+10 time control approximates slow classical chess. We also got two weekends to play, with three games each weekend instead of six. It was almost like the old day—you could prepare for your opponent all week!

The Senior also had the strongest field in its young history. Grandmasters Larry Kaufman, Sergey Kudrin, Michael Rohde, Enrico Sevillano, and Alonso Zapata all played, as did your reporter.

The extra week of opening preparation helped me against Rohde, and so the deciding game for me, just like in the Senior two years ago, was against Alonso Zapata:

(See game on next page)

ALEX FISHBEIN



OPEN RUY LOPEZ (C80)

GM Alonso Zapata (2518)

GM Alex Fishbein (2558)

2020 Senior (5), 08.01.2020

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6
5. O-O Nxe4

I decided, for old times' sake, to go with the Open Ruy, which I played against Zapata at the Saint John Festival in Canada 32 years ago.

6. d4 b5 7. Bb3 d5 8. dxe5 Be6 9. Be3 Be7

In the aforementioned game I played 9. ... Nc5?! and was fortunate to eventually escape with a draw after 10. Nc3!

10. c3 O-O 11. Nbd2 Bg4! 12. Re1!!

The move 11. ... Bg4 had long been shunned because of 12. Nxe4 dxe4 13. Qd5 Qxd5 14. Bxd5 exf3 15. Bxc6 fxe2 16. Kxg2 Rad8 17. a4, as played in the famous game between Alexander Alekhine and Richard Teichmann in 1921. But Black should not have serious problems after 17. ... b4.

12. ... Nxe5 13. Nxe4 Bxf3 14. gxf3 dxe4
15. fxe4 Qc8

After 15. ... Nd3 16. Re2 Qd6 17. Bd5 Nf4 18. Bxf4 Qxf4 19. Bxa8 Qg4+ 20. Kf1 Qh3+ 21. Ke1 Rxa8, White has nothing better than perpetual check: 22. Re3 Qxh2 23. Ke2 Qh5+ 24. Kf1 Qh1+ as played in a PRO Chess League game (GM Leinier Dominguez – GM Grigoriy Oparin) earlier this year which I was not aware of.

16. Bf4 Bd6 17. Bg3

Giving me a bit of an initiative, although the game remains roughly level. The way to fight for an advantage was 17. Bxe5 Bxe5 18. Qh5.

17. ... Qh3! 18. Qe2 h5 19. Rf1 Rad8 20. Kh1 Ng4



21. Bxd6?

The correct defense is 21. f4 h4 22. Rf3! hxg3 23. Rxg3 Qxh2+ 24. Qxh2 Nxh2 25. e5 with equality. Zapata must have missed something here, as he relieved the tension prematurely.

21. ... Rxd6 22. f3 Ne5 23. Rad1?! Rfd8 24. Rxd6 Rxd6

Now I have full control of the d-file, and the threat of ... Rd2 forces White into further concessions.

25. Qg2 Qxg2+ 26. Kxg2 Nd3!

I certainly wanted no part of 26. ... Rd2+ 27. Rf2 Rxf2+ 28. Kxf2 Nd3+ 29. Ke3 Nxb2 30. Kd4. The b-pawn won't run away.

27. f4 Nxb2 28. e5 Rc6 29. Rf3 Kf8 30. f5 Nc4 31. e6 Ke7?!

Missing 31. ... Nd2 32. Rd3 Nxb3 33. Rd8+ Ke7 34. Rd7+ Ke8! 35. exf7+ Kf8, and the rook ending is hopeless for White.

32. exf7 Kxf7 33. Rh3! Kf6 34. Rxh5 Ne3+ 35. Kf3 Rxc3 36. Ke4 Nc4 37. Rh8 Nd6+ 38. Kf4 Rc1 39. Ra8 Rf1+ 40. Kg4 Rxf5?

That f-pawn could have waited too. 40. ... Ke5! 41. Rxa6 c5 threatens to trap the bishop and wins.



41. Rxa6 Rf2?

The final and worst error. With 41. ... Rc5, keeping the pawns together, Black should still win.

42. Rc6! Rxh2 43. Rxc7

Now the position was drawn, and I realized it. Zapata had put up a tough defense, and he was down to the last few seconds here, playing on increment. I started looking for a trap I could set.

43. ... Rd2 44. Rc5 Rd4+ 45. Kf3 b4 46. Ke3 Re4+ 47. Kd3 Re7 48. Rd5 Nf5 49. Rb5 Rd7+!



With ten seconds on the clock, White is in check and has to decide where to move the king. The problem is, any king move loses to a knight fork! So he has to go back with 50. Rd5!, and this draws!

Running out of options for the king (or maybe due to a mouse malfunction!), Alonso lost on time here. The all-important clock advantage (and a little bit of luck) helped me in the end.

... White lost on time.

Sergey opted for a quick draw with Black against me in the final round, and I took my second Senior title with 5½/6, a point ahead of Rohde, Zapata, Kudrin, IM Ron Burnett (one of my opponents in the first Denker 35 years ago!), and Kaufman.

On the night before all the invitationals, another tradition (I hope) was born: the Sunil Weeramantry National Blitz Tournament of State Champions! All the invitees could play in a blitz tournament together, split into three sections by rating.

In the top group, Checa finished first with 7 out of 9, followed by Hong, Balakrishnan, and me with 6½. Sandeep Sethuraman and Ryan Amburgy tied for first with 8 in the second group, and Kyle Ching won the third group.

It has been an honor for me to participate in the tradition that started with Arnold Denker and to report on it for you. I congratulate US Chess for organizing this online event. Thanks to Al Lawrence and the US Chess Trust for their sponsorship and support. Dewain Barber has worked tirelessly for American chess, and John D. Rockefeller V helped make the first Rockefeller event a success. I'd also like to thank our other key sponsors: American Chess Equipment, chess.com, ICC, Trophies Plus, Dwight Barber, the Ursula Foster family, Charles Unruh, Clifford and Rick Lester, Ralph Bowman, and Richard and Barbara Schiffrin. If I have omitted anyone, I apologize. It is unintentional.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work of the organizers and directors. Jon Haskel, chair of the Invitationals committee, put it all together. Judit Sztaray made sure everything was promptly announced and helped direct each tournament. Brian Yang and Danny Rohde ran the Denker and Rockefeller. John Rockefeller and Eric Vigil ran the Barber and Haring. Christina Schweiss ran the Senior (which couldn't have been easy since she had to teach some of us about modern technology!), assisted by Joe Jun.

While I hope that these online invitationals will be remembered fondly, I also hope they will be the last in this format. Here's to coming back to over-the-board play next year! ♠



MAKE YOUR MOVE!

OCTOBER 2020 | FM CARSTEN HANSEN

This month's tactical puzzles are once more taken from a mix of online events and some of the traditional events that are slowly but surely returning. I also included an endgame study with a nice tactical theme.

The puzzles start from easy and gradually move toward being difficult. Try first to solve the puzzle before reading the text under the diagram. If unsuccessful, play through the solution, but return to the puzzle in one or two weeks to see if you can now solve it. That way you gradually expand your tactical vision and it will be more likely that you will spot tactics as they occur in your own games. Whatever you do, do not use an engine to solve the puzzles, as that will only cheat yourself out of improving your game.

TACTIC I.



BLACK TO MOVE
HINT: SOFT PROTECTION

TACTIC II.



WHITE TO MOVE
HINT: NARROW SPACES

TACTIC III.



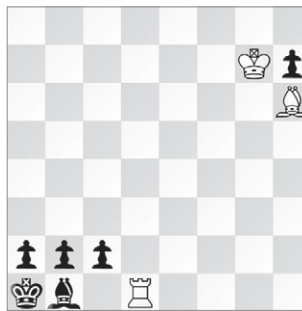
BLACK TO MOVE
HINT: THE KING IS STUCK

TACTIC IV.



WHITE TO MOVE
HINT: NOT ENOUGH DEFENDERS

TACTIC V.



WHITE TO MOVE
HINT: OPEN THE DIAGONAL

TACTIC VI.



WHITE TO MOVE
HINT: HACK A HOLE

TACTIC VII.



WHITE TO MOVE
HINT: PULL THE KING OUT TO DANCE

TACTIC VIII.



WHITE TO MOVE
HINT: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BLACK'S LACK OF COORDINATION

TACTIC IX.



WHITE TO MOVE
HINT: IDENTIFY BLACK'S WEAKNESSES, THEN STRIKE

Modern Theory

Databases from Modern Chess offer both new and tested ideas.

By IM JOHN WATSON

ONLINE CHESS PLAY HAS GROWN rapidly for many years, but chess publishing has in some respects been slow to follow. True, fans who crave news and tournaments find them on the internet, but nothing there has quite replaced the chess magazine for in depth coverage of events and reporting, or the chess book for serious theoretical work. Of late, however, electronic chess offerings like videos and databases are becoming both more numerous and increasingly competitive. They are not only being offered on an increasing number of platforms, but the quality of the material and authors is generally superior to what we were seeing just a few years ago.

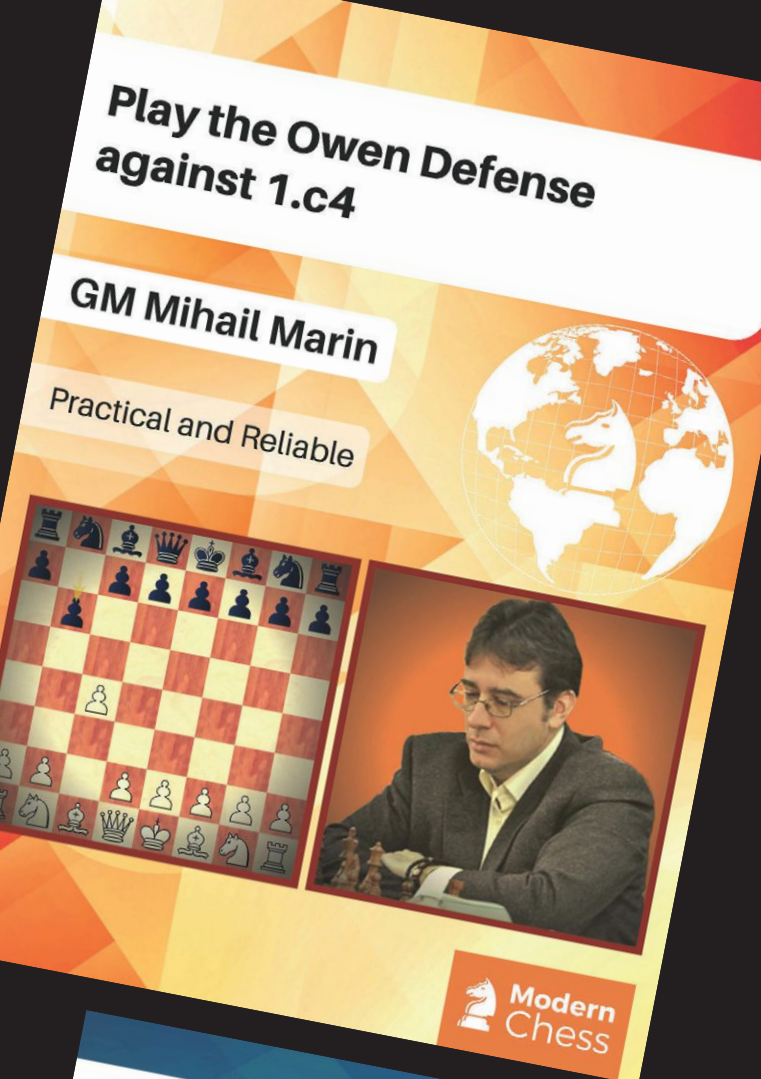
I've been using Modern Chess databases (www.modern-chess.com) for some time. These cover a variety of subjects, including middlegames, endings, a terrific series "Learn from the Classics," and, primarily, opening systems. The moves and notes can be played over online and/or downloaded in PGN format. The two products we discuss this month are also available in video lecture format.

Among the authors Modern Chess has employed multiple times are well-known players and theoreticians like GMs Mihail Marin, Boris Avrukh, Pavel Eljanov, Kiril Georgiev, Arturs Neikšans, Aleksander Delchev, Dasvorin Kuljasevic, Grigor Grigorov, and Robert Hungaski, and IM Robert Ris. Grandmaster Mihail Marin is one of world's preeminent chess writers, with a string of books, several award-winning, reaching back to at least 2003. Over the past few years, he has produced four endgame databases, five middlegame databases, and twenty-one opening databases for Modern Chess.

Marin's recent opening databases include the two-part *Play the Bogo-Indian Defense*, a three-part French Defense repertoire, and *Play the Open Spanish—Repertoire for Black*. He has now turned his attention to the Owen Defense versus the English Opening, i.e., 1. c4 b6. As he explains, "This database aims to offer a complete Owen repertoire against 1. c4 that avoids transpositions to the Queen's Indian or other main openings."

Move orders in the Owen are critical. Marin's main recommendation, 1. c4 b6 2. d4 Bb7, avoids the most important line that black players have struggled with over the years; i.e., 1. c4 b6 2. d4 e6 (this is the English Defense proper, which also arises via 1. d4 e6 2. c4 b6) 3. e4, when 3. ... Bb7 4. Bd3 is probably the only variation in which theory gives White the nod. Fortunately, Marin also has an excellent bonus section on the English Defense with improvements for Black in the 4. Bd3 systems, which means you can play the Owen or English Defense depending upon which White formations you want to face.

Let's look at a few variations. White has a wide variety of options.



1. c4 b6 2. d4 Bb7 3. Nc3 e6 4. a3 f5 is the longstanding “positional” solution, when 5. d5 Nf6 6. g3 Na6 7. Bg2 Nc5 is a complex and fascinating line used in hundreds of high-level games.



WHITE TO PLAY

It won't surprise you that this unbalanced position has been producing complex and original battles for many decades.

The variations with 4. e4 Bb4, which originally entranced the chess world during the “English Chess Explosion” days (late 1970s and 1980s) when GMs Tony Miles, Jon Speelman, Nigel Short, Raymond Keene, and James Plaskett were showing off its hypermodern eccentricities, are still going strong after thousands of games.



WHITE TO PLAY

Remarkably, in my biggest database, White's and Black's performance ratings in that position after all these years are identical to the point! Strange-looking lines like 5. Qc2 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Qh4! and 5. f3 f5 6. exf5 Nh6 still find advocates for both colors.

Marin has particularly useful analysis on a position other Owen/English Defense works tend to skimp on, beginning with the safe and sound move 4. Nf3 (after 1. c4 b6 2. d4 Bb7 3. Nc3 e6). Black can now enter a Nimzo-Indian with 4. ... Bb4 or a Queen's Indian with 4.

... Nf6, but Marin wants to give the game a unique Owen feel with the characteristic move 4. ... f5. No fewer than five games are devoted to analyzing this position in depth, with many original ideas.

I've played and taught the English Defense for years (even producing a short lecture series), and I learned a lot of new things from this work, including some clever move order tricks and a few strategies that I'd never seen before.

Another recent Modern Chess Offering is *Meet 1. Nf3 with 1. ... d5 - Complete Repertoire against 2. b3, 2. c4, 2. g3* by Yuriy Krykun, a 21-year-old Ukrainian FM (with two IM norms) who already has extensive experience in teaching and writing about chess. Despite his tender age, Krykun is already an experienced author, having made several videos for the site Chessable, and produced the database *Ambitious Repertoire against the Gruenfeld* for Modern Chess.

In this database and video, Krykun sets forth a repertoire for Black following 1. Nf3 d5, covering the three most common responses apart from 2. d4. He suggests meeting 2. b3 with 2. ... Bg4, a sort of reversed Trompowsky Opening (1. d4 Nf6 2. Bg5) but with White's extra move b2-b3. Can it be okay to be a tempo down? Yes: in the reversed Trompowsky position, Black plays ... c7-c5 and then either ... Qd8-Qb6 or ... Qd8-Qa5 with threats; but if White plays c2-c4 in this Owen Defense variation, the b3 pawn blocks the queen's path to b3 or a4. The line quickly moves into complex and uncharted territory.

Versus 1. Nf3 d5 2. c4, Krykun offers the more traditional 2. ... d4, a venerable Reti line, when he suggests meeting the fashionable 3. b4 with 3. ... Bg4. Then after 4. Qb3, Krykun likes 4. ... a5. And on 4. Ne5, 4. ... h5!? is a fun idea taken from the reversed Trompowsky position.

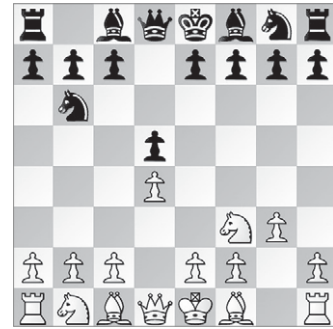


WHITE TO PLAY

As you might imagine, the players tend to be on their own at a very early stage in such positions, which makes for a refreshing change from traditional Reti Opening theory.

The most interesting part of the repertoire arises after 2. g3, when Krykun advocates the response 2. ... Nd7. Then 3. g3 e5 is a reversed Pirc Defense. He provides a good deal of analysis, but it's not surprising that Black has equal chances in such a solid position.

The really intriguing part arises after 2. g3 Nd7 3. d4, with the move 3. ... Nb6:



WHITE TO PLAY

Black takes two moves to place the knight on the traditionally suspect b6 square! Krykun describes its logic as follows: “This is the key fresh idea that was discovered just recently and that made me interested in creating this repertoire with 2. ... Nd7 at its core. Black firmly takes the c4-square under control and prepares the convenient development with ... Bf5 and ... e7-e6. This way, he would have no bad pieces, his bishop won't be locked in. At the same time, White won't be able to play c2-c4 easily.”

It's not surprising that the top players as White have chosen this line to contest. There aren't that many games with this position, but they are almost all recent, and by strong GMs such as Alireza Firouzja, Andrey Episenko, Kirill Alekseenko, and Matthias Bluebaum.

These videos and databases can be enjoyed by everyone, but the primary audience will be players looking to learn new openings in depth. My guess is that they would be particularly appealing for young players to study in a comfortable environment, i.e., on the computer with a chess-playing interface and video content. ♠

Marin, Mihail. Play the Owen Defense against 1. c4. *Modern Chess (June 2020) PGN and Video*. Runtime 2 Hours 18 Minutes. €19.90 for the database alone; €32.90 for database and video. Available at modern-chess.com.

Krykun, Yuriy. Meet 1. Nf3 with 1. ... d5 - Complete Repertoire against 2.b3, 2.c4, 2.g3. *Modern Chess (June 2020) PGN and Video*. Runtime 1 Hour 46 Minutes. €19.90 for the database alone; €32.90 for database and video. Available at modern-chess.com.

Avoiding the Endgame

You'd avoid trading pieces too if you could attack like David Janowski.

By **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**

DAVID JANOWSKI (1868-1927) WAS A Russian-born French master known for his creativity in attack and sharp tactical play. He could on occasion beat the world's top masters, but was inconsistent, with wide swings in the quality of his performances. His biggest weakness was the endgame. He simply didn't like that phase of chess at all. But given the initiative and a team of active pieces, Janowski was dangerous. In this month's game against O. Chajes (Black) played in New York in 1916, we get a sense for Janowski's flair for the attack.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED (D66)

David Janowski

Oscar Chajes

Rice Memorial, New York, 02.1916

1. e4 Nf6 2. Nf3 d5 3. c4 e6 4. Bg5 Be7 5. e3 Nbd7 6. Nc3 c6 7. Bd3 dxc4 8. Bxc4 b5



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 White'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 White's move is on the next line. **

9. Bd3 **Par Score 5**

Accept *full credit* for 9. Bb3.

9. ... **a6**

Now that b5 is secure, Black can follow with ... c6-c5. **

10. O-O **Par Score 5**

With his king safely castled, Janowski can pursue his real love: the attack!

10. ... **c5**

Black strives for play against White's center. **

11. Rc1 **Par Score 5**

Placing the rook on the open c-file is natural in such positions.

11. ... **Bb7**

At b7, the queen-bishop can get meaningful action along the a8-h1 diagonal. **

12. Qe2 **Par Score 5**

Janowski clears d1 for the f1-rook.

12. ... **O-O**

The position is about even, with White having a slight playing edge. **

13. Rfd1 **Par Score 5**

The rook is well positioned here to support the d-pawn and fighting up the line.

13. ... **Qb6**

Black removes the queen from a potential discovery and pin along the d-file. **

14. Ne5 **Par Score 6**

White threatens to win a piece.

14. ... **Rfe8**

This defends the bishop and neutralizes the threat. **

15. dxc5 **Par Score 6**

White opens the d-file with a gain of time.

15. ... **Nxc5**

Possibly better was 15. ... Qxc5. Black now runs into a little trouble. **

16. Bxf6 **Par Score 6**

White removes the guard for h5.

16. ... **Bxf6**

Even worse would have been 16. ... gxf6. Add *1 bonus point* for realizing that either 17. Qh5 or 17. Qg4+ force a win. **

17. Bxh7+ **Par Score 7**

No way Janowski would miss this shot.

17. ... **Kxh7**

Add *1 bonus point* if you had planned to answer 17. ... Kh8 by 18. Qh5. **

18. Qh5+ **Par Score 5**

At the very least, White has a perpetual check.

18. ... **Kg8****

19. Qxf7+ **Par Score 5**

ABCs of Chess

These problems are all related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, **Black is to move**. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 59.

October Exercise: It's hard to avoid games with an isolated queen pawn. So it makes sense to practice playing with it and against it. Using chess software, find a roughly balanced isolated queen pawn situation and begin taking either side of the bet. Playing against it, try to restrain the pawn's movement, blockade the square in front of it, and pile up the pressure on it. When playing with it, try to occupy your strong points and possibly advance the pawn at key moments. Do this pro-and-con exercise enough and you will certainly come away with a greater understanding of the isolated queen-pawn theme in practical play.

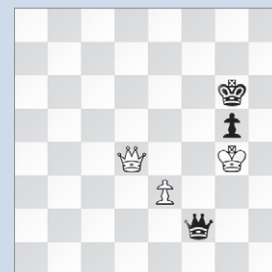
PROBLEM I. Mating net



PROBLEM II. Mating net



PROBLEM III. Mating net



PROBLEM IV. Mating net



PROBLEM V. Mating net



PROBLEM VI. Mating net



Clearly, White has a perpetual. Does he have better? Let's see.

19. ... **Kh7**

It turns out that 19. ... Kh8 afforded much better chances of holding.**



20. **Nd7** **Par Score 6**

This leaves Black practically no choice.

20. ... **Nxd7****

21. **Rxd7** **Par Score 5**

Doubling on the seventh rank is crushing. One threat is Qxf6.

21. ... **Bc6**

Black hopes the attack on the rook will gain time to defend.**

22. **Ne4** **Par Score 6**

A nice centralization. Accept *1 bonus point*

if you saw 22. ... Bxd7 23. Nxf6+, with mate next.

22. ... **Bxb2**

Black gets the bishop out of attack, while keeping g7 defended.**

23. **Ng5+** **Par Score 5**

Black's king is forced out into the open.

23. ... **Kh6****



24. **g4** **Par Score 6**

White threatens immediate mate at h5. If 24. ... Kxg5, the simplest mate is 25. Qh5+ Kf6 26. Rf7 mate (*1 bonus point*).

24. ... **g6**

Chajes tries to block out the White queen.**

25. **h4** **Par Score 6**

With the knight defended, White is once

again threatening mate.

25. ... **Rh8**

This doesn't stop it.**

26. **Qh7+** **Par Score 6**

It is mate next move.

26. ... **Black resigned** ♠

Did you know you could read archival copies of "Solitaire Chess" (and all columns and features)? Go to uschess.org, click on "Chess Life Magazine," and then "Archives."

TOTAL YOUR SCORE TO DETERMINE YOUR APPROXIMATE RATING BELOW:

Total Score	Approx. Rating
95+	2400+
81-94	2200-2399
66-80	2000-2199
51-65	1800-1999
36-50	1600-1799
21-35	1400-1599
06-20	1200-1399
0-05	under 1200



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US CHESS



National Events

Note: Tournament memberships not valid for National events

See TLA in this issue for details

2020 (61st Annual) U.S. Armed Forces Chess Championship October 10-12 • Virginia Beach, Virginia

2020 U.S. Class Championships - Virginia October 30-November 1 or October 31-November 1 • Dulles, Virginia

CANCELED: 2020 U.S. Game/10 Championship December 18 • Charlotte, North Carolina

CANCELED: 2020 U.S. Game/30 Championship December 19 • Charlotte, North Carolina

CANCELED: 2020 U.S. Game/60 Championship December 20 • Charlotte, North Carolina

FUTURE EVENTS (Watch for details)

2020 K-12 Grade Championships December 11-13 • Orlando, Florida

CANCELED: 2020 Pan-American Intercollegiate Team Championship December 27-30 • Toronto, Canada

2021 All-Girls National Championships April 23-25 • Chicago, Illinois

2021 SuperNationals VII May 7-9 • Nashville, Tennessee

2021 U.S. Junior Open Championship June 4-6 • Pomona, California

2021 U.S. Senior Open Championship June 4-6 • Pomona, California

2021 National Open June 16-20 • Las Vegas, Nevada

2021 U.S. Women's Open June 17-18 • Las Vegas, Nevada

122nd annual (2021) U.S. Open July 31-August 8 • Cherry Hill, New Jersey

2021 K-12 Grade Championships December 3-5 • Orlando, Florida

2022 National High School (K-12) Championship April 8-10 • Memphis, Tennessee

2022 National Junior High School (K-9) Championship April 29-May 1 • Grapevine, Texas

2022 National Elementary School (K-6) Championship May 13-15 • Columbus, Ohio

123rd annual (2022) U.S. Open July 30-August 7 • Rancho Mirage, California

2022 K-12 Grade Championships December 9-11 • National Harbor, Maryland

2023 National High School (K-12) Championship March 31-April 2 • Washington, District of Columbia

2023 National Junior High School (K-9) Championship April 21-23 • Round Rock, Texas

2023 National Elementary School (K-6) Championship May 12-14 • Baltimore, Maryland

124th annual (2023) U.S. Open July 29-August 6 • Grand Rapids, Michigan

2023 K-12 Grade Championships December 15-17 • Washington, District of Columbia

2024 National Elementary School (K-6) Championship April 26-28 • Columbus, Ohio

2024 National Junior High School (K-9) Championship May 10-12 • Atlanta, Georgia

125th annual (2024) U.S. Open July 27-August 4 • Norfolk, Virginia

2024 K-12 Grade Championships December 6-8 • National Harbor, Maryland

Bids

Note: Organizers previously awarded options for US Chess National Events must still submit proposals (including sample budgets) for their events.

OVERDUE BIDS

Please contact the National Office if you are interested in bidding for a National Event. US Chess recommends that bids be submitted according to the following schedule. However, bids may be considered prior to these dates. US Chess reserves the right to decline all bids and organize the event itself.

For our expanded list of national events available for bid, see: www.uschess.org/content/view/12116/705/.

RATING SUPPLEMENTS

Rating supplements will be updated EACH MONTH on the US Chess website, and each monthly rating supplement will be used for all tournaments beginning in that month, unless otherwise announced in *Chess Life*. The US Chess website at www.uschess.org also frequently lists unofficial ratings. The purpose of unofficial ratings is to inform you of your progress; however, most tournaments do not use them for pairing or prize purposes. If you would otherwise be unrated, organizers may use your unofficial rating at their discretion, even without advance publicity of such a policy.

NOTE

The TLA pages "Information for Organizers, TDs, and Affiliates" and "Information for Players" can now be found online at main.uschess.org/go/tlainfo.

PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS HEALTH AND BENEFITS FUND

Many Grand Prix tournament organizers will contribute \$1 per player to the Professional Health & Benefits Fund. All Grand Prix tournaments which participate in this program are entitled to be promoted to the next higher Grand Prix category—for example, a six-point tournament would become a 10-point (Enhanced) tournament. Points in the top category are promoted 50%.

ATTENTION AFFILIATES

US Chess has partnered with R.V. Nuccio & Associates Insurance Brokers, Inc. to provide US Chess affiliates with affordable annual liability and short term event insurance. The liability coverage is available for approximately \$265 per year for a \$1,000,000 limit of insurance. Also available is contents property and bonding insurance. For more information, please go to www.rvnuccio.com/chess-federation.html. For event insurance, please go to www.rvnuccio.com.

Nationals

A Heritage Event!

OCT. 10-12, 2020 (61st Annual) U.S. Armed Forces Chess Championship (5-SS FIDE G/2+30)

G/2, +30 (increment 30 seconds/move), FIDE-rated. USCF Ratings will be used for pairing purposes. HUBZone HQ, 1591 Dahlia Dr., Ste. 103, Virginia Beach, VA 23453. Website: <https://usarmedforceschess.org>. Due to pandemic-related factors, this year's venue is off-base. Venue restrictions limit the number of players to 20. USCF MCC player selection criteria: 12 slots are reserved for the Top 3 rated applicants from each service (USA, USN, USAF and USMC) who apply on or before Labor Day (Monday 7 SEP). Remaining 8 slots plus any of the unfilled 12 service slots will be assigned to other applicants based on their highest USCF regular ratings. List of participants will be finalized on Friday 11 SEP 2020 to allow sufficient time for selectees to make travel plans. U.S. Active Duty, Reservists, Military Retirees, Cadets, Midshipmen, and ROTC who have a USCF membership may apply. **Entries and additional information:** tbelle@hubzonehq.com. **EF:** Free! **Prizes:** Trophies/Plaques to Top 3 overall players, Top player of each DoD service on Active Duty, Top Reservist, Top Retiree, Top class A, B-and-below, Highest Upset, Best Sacrifice and various special prizes. If there are at least 2 class C entries, the class prizes will be revised to A, B, and C-and-below. Top Team member plaques to the top 3 scoring members of the winning military service team: USCF Rollins team scoring points system applies. **Reg:** Advance registrations only on the website **On-site check-in:** 0800-0845 Rds.: Sat. 0900-1500; 0900-1500; 0900. All participants must have a Military ID Card as it is required at check-in for the tournament. Participation is voluntary and all participants must sign a pandemic contact sports liability waiver. **Byes:** A single half-point bye is available and must be requested 30 minutes before Round 2. Byes for rounds 3, 4 & 5 may not be changed after the start of round 2. **Billeting:** None. Include room-sharing request with your e-entry. **Hotel:** See hotel information on the website. **Info:** For all other questions contact CAPT Tom Belke, USN (ret.) at tbelle@hubzonehq.com. Boards, sets and clocks provided. **FIDE. W.**

The Executive Board authorizes a temporary change in the US Chess Grand Prix (GP) rules for the period March 4, 2020 through October 31, 2020 out of concern for the unforeseeable impacts the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) could have on participation in GP events. The change allows organizers with guaranteed prize funds to change the status of their prize fund without first seeking US Chess permission to make the change. More specifically, organizers who have announced "\$XXX in Guaranteed prizes" (or similar words) for their GP events shall be allowed to re-state their prize funds in their publicity as "\$XXX in Projected prizes based on ### players," where ### represents the number of players in last year's event rounded to the nearest five players. For new GP events lacking historical attendance data, the organizer shall specify a "based on" number of players as part of the Projected Prize Fund language in their publicity. This decision includes all GP tournaments that already have been advertised in *Chess Life*. For any GP events being publicly advertised (whether by TLA, another website, flyers, emails, social media, etc.), organizers shall take all necessary steps to ensure their revised pre-tournament announcements call attention to this change in prize fund status and provide the appropriate "Projected based on XXX players" in the language of their updated publicity. US Chess asks that the chess community support this temporary change in the spirit that it is intended. The Executive Board shall revisit this matter as necessary.

The Tournament Announcements on the following pages are provided for the convenience of US Chess members and for informational purposes only. Unless expressly indicated otherwise, neither US Chess nor *Chess Life* warrants the accuracy of anything contained in these tournament announcements. Those interested in additional information about or having questions concerning any of these tournaments are directed to contact the organizer listed. *Chess Life* will exercise all due diligence in providing accurate typesetting of non-camera-ready copy but assumes no responsibility for errors made in such work.

Effective with TLAs submitted after November 10, 2010, the following additional rules apply to Grand Prix tournaments: 1) The guaranteed first prize must be at least \$150. 2) No more than one prize under \$100 may count towards the Grand Prix point total. 3) Prizes below the maximum entry fee do not count towards the Grand Prix point total. Also include full time control noting increment or time delay even if delay is zero (d0).

US Chess Junior Grand Prix: A Junior Grand Prix event must have four or more rounds with a time control greater than 65 min. Please see: www.uschess.org/data/page/JGP-Rules.php for complete Rules.

SUBMISSIONS: E-mail your TLA to: tl@uschess.org (Joan DuBois). For tla deadline schedule, formatting help and Grand Prix information check www.uschess.org/go/tlainfo and "Advertising" at uschess.org. Payment can be done online through the TD/Affiliate area or sent to: US Chess, TLA Dept., PO Box 3967, Crossville, TN 38557.

Note: US Chess Junior Grand Prix events do not have to necessarily be Scholastic or Youth tournaments. They do, however, have to have the required number of rounds and time control in order for scholastic and youth players to gain JGP points for prizes. For more information, please see the JGP rules at <http://www.uschess.org/datapage/JGP-Rules.php>.

Special Events: The Awards ceremony will be held immediately after Rd 5. **1st Annual Armed Forces Rapid Championship** will be held on Sat, 10/10 at 2130. (5-SS, G/12 inc. 3, FIDE). **The Armed Forces Blitz Championship** G/5 d0 will be held Sunday 10/11 at 2130 (double 5-SS, G/5 d0, USCF-rated only). See the website for details.

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

OCT. 30-NOV. 1 OR OCT. 31-NOV. 1, VIRGINIA

US CHES GRAND PRIX POINTS: 100 (ENHANCED)

2020 U.S. CLASS CHAMPIONSHIP - VIRGINIA

A VCF Cup Event! \$514,000 GTD (7 Sections). Washington Dulles Airport Marriott, 45020 Aviation Dr., Dulles, VA 20166. **Master to Class D Sections plays 3-day or 2-day, 5-SS. Class E/Unr plays 2-day only 6-SS. Master (FIDE):** \$2000-1000-500-300-200. **Expert (FIDE):** \$1400-800-400-200. **Unr limit \$200. Class A (FIDE):** \$1000-500-300-200. **Unr limit \$200. Class B:** \$800-400-300-200. **Unr limit \$200. Class C:** \$700-400-200-100. **Unr limit \$150. Class D:** \$600-300-200-100. **Unr limit \$150. Class E/Unr:** \$400-300-200. **Plaque/Trophy to the Class Champion in each section and Medals for Tied for 1st Place(s).** **Time Controls and Round Times: Master to Class D, 5-SS: 40/120; SD/30 d10 except Round 1 at G/120 d10 (3-day) OR Rds. 1 & 2 at G/60 d10 (2-day); 3-day: Fri 7:30pm, Sat 10am-4pm, Sun 10am-4pm. 2-day: Sat 10am-1pm, Merge with 3-day Rd. 3 at 4pm. Class E/Unr, 6-SS: 2-day only G/60 d10. Sat/Sun 10am-1pm-4pm. **Entry Fees:** Early Bird: \$95 by 9/15; Regular Entry fee: \$105 after 9/15 and before 10/16; Late Entry Fee: \$115 after 10/16 and before 10/29; \$125 after and onsite. **Byes:** Limit 2, must commit 1hr before Round 3 starts (by Sat 3pm). Except Rounds 4/5 in Master, Expert and Class A FIDE Sections must be declared prior to Round 1. **HR:** \$99/night by Oct 5th. Reservations <https://tinyurl.com/tk3b9x6> or 703-471-9500, mention chess tournament. More tournament information/Online registration: www.capitalareachess.com/2020USClass. Mail checks to: Capital Area Chess, 5116 Bebe Ct., Centerville, VA 20120. Email info only: AnandDommalapati@capitalareachess.com. Boards and sets provided in ALL sections. **Two Side Events: Sat US Class Scholastic 9am; Sat US Class Blitz 9:30pm.****

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), NORTH CAROLINA

US CHES GRAND PRIX POINTS: 10

CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/10 CHAMPIONSHIP (BLZ)

6 rounds, G/10 d0. Hilton Charlotte University Place Hotel, 8629 JM Keynes Road, Charlotte, NC - 704-547-7444 and mention chess tournament, or reserve online at www.charlottechesscenter.org/usblitzrapid. Hotel rooms \$109-\$109, reserve by December 1. Free parking, free internet. **\$1000 guaranteed prize fund** in one section. **G/10 National Championship:** \$300 - 200 - 100 - 50 - 25. **Unrated:** \$100 - 50 - 25 - 10 - 5. **Under 1600:** \$100 - 50 - 25 - 10 - 5. **G/10 National Championship (Charlotte):** GM Ilija Stokich, 2020 USCF rated, December USCF regular ratings used for pairings and prizes. Up to 2 byes available, request at registration. Rounds Friday 7:30pm then ASAP. **Registration:** \$30 online at www.charlottechesscenter.org/usblitzrapid or check mailed to Charlotte Chess Center, 10700 Kettering Drive, Suite E, Charlotte, NC 28226 by 12/15. \$40 after 12/15 or on-site. GMs, IMs, WGMs free, \$30 from prize. Boards and sets provided, please bring clocks. Info and registration: www.charlottechesscenter.org/usblitzrapid, grant@charlottechesscenter.org.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), NORTH CAROLINA

US CHES GRAND PRIX POINTS: 20

CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 CHAMPIONSHIP

5 rounds, G/30 d5. Hilton Charlotte University Place Hotel, 8629 JM Keynes Road, Charlotte, NC - 704-547-7444 and mention chess tournament, or reserve online at www.charlottechesscenter.org/usblitzrapid. Hotel rooms \$109-\$109, reserve by December 1. Free parking, free internet. **entry fee discount if also playing Sunday G/60 \$3000 - 2000 - 1000 - 500 - 250. Top Under 1600 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 1400 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 1200 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 1000 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 800 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 600 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 400 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 200 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 100 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 50 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 25 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 10 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 5 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 2 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. Under 1 \$1000 - 500 - 250 - 100 - 50. 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2 (12:45 pm), Rd. 3 (3:00 pm), Rd. 4 merge with regular schedule – (6:00 pm). Byes available any round if requested by Rd.1 (Open Section 2 byes max). ENT: make checks payable and send to: SANDS REGENCY (address listed above), postmarked by 9/18. \$11 late fee if postmarked after 9/18. Do not mail after 10/9 or email after 10/13. \$22 late fee at site. HR: (Sun-Thurs. \$65.30) (Fri. & Sat. \$106.16) 1-866-386-7829 Reservation Code: CHESS1020 (Reserve by 10/5/20 to get Chess rate. Under 21 years of age must check in with an adult. ALL prize winners (including juniors attending with parents) must have photo i.d. to collect prize money at site. ***Neither the tournament director(s) nor the Sands Regency will be held liable for any player/spectator whose health may be compromised by attending the tournament. In addition, masks will be required to be worn for the tournament based on State/Government Covid19 regulations.*** INFO: Jerry Weikel, 6578 Valley Wood Dr., Reno, NV 89523, (H) 775-747-1405 or (Cell) 775-354-8728 (AFTER 10/15/20 please call cell number ONLY or the Sands Regency), wackyyl@aol.com or check out our website at: www.reno.chess.org. To verify entry and review the Health and Safety Protocols for the tournament check Reno Chess website.

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

OCT. 20-25, MISSOURI

US CHESS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 200 (ENHANCED)

14TH ANNUAL SPICE CUP OPEN

9SS, G/90 + inc/30 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel St. Louis – Chesterfield, 16625 Swingley Ridge Road, Chesterfield, MO 63017. **\$15,500 in prizes – all guaranteed. GM and IM norms possible.** One Section, minimum 2000 FIDE or 2199 USCF to play. FIDE ratings used for pairings and prizes. **G.** \$5000-3000-2000-1500-1000- Top U2450 \$400-200-100 Top U2300 \$400-200-100. Special prizes (which can be won in addition to place or class prize): Top Woman/ Top Junior (born after 1/1/2005)/ Top Senior (born before 1/1/1970) \$300-200 in each category. Brilliance prize \$100. Limited free hotel accommodation at event hotel for 2500+ GMs. All equipment provided. **EF:** Free to GMs, IMs, WGMs, WIMs (must complete all 9 rounds). Foreign FIDE-rated players/US FIDE Masters/US 2300+ \$100 by 9/15, \$125 by 10/13, \$150 later or on onsite. US players 2200-2299 FIDE, \$150 9/15, \$175 by 10/13, \$200 later or on onsite. US players 2100-2199 FIDE, \$200 9/15, \$225 by 10/13, \$250 later or on onsite. US players 2000-2099 FIDE, \$300 9/15, \$350 by 10/13, \$400 later or on onsite. **Schedule:** Reg. ends Tue 2pm, rds. 10/20 5pm, 10/21 & 22 10am & 5pm, 10/23 5pm, 10/24 10am & 5pm 10/25 10am **HR:** \$119 (for King room) or \$129 (for 2 doubles) including FREE excellent full hot buffet breakfast, internet & parking. DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel St. Louis – Chesterfield. For reservations call 800-315-5459 and use "SPICE Cup" code. **Ent:** Webster University SPICE 314-246-8075, chess@webster.edu 470 E. Lockwood Ave., St. Louis, MO 63119. More info @ www.webster.edu/spice/spicecup Special rules and procedures to ensure the safety of all players will be announced soon on the website.

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

OCT. 23-25 OR 24-25, GEORGIA

US CHESS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 20

CANCELED: ATLANTA CLASS CHAMPIONSHIPS

5-SS, Interactive College of Technology, 5227 New Peachtree Rd., Chamblee, GA 30341. **\$3000 guaranteed.** 5 sections. **"Master/Expert (FIDE-rated):"** Open to USCF or FIDE-rated 2000 and Above. \$500-250; Under 2200, \$225-125. **Class "A:"** Open to USCF-rated 1800 thru 1999. \$400-200. **Class "B:"** Open to USCF-rated 1600 thru 1799. \$300-150. **Class "C:"** Open to USCF-rated 1400 thru 1599. \$250-125. **Class "D/Below:"** Open to USCF-rated below 1400 and Unrated. \$200-100; Under 1200, \$100-75. **Class "D"** thru "A" rated players may elect to enter the next higher section. **Entry Fee:** \$74 (3-Day), \$73 (2-Day) — if received by October 22; \$79 at site. (W)GMs and WIMs: \$40 (not available for 2-day). **Time controls:** 7:00-10:00am & 3:30pm-7:30pm; SUN 10:00am & 3:30pm. **Time controls:** "Master/Expert" Section: 40/90, SD/30, d10. All other sections: G/120, d10. All sections: 2-day Schedule, Rd. 1 G/90, d10. (SAT 10:30am round is not "FIDE-rated"). **½-Pt. Byes:** Available any round (limit two) — requests required before Round One (no changes afterwards). **Players Must Bring Sets, Boards, and Clocks** — None Are Supplied By The Tournament Promoters. **Entries and Information:** americanchesspromotions.com, (478) 973 — 9389. PHONE CALLS ONLY AFTER OCTOBER 22 — no e-mails or TEXT messages, please.

OCT. 23-25 OR 24-25, NEW JERSEY

US CHESS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 30 (ENHANCED)

CANCELED: 24TH ANNUAL EASTERN CHESS CONGRESS

5SS, Hyatt Regency Princeton, in 7 sections. **Premier Section** (1900/up): Minimum \$5 500-300-200. Details: www.chessevents.us.

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

OCT. 24-25, TEXAS

US CHESS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 20 (ENHANCED)

2020 DCC FIDE OPEN II (RESCHEDULED FROM MAY 9-10)

5SS, G/90 inc/30. Embassy Suites Dallas – Park Central, 13131 North Central Expressway, Dallas, TX 75243. HR \$119. Mention Chess **Open:** \$5875G. FIDE and US Chess rated but uses FIDE rules. Use US Chess ratings and rules for pairings and for awarding prizes. Default late forfeiture time is one hour. TD may extend this time at TD's discretion. Note that Foreign players must disclose their FIDE ID number before 1st round in order to play. Note that USA Players with no FIDE ID must disclose their email address. \$5 \$500-250-\$125. **EF:** 2400+ \$125, U2400 \$99, Senior/Birthday during tournament/Additional Family Member \$60. Small Minimum prize to the First three GM/IM's who apply. GM/IM must play all rounds to get minimum prize (entry fee may be deducted from prize). **Reg:** Saturday from 9:45-10:15 am. Rds.: Sat 10:45 am-3:10pm-7:16pm, Sun 9:45 am-2:10pm. One half point Bye allowed if requested before end of round 2 and before getting full point bye. Withdrawals and zero-point last round byes are not eligible for prizes. Due to social distancing, the occupancy of the ballroom may be met and registrations may be cut off. So, register early. Online registration strongly recommended and no onsite

registration. Register at www.dallascchess.com Make/mail Checks payable to Dallas Chess Club, C/O Barbara Swafford, 2709 Longhorn Trail, Crowley, TX 76036-4719. Info: 214-632-9000. FIDE.

OCT. 30-NOV. 1 OR OCT. 31-NOV. 1, VIRGINIA

US CHESS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 100 (ENHANCED)

2020 U. S. CLASS CHAMPIONSHIP - VIRGINIA

See Nationals.

OCT. 31, VIRGINIA

US CHESS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 10 (ENHANCED)

2020 U. S. CLASS FIDE BLITZ! (BLZ)

Side Event to the 2020 U. S. Class Championship. Washington Dulles Airport Marriott, 45020 Aviation Dr., Dulles, VA 20166. 2 Sections. **Open:** G/5 d0; 5-SS Double. **\$5500 GTD** \$200-150-100-50. **U1800** (b/16): \$150-75-50. **EF:** \$30 by Oct 30th online, Onsite \$35 by 9:15pm. Rounds start 9:30pm. Max 1 byes allowed at entry. More information/Online registration: www.capitalareachess.com/2020USClass

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), NORTH CAROLINA

US CHESS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 10

CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/10 CHAMPIONSHIP (BLZ)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), NORTH CAROLINA

US CHESS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 20

CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 CHAMPIONSHIP

See Nationals.

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), NORTH CAROLINA

US CHESS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 20

CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/60 CHAMPIONSHIP

See Nationals.

Regional

ALABAMA

OCT. 23-25 OR 24-25, CANCELED: 2020 Atlanta Class Championships (GA)

See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

CALIFORNIA, NORTHERN

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

COLORADO

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

DEC. 5-6, Winter Springs Open - Manitou Springs, CO

4-SS. Time Control G/90 with 30 seconds increment. Manitou Springs City Hall, 606 Manitou Ave., Manitou Springs. **Section:** June (open), July (U1800 & Unrated), August (U1400 and Unrated) **EF:** \$40 if rec'd by 12/2, \$45 at site. \$5 discount members of Colorado State Chess Assn. Additional \$5 discount for Supporting Members of Colorado Springs Chess Club. **Cash prizes** per entries. Second day Byes must be requested before Round 1. **Register:** 8:30 – 9:30 AM. **Rounds:** 10 AM, 2:30 PM both days. **Entries to:** Richard Buchanan, 1 Sutherland Rd., Manitou Springs, CO 80829. **Information:** (719) 685-1984 or buckpeace@pcisys.net

CONNECTICUT

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

FLORIDA

Boca Raton Chess Club

Friday night tournament games, one game a week for 4 weeks. www.bocachess.com, 561-302-4377.

OCT. 23-25 OR 24-25, CANCELED: 2020 Atlanta Class Championships (GA)

See Grand Prix.

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/10 Championship (BLZ) (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/60 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

GEORGIA

OCT. 23-25 OR 24-25, CANCELED: 2020 Atlanta Class Championships

See Grand Prix.

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/10 Championship (BLZ) (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships

CANCELED

TOURNAMENT LIFE: ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS

All tournaments are non-smoking with no computers allowed unless otherwise advertised.

BLZ: Blitz rated.

QC: Quick Chess events.

\$\$Gtd: Guaranteed prizes.

\$\$b/x: Based-on prizes, x = number of entries needed to payfull prize fund. At least 50% of the advertised prize fund of \$501 or more must be awarded.

Bye: Indicates which rounds players who find it inconvenient to play may take 1/2-point byes instead. For example, Bye 1-3 means 1/2-point byes are available in Rounds 1 through 3.

CC: Chess club.

dx: Time delay, x = number of seconds.

+xx: Time increment, xx = number of seconds added after each move.

EF: Entry fee.

Ent: Where to mail entries.

FIDE: Results submitted to FIDE for possible rating.

G/: Game in. For instance, G/75 means each side has 75 minutes for the entire game.

GPP: Grand Prix Points available.

HR: Hotel rates. For example, 60-65-70-75 means \$60 single, \$65 twin, \$70/3 in room, \$75/4 in room.

JGP: Junior Grand Prix.

Memb. req'd: Membership required; cost follows. Usually refers to state affiliate.

Open: A section open to all. Often has very strong players, but some eligible for lower sections can play for the learning experience.

Quad: 4-player round robin sections; similar strength players.

RBO: Rated Beginner's Open.

Rds: Rounds; scheduled game times follow. For example, 11-5, 9-3 means games begin 11 a.m. & 5 p.m. on the first day, 9 a.m. & 3 p.m. on the second day.

Reg: Registration at site.

RR: Round robin (preceded by number of rounds).

SD/: Sudden-death time control (time for rest of game follows). For example, 30/90, SD/1 means each player must make 30 moves in 90 minutes, then complete the rest of the game in an hour.

SS: Swiss-System pairings (preceded by number of rounds).

Unr: Unrated.

W: Site is accessible to wheelchairs.

WEB: Tournaments that will use a player's online rating.

onships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)
See North Carolina.

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/60 Championship (NC)
See Nationals.

IDAHO

NOV. 7, 14, 21, 28, 2020 November Chandra Alexis Chess Club A6028577

at Blue Pencil White Pawn, 7337 Northview St., Suite 4, Boise, ID 83704. Saturday rated 4/SS G/60 d5. **EF:** \$25, \$200/b 10 or 80% if < 10, 9 am-8 pm. **Reg.:** chandraalexischessclub.org. Reg ends Fri 8 pm. 1st 12 players only. FIDE Arbiter-USA George Lundy (208) 375-1211.

ILLINOIS

OCT. 30-NOV. 1, Midwest Holiday Class

6-SS. At the Embassy Suites O'Hare 5500 North River Rd., Rosemont, IL 60018. In 5 Sections. Time Control of G/90 + 30i [2-day for rds 1 & 2 is G/61 + 5i] **EF:** \$98 if by 10/15/20, \$108 if by 10/25, \$120 after. \$40 off for players in D/E/U section. Prizes [\$2950 b/60] **M/X** [1900 & higher] 275-200, U2100 225. **A** [1700-1999] 250-170, U1910 140. **B** [1500-1799] 250-170, U1710 140. **C** [1300-1599] 250-170, U1510 140. **D/E/U** [U1400 & Unrated] 150-110, U1100 100, U900/Unr 90. \$30 for biggest upset Rd 2/3 in **M/X, A, B, & C** ALL: 2 half point byes available, w/entry. NO playing up. MASKS REQUIRED & limited to 68 players. Rd times 7:30, [2-day rds 1 & 2 at 9:10-11:20] 9-2:15-7:30, 9:30-2. FREE box lunch on Saturday. FREE raffle prizes. Hotel rate of \$99 per night [code MHC] until 10/13. Validated parking ONLY in Embassy Suites lot. Info & registration online at www.kingregistration.com/midwestholidayclass. Organizer: All Americas Chess, allamericaschess@gmail.com; Phone: 630-834-2477. Website: <http://kingregistration.com>

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

NOV. 7-8, Caveman First Weekend Club #3

Ramada Plaza Chicago North Shore, 1090 South Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling, IL 60090. 5SS, G/80+30. 2 sections based on published rating **Open:** 1800 & up, **Reserve Under 1800.** Details & entry info: @ <https://www.cavemanchess.com/events-and-tournaments>. Due to COVID-19, tournament planning is challenging, & tournaments may be reconfigured up to 1 week before the event or canceled. Enter online only. We will email you if there is a change & provide you an updated entry or an opportunity for a full refund. 100% refund if we cancel. Please follow the url above & <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cavemanchess/> for updated information. Also see our COVID rules: <https://www.cavemanchess.com/coronavirus-impact>

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

DEC. 12-13, Caveman First Weekend (Oops-actually the 2nd weekend) Club #4

Ramada Plaza Chicago North Shore, 1090 South Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling, IL 60090. 5SS, G/80+30. 2 sections based on published rating **Open:** 1800 & up, **Reserve Under 1800.** Details & entry info: @ <https://www.cavemanchess.com/events-and-tournaments>. Due to COVID-19, tournament planning is challenging, & tournaments may be reconfigured up to 1 week before the event or canceled. Enter online only. We will email you if there is a change & provide you an updated entry or an opportunity for a full refund. 100% refund if we cancel. Please follow the url above & <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cavemanchess/> for updated information. Also see our COVID rules: <https://www.cavemanchess.com/coronavirus-impact>

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)
See North Carolina.

INDIANA

A Heritage Event!

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

A State Championship Event!

NOV. 20-22 OR 21-22 (NOT JULY 24-26 OR 25-26), 79th

Annual Indiana State Chess Championship - New Date

Waterfront Hotel and Conference Ctr., 2930 Waterfront Pkwy W. Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46214, 317-299-8400. **HR:** \$79, **Prize Fund:** \$2050(b/60) in two sections. **OPEN(Over 1699):** 5/SS, G/100 +30s. (2Day Opt Rd.1 G/40; d5). Prizes: \$300+plaque(IN. Residents only), \$230, X \$200, A \$200, Senior, Female \$50 ea. **Reserve (U1800):** 5/SS, G/80 +30s (2Day Opt Rd.1 G/40; d5) \$295+plaque(IN. Residents only), \$220, C \$195, D/U \$195 Senior, Female \$50 ea. **Rnds:** Fri 7, Sat 11, 4, Sun. 10, 4; (2-day Rd1 Sat 9 then MERGE). **REG:** 3day Fri.6-6:45, 2day Sat.8-8:45, 1/2pt bye available Rd.1-4. **EF:** \$70 by 11/17, \$85 onsite, Reentry \$30. **\$5 discount to ISCA members, ENTRIES:** Go to indianachess.org or mail to Craig Hines, 613 North Park Dr., Evansville, IN 47710 with checks payable to ISCA. **ISCA MEMBERSHIP MTG:** 11/22 at 2:30pm.

MARYLAND

MARYLAND CHESS TOURNAMENTS

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 week-ends. See www.MDChess.org for tournament announcements, registration for tournaments, updated wallcharts, live standings, signup for K-12 & open e-newsletters, lists of coaches & clubs, camp announcements, & news. K-12 MD players who compete

in the Varsity section (for players rated 1600+) of 1 of 8+ annual MD-Sweet-16 Qualifiers can qualify for the \$48,000+ scholarship to the University of Maryland, Baltimore County awarded annually. UMBC is a perennial top-10 contender for the collegiate national chess championship.

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), CANCELED: U.S. G/10 Championship (BLZ) (NC)
See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 Championship (NC)
See Nationals.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)
See North Carolina.

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/60 Championship (NC)
See Nationals.

MASSACHUSETTS

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)
See North Carolina.

MISSOURI

OCT. 20-25, 14th Annual SPICE Cup Open

See Grand Prix.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)
See North Carolina.

NEVADA

OCT. 16-18, CANCELED: 38th Annual Sands Regency Reno - Western State Open - Open Section FIDE Rated - NEVADA
See Grand Prix.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)
See North Carolina.

NEW JERSEY

OCT. 23-25 OR 24-25, CANCELED: 24th annual Eastern Chess Congress.
See Grand Prix.



THANK YOU TO OUR BENEFACTORS



Thank you for being the sustaining force behind all our initiatives, and for making all of our programs possible.

US Chess Benefactor Members as of July 30, 2020:

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US CHESS

A State Championship Event!**NOV. 22, New Jersey K-12 Grade Championships**

5SS, G/25 d5. Brookdale College, 765 Newman Springs Rd., Lincroft, NJ 07738. Student Life Center, use Parking Lot #7 or #6; 4 miles from Garden State Parkway exit 109. **13 Sections:** Play only in your grade! Grades K-12: Trophies to top 10 individuals, top 3 teams - top 3 from each school/grade; 50% of players receive trophy or medal! **Rds.:** 10am and ASAP. **EF:** \$35 by 11/15, \$55 at site. USCF mem req'd. **Reg.:** 8-9:00am After 9:00am 1/2 pt bye rd 1. **Info:** 732 259-3881, Halsprechman@gmail.com **Ent:** Please make checks payable to NJSCF and send to Hal Sprechman, 66 Cromwell Lane, Jackson, NJ 08527. Entries must include name, grade school, date of birth, USCF ID # & expiration, mailing address, phone number & entry fee, please include email address. Register online at: www.njscf.org until 7pm 11/21.

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/10 Championship (BLZ) (NC)
See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 Championship (NC)
See Nationals.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Chanted (NC)
See North Carolina.

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/60 Championship (NC)
See Nationals.

NEW YORK**US Chess Junior Grand Prix!**

OCT. 8, 15, 22, 29, NOV. 5, 10th LICC Fall Open

5SS, G/90 d5. United Methodist Church, 470 East Meadow Ave., East Meadow, NY 11554. **Open to all. \$(b/20 pd. ent.):** \$110-90. Top U-2000, U-1500/unr. \$60 ea. **EF:** \$35. Non-LICC members +\$10. UNRATED FREE! **Reg.:** 6:45 - 7:15 PM, no adv. ent., **Rds.:** 7:30 PM ea. Thursday. 2 byes 1-5. **Info:** www.licchessclub.com.

OCT. 10, CHESS IS BACK! National Chess Day Tourney!

308 Chenango St., Binghamton, NY 13901. 3 round SS. G/45 d0. **EF:** \$30 open section \$25 reserve section (under 1700). **Rounds:** 10AM-12:30PM-3PM. \$500 prize money based on 20 entries. **Open** 1st \$125, 2nd \$100, 3rd \$75, **Reserve** 1st \$100, 2nd \$75, 3rd \$25. For every paid entry 1 chess set and board will be donated by Congresswoman Claudia Tenney (NY22) to a local school or community organization of the players choice. **Info:** call 607-772-8782 or cordisco4council@gmail.com. Bring your own masks if required. None provided.

OCT. 15, Marshall Thursday Action

Complete details and registration: www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

OCT. 24, Central NY Chess Scholarship Series ONLINE Tournament 8SS, G/30 d0. Chesskid.com. Open to USCF members registered as Scholastic, Youth, and Young Adults, in separate divisions. Each division will be split into sections of no more than 60 players each. Trophies and College Scholarship prizes awarded to the top two winners of each full section in the amount of \$2000 for 1st place and \$500 for 2nd place. Scholarship award amounts will be prorated based on attendance for any section less than 60 players. Rounds begin at 10AM EST. **EF:** \$50 by 10/14. \$60 from 10/15 until 10/21. Absolutely no registration after 10/21. Additional Early Registration Gift for the first 300 entrants. **More details & online registration at:** centralNYchess.org or by phone at 315-951-0197. **Any Questions please email:** ChristopherDeSalvo@centralNYchess.org

NOV. 4, 11, 18, 25, Community Chess Club of Rochester Wed Night chess!

Note: 1 game rated per night, G/80 d5. Rochester Chess Center, 221 Norris Dr., Rochester, NY 14610. 585-442-2430. **EF:** \$5, CCCR members \$3. **Reg.:** 6:30-7:15 pm. **Rd.:** 7:30pm. www.rochesterchessclub.org.

NOV. 7, 14, 21, 28, Rochester Chess Center Saturday Tournaments!

3-SS, G/60 d5. Rochester CC, 221 Norris Dr., Rochester, NY 14610. 585-442-2430. Prizes based on entries. **EF:** \$16, RCC members \$14. \$2 less for HS and Pre-HS. **Reg.:** 1-1:45 pm. **Rds.:** 2-4-6. One bye available, request at entry. www.nychess.org. **Also,** Youth tournament, G/30 d5, every Saturday morning 10am-1pm, trophies and prizes. **EF:** \$6.

NOV. 17, Marshall Masters

4-SS, G/25 d5. Open to players rated 2000+. FIDE Rapid rated. (\$750 b/25): \$250-150-100; U2400: \$125; U2300: \$100; Biggest upset: \$25. **EF:** \$30; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) GMs Free. **Rds.:** 7-8:15-9:30-10:45pm. Max one bye, for Rd. 1 or 4 only; request at entry. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

NOV. 19, Marshall Thursday Action

4-SS, G/25 d5. (\$400 b/25): \$150-75; U2200, U1900: \$75; Biggest upset: \$25. **EF:** \$25; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) GMs Free. **Rds.:** 7-8:10-9:20-10:30pm. Max one bye, for Rd. 1 or 4 only; request at entry. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!**NOV. 20-22, Marshall Monthly U2400**

5-SS, G/90 +30. Open to players rated below 2400 USCF. (\$1,000 b/40): \$500-200; U2100: \$150; U1800: \$150. **EF:** \$50; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) **Rds.:** Fri: 7pm, Sat & Sun: 12:30 & 5:30pm. Max two byes; request at entry. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

CORRESPONDENCE CHESS

Check out these US Chess Rated Events!

US CHESS 73rd ANNUAL 2020 Open Correspondence Chess Golden Knights Championship

\$800 FIRST PRIZE (plus title of US chess Golden Knights Champion and plaque)
2ND PLACE \$500 • 3RD \$300 • 4TH THRU 10TH PLACE \$100 EACH • ENTRY FEE: \$25

These US Chess Correspondence Chess events are rated and open to all US Chess members who reside on the North American continent, islands, or Hawaii, as well as those US Chess members with an APO or FPO address. US Chess members who reside outside of the North American continent are welcome to participate in e-mail events. Your US Chess membership must remain current for the duration of the event, and entry fees must be paid in U.S. dollars. Those new to US Chess Correspondence Chess, please estimate your strength: Class A: 1800-1999 (very strong); Class B: 1600-1799 (strong); Class C: 1400-1599 (intermediate); Class D: 1399 and below (beginner level). Note: Prize fund based on 200 entries and may be decreased proportionately per number of entries assigned.

US CHESS 17th ANNUAL 2020 E-mail Correspondence Chess Electronic Knights Championship*

\$800 FIRST PRIZE (plus title of US Chess electronic Knights Champion and plaque)
2ND PLACE \$500 • 3RD \$300 • 4TH THRU 10TH PLACE \$100 EACH • ENTRY FEE: \$25

These US Chess Correspondence Chess events are rated and open to all US Chess members with e-mail access. Your US Chess membership must remain current for the duration of the event, and entry fees must be paid in U.S. dollars. Maximum number of tournament entries allowed for the year for each player is ten. Note: Prize fund based on 200 entries and may be decreased proportionately per number of entries assigned.

*Seven-player sections, one game with each of six opponents.

Mail in this form to enter, or call us at 800-903-USCF option 4, or visit us online at www.uschess.org

Name _____ US CHESS ID# _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____ Est. Rating _____

Please call the number above to pay by credit card.

☐ Check here if you do not wish to have an opponent who is incarcerated
(note that this may slow down your assignment).

Make checks payable to US CHESS and mail to: Joan DuBois, US Chess, PO Box 3967, Crossville, TN 38557

Three ways to enter:

- Call 800-903-USCF (8723) option 4
- Visit us online at uschess.org
- Mail in the form below

CORRESPONDENCE CHESS MATCHES (TWO PLAYERS)

Two or six-game options. ENTRY FEE: \$5.

☐ Win A Correspondence Chess Trophy

Four-player, double round-robin with rating-level (0000-1499; 1500-1799; 1800-2000+) pairings. 1st-place winner receives a trophy. Entry fee: \$10.

☐ Victor Palciauskas Prize Tournaments

Seven-player class-level pairings, one game with each of six opponents. 1st-place winner receives \$130 cash prize and a certificate signed by Victor Palciauskas. Entry fee: \$25.

☐ John W. Collins Memorial Class Tournaments

Four-player, double round-robin with rating-level (0000-1499; 1500-1799; 1800-2000+) pairings (unrateds welcome). 1st-place winner receives a John W. Collins certificate. Entry fee: \$7.

EMAIL RATED EVENTS (NEED EMAIL ACCESS)

☐ Lightning Match

Two players with two or six-game option. Entry fee: \$5.

☐ Swift Quads

Four-player, double round-robin format. 1st-place prize US Chess CC entry credit of \$30. Rating-Levels 0000-1499; 1500-1799; 1800-2000+. Entry fee: \$10.

☐ Walter Muir E-Quads (webserver chess)

Four-player, double round-robin webserver format tournament with class-level pairings. 1st-place receives a certificate. Entry fee: \$7.

Please check event(s) selected.

NOTE: Except for Lightning Matches, Swift Quads, Walter Muir E-Quads & Electronic Knights, players will use post office mail, unless opponents agree to use e-mail.

NOV. 22, Marshall Rated Beginner

3-SS, G/25 d5. Only open to players without a rating or rated U1200. (\$225 b/25): \$150-75. **EF:** \$15; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) **Rds.:** Begin at 9am & continue ASAP. No byes. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

NOV. 27, Marshall Friday Night Blitz (BLZ)

9-SS, G/3 +2. USCF Blitz ratings (when possible) used for pairings & prizes. (\$500 b/35): \$200-100; U2200, U2000, U1800: \$50. **EF:** \$20; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) GMS Free. **Rds.:** Begin at 7pm and continue ASAP. Max three byes; request at entry. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

NOV. 28, Marshall G/50 (Open & U1800)

4-SS, G/45 d5. Two Sections: **Open:** (\$325 b/25): \$150-100; U2200: \$75. **U1800:** (\$325 b/25): \$150-100; U1600: \$75. **EF:** \$20; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before

Rd. 1.) GMS Free. **Rds.:** 12-2-4-6pm. Max one bye; request at entry. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

NOV. 29, Marshall Rated Beginner

3-SS, G/25 d5. Only open to players without a rating or rated U1200. (\$225 b/25): \$150-75. **EF:** \$15; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) **Rds.:** Begin at 9am & continue ASAP. No byes. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

NOV. 29, Marshall G/50 (Open & U1500)

4-SS, G/45 d5. Two Sections: **Open:** (\$325 b/25): \$150-100; U1900: \$75. **U1500:** (\$325 b/25): \$150-100; U1300: \$75. **EF:** \$20; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) GMS Free. **Rds.:** 12-2-4-6pm. Max one bye; request at entry. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

DEC. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Community Chess Club of Rochester
Wed Night chess!

Note: 1 game rated per night, G/80 d5. Rochester Chess Center, 221 Norris Dr., Rochester, NY 14610. 585-442-2430. **EF:** \$5, CCCR members \$3. **Reg.:** 6:30-7:15 pm. **Rd.:** 7:30pm. www.rochesterchessclub.org.

DEC. 3, Marshall Thursday Action

4-SS, G/25 d5. (\$400 b/25): \$150-75; U2200, U1900: \$75; Biggest upset: \$25. **EF:** \$25; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) GMS Free. **Rds.:** 7-8:10-9:20-10:30pm. Max one bye, for Rd. 1 or 4 only; request at entry. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

DEC. 4-6 & 11-13, 104th Edward Lasker Memorial/MCC Championship

9-SS, G/90 +30. Open to players rated 2000+ USCF or FIDE; NO Exceptions! FIDE ratings used for pairings and prizes. FIDE rated. (\$7,500 b/40) \$3000-1500-1000, U2400 FIDE: \$1000-500, U2300 FIDE: \$500. Title of "2020 Marshall Chess Club Champion" goes to highest-scoring

US Chess on Twitch & YouTube!

During this "new normal," join us as key staff members provide you with streaming and archived content you can use and enjoy at home.

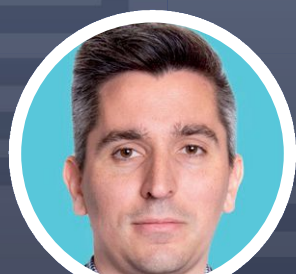
Jennifer Shahade, Pete Karagianis, Chris Bird & John Hartmann can all be found at twitch.tv/uschess and youtube.com/uschessfederation.



JEN SHAHADE



JOHN HARTMANN



PETE KARAGIANIS



CHRIS BIRD





Gold & Silver Affiliates



US CHESS would like to recognize and thank
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www.bayareachess.com

Berkeley Chess School

2622 San Pablo Avenue,
Berkeley, CA 94702
510-843-0150
tournaments@berkeleychessschool.org
www.berkeleychessschool.org

Capital Area Chess

Centreville VA
703-627-5314
info@capitalareachess.com
www.capitalareachess.com

Caveman Chess, LLC

27 Morris Street
Park Ridge, IL 60068
224-985-5244
contact@cavemanchess.com
www.cavemanchess.com

ChessNYC.com

Michael Propper
1562 1st Ave #189
New York, NY 10128
212-475-8130
info@chessnyc.com
www.chessnyc.com

Continental Chess Association

P.O. Box 8482
Pelham, NY 10803
201-347-2269
director@chess.us
www.chesstour.com

Marshall Chess Club

23 West 10th Street,
New York, NY 10011
212-477-3716
admin@marshallchessclub.org
www.marshallchessclub.org

PaperClip Pairings

c/o Remy Ferrari
4 Jalapa Court
Brownsville, TX 78526
956-621-0377
rrferrari@bisd.us

Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis

4657 Maryland Avenue,
St. Louis, MO 63108
314-361-CHESS
info@saintlouischessclub.org
www.saintlouischessclub.org

San Diego Chess Club

2225 Sixth Avenue,
San Diego, CA 92101
619-752-4377
chucnglo@aol.com
www.sandiegochessclub.org

WilliamsburgTutoring.com

David Green
60 Broadway
Brooklyn NY 11249
info@ChessNYC.com
www.WilliamsburgTutoring.com

US CHESS SILVER AFFILIATES

Chess Center of New York (NY)

www.chesscenter.cc

Jersey Shore HS Chess League (NJ)

shorehschessleague@yahoo.com

Oklahoma Chess Foundation (OK)

www.OCFchess.org

En Passant Chess Club (TX)

td_edg@twc.com

Little House of Chess, Inc. (NY)

littlehouseofchess.com

Rochester Chess Center (NY)

www.chessset.com

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www.evangelchurch.me

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516-739-3907

Sparta Chess Club (NJ)

www.spartachessclub.org

Michigan Chess Association (MI)

www.michess.org

For all information on becoming a Gold or Silver Affiliate, please visit www.uschess.org/content/view/7905/95.

TLA Continued

MCC Member. Tie break for the title will be decided by blitz playoffs (G/3 + 2) and an Armageddon game (bidding for time) if necessary. **EF:** \$250 (GMs can petition for a free entry, space permitting.); Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$50 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) **Rds.:** Fri 12/4: 7pm, Sat 12/5: 12 & 6pm, Sun 12/6: 12 & 6pm, Fri 12/11: 7pm, Sat 12/8: 12 & 6pm, Sun 12/13: 12pm, Blitz Playoff (if necessary): TBD. Max three byes; request at entry (limit one bye in rounds 8-9). FIDE GM/IM Norms possible; must play all rounds. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

DEC. 9, 16, 23, 30, JAN. 6, 13, Marshall Weekly Wednesday 6-SS, G/90 + 30. Two Sections: **U2000:** (\$600 b/25) \$250-150-100; **U1700:** \$100. **U1400:** (\$600 b/25) \$250-150-100; **U1100:** \$100. **EF:** \$40; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) **Rds.:** 7pm each Wed. Max two byes; request by Rd. 4. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

DEC. 10, Marshall Thursday Action

4-SS, G/25 d5. (\$400 b/25): \$150-75; U2200, U1900: \$75; Biggest upset: \$25. **EF:** \$25; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) GMs Free. **Rds.:** 7-8:10-9:20-10:30pm. Max one bye, for Rd. 1 or 4 only; request at entry. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

DEC. 10, 17, 31, JAN. 7, 14, 21, Marshall Thursday Open 6-SS, G/90 + 30. (\$600 b/25): \$250-150; U1900: \$100; Top Senior (Age 50+): \$100. **EF:** \$40; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) GMs Free. **Rds.:** 7pm each Thurs. Max two byes; request by Rd. 4. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

DEC. 15, Marshall Masters

4-SS, G/25 d5. Open to players rated 2000+. FIDE Rapid rated. (\$750 b/25): \$250-150-100; U2400: \$125; U2300: \$100; Biggest upset: \$25 **EF:** \$30; Non-MCC Mbr: Additional \$25 Mbr fee. (\$5 late fee: in-person reg hour before Rd. 1.) GMs Free. **Rds.:** 7-8:15-9:30-10:45pm. Max one bye, for Rd. 1 or 4 only; request at entry. **Register Online:** www.marshallchessclub.org/register.

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/10 Championship (BLZ) (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/60 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

NORTH CAROLINA

OCT. 23-25 OR 24-25, CANCELED: 2020 Atlanta Class Championships (GA)

See Grand Prix.

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/10 Championship (BLZ)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 Championship

See Nationals.

US Chess Junior Grand Prix!

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed

An official FIDE Continental Championship offering IM, FM, WIM, WFM direct FIDE titles and GM, IM, WGM, WIM norms for winners! The 2019 North American Junior was held in Charlotte and had a record 77 players. Two sections – **Open U20** and **Girls U20** (girls may enter either section). 9 rounds, G/90 inc/30, USCF and FIDE-rated, FIDE norms and titles available. Venue: **Hilton Charlotte University Place Hotel**, 8629 JM Keynes Rd., Charlotte, NC 28262. Hotel: \$109/night (single/double), free breakfast, free 3-mile shuttle, free internet, free parking, fridge/microwave in every room. \$15 discount off tournament entry fee if staying at official hotel. Open to all players from USA, Canada, and Mexico who are under 20 (19 & younger) as of 1/1/2020 (born 2000 or after). This is a completely open event for those who meet the age and eligibility requirements. **Awards:** Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals to top 3 in each section (on tiebreaks if necessary). Gold medalists win Personal Rights status at 2021 North American Junior and Pan-Am Junior Championships. **Direct FIDE Titles:** Open section – Gold medal = **IM title and GM norm**; if tie for first, top 3 on tiebreaks receive IM title, gold medalist also earns GM norm. Silver = **FM title and IM norm**. Bronze = **FM title and IM norm**. Girls section – Gold = **WIM title and WGM norm**; if tie for first, top 3 on tiebreaks receive WIM title, gold medalist also earns WGM norm. Silver = **WFM title and WIM norm**. Bronze = **WFM title and WIM norm**. **Schedule:** suggested arrival Friday 12/18. Players meeting 12/19 12:30pm, Rounds Sat 1pm, 7pm, Sun 12pm, 6pm, Mon 12pm, 6pm, Tues 12pm, 6pm, Wed 10am. **Registration:** Players should register directly with the organizers online, it is not necessary to go through the federation. **Entry Fee:** \$260 paid online at www.charlottechesscenter.org/najunior until 11/20, \$280 until 12/10, \$300 until 12/18. No registration after 12/18. \$15 off EF if staying at official hotel. Refunds before 11/20 subject to 5% service

fee. No refunds for withdrawals after 11/20. No half-point byes, only zero-point byes. All equipment provided! This event takes place at the same time as the U.S. G/10, G/30, G/60 Championships (www.charlottechesscenter.org/usblitzrapid). FIDE Rules, December FIDE ratings used for pairings, USCF and FIDE-rated, all players must have US Chess membership. Organizer: Charlotte Chess Center, contact: grant@charlottechesscenter.org. Info, detailed regulations, registration: www.charlottechesscenter.org/najunior

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), CANCELED: U.S. G/60 Championship

See Nationals.

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See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/60 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

SOUTH CAROLINA

OCT. 23-25 OR 24-25, CANCELED: 2020 Atlanta Class Championships (GA)

See Grand Prix.

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/10 Championship (BLZ) (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/60 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

TENNESSEE

OCT. 23-25 OR 24-25, CANCELED: 2020 Atlanta Class Championships (GA)

See Grand Prix.

TEXAS

OCT. 24-25, 2020 DCC FIDE Open II (rescheduled from May 9-10)

See Grand Prix.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

VIRGINIA

OCT. 10-12, 2020 (61st Annual) U.S. Armed Forces Chess Championship (5-SS FIDE G/2+30)

See Nationals.

OCT. 30-NOV. 1 OR OCT. 31-NOV. 1, 2020 U. S. Class Championship - Virginia

See Nationals.

OCT. 31, 2020 U. S. Class FIDE Blitz! (BLZ)

See Grand Prix.

DEC. 18 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 17), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/10 Championship (BLZ) (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 18), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/30 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

See North Carolina.

DEC. 20 (POSTPONED FROM JULY 19), CANCELED: 2020 U.S. G/60 Championship (NC)

See Nationals.

WASHINGTON

DEC. 19-23, 2020 North American Junior (U20) FIDE Championships (Postponed from July 15-19), Hotel Changed (NC)

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Solutions

Page 15 / MAXIM DLUGY

PROBLEM I. White resigned after 24. ... Bd5! because of the threat of 25. ... Re1 mate. **PROBLEM II.** 28. b6! queens because of 28. ... Rb8 29. Ra8! Rxa8 30. b7 Rb8 31. Rc8+. Or 28. ... Ke7 29. b7 Rb8 30. Ra7 followed by the rook coming to c8. **PROBLEM III.** 33. Re8+! Kg7 (33. ... Rxe8 34. Qxb4) 34. Qe5! with the threat of Re8xb8 or Rf6-f4+. **PROBLEM IV.** Not 32. Kxf1?? Qb1+ but 32. Rg3!, e.g. 32. ... Qxg3 33. Rh7 mate. Also 32. ... Qb1 33. Bxf1 followed by Rg3-g7, or 32. ... Bd3 33. Rgxd3 Rf8 34. Rd8. **PROBLEM V.** 14. b6! Bxd5 15. bxa7 leads to promotion, e.g. 15. ... Bd6 16. Nxd5 and 17. a8=Q. **PROBLEM VI.** Not 29. ... Kg7 30. h5! but 29. ... Rxd2! 30. Nxd2 Rd8, which wins material. For example, 31. Rb1 Rxd2 32. Qa8+ Rd8 33. Qxa6 Rd1!. Or 30. Qxd2 Qxe4 and eventually ... Bf8.

Page 45 / MAKE YOUR MOVE!

TACTIC I. 13. ... Bxf2! This tactical strike should always be on your radar. Here in the Dubov-Tarrasch, Abdusattorov has gotten excellent mileage out of this trick. **14. Kxf2 Ng4+ 15. Kg1 Qb6+ 16. e3** Of course, 16. Kh1 results in a smothered mate after 16. ... Nf2+ 17. Kg1 Nh3+ 18. Kh1 Qg1+ 19. Rxc1 Nf2 mate. **16. ... Rxe3!** The rook capture is much stronger than the knight capture. **17. Kh1 Nf2+** and **White resigned** before getting mated. **Shapkin - Abdusattorov** Titled Tuesday 2020. **TACTIC II. 19. c4!** In the game, White missed his chance and played **19. Rad1 bxc3 20. bxc3 Qc7** which led to equal chances. **19. ... Bxb2!?** Trying to create confusion, whereas 19. ... Nf6 20. Bf4 will cost Black a piece to save the queen. **20. cxd5 Qxd5 21. Bb3 Nd4 22. Bxd5 Nxe2 23. Rab1 Bf6 24. Bb3** and White should win without too many problems. **G. Meier - Donchenko** German Blitz ch 2020 **TACTIC III. 24. ... Bd2!** Threatening mate, starting with a combination of ... Bxc3+ and ... Qxc3 in whichever order you please. **25. c4** Of course, 25. Rxd2 is met by 25. ... Qxc3 mate; and 25. Rhh3 by 25. ... Qg1 mate. **25. ... Qd4+!** and **White resigned.** Capturing the queen is met by ... Bc3 mate, whereas 26. c3 Qxc3+ 27. Rxc3 Bxc3 mate is a pretty conclusion. **Willow - Kavyev** Titled Tuesday 2020. **TACTIC IV. 21. Rxc6!** In the game, White won after **21. Ne5 Nd4 22. Nh6+ Kh8 23. Nxf7+ Rxf7 24. Nxf7+ Kg8 25. Nh6+ Kh8 26. Rxf6 gxf6 27. Qf4**, and **Black resigned.** **21. ... fxe6** This capture allows mate, but otherwise Black is a piece down for nothing. **22. Rxc7+** (Also decisive is 22. Qg5) **22. ... Kh8 Kh8 23. Qh6! exf5 24. Re7!** and Black can delay getting mated but not prevent it. **Berkes - Kozak** Hungarian rapid ch 2020. **TACTIC V. 1. Rc1!!** Now, Black has one legal move and it opens the a1-h8-diagonal which is what we need to deliver mate. A tempting alternative is 1. Rg1?!, but in that case Black wins: 1. ... c1=Q 2. Rxc1 bxc1=Q 3. Bxc1 h5 4. Bf4, threatening mate, but now Black untangles from the nest on a1: 4. ... Bc2 5. Kf6 h4 6. Kg5 h3 7. Kg4 Kb1 8. Be5 a1=Q 9. Bxa1 h2 and Black wins. **1. ... bxc1=Q 2. Bxc1 h5** Our plan is quite simple: transfer our king to c3 and then play Bb2 mate. **3.**

Kf6 The king makes his way to c3 to deliver mate. **3. ... h4 4. Ke5 h3 5. Kd4 h2 6. Kc3 h1=Q 7. Bb2 mate.** A nice conclusion to a study with a tactical theme. **Smyslov** (composed study) *Moi Etyudy* 2005. **TACTIC VI. 26. Bxe4! fxe4?** Capturing the bishop accelerates the end but 26. ... Rb8 27. Bg2 leaves Black with a hopeless mess of a position. **27. Qe5!** Black's forces are paralyzed so White can take his time penetrating Black's position if he does so without letting Black entirely off the hook, therefore 27. Rf6?? doesn't work on account of 27. ... Qb6 followed by castling queenside. **27. ... Rc8?** This makes no sense, not leaving Black's king with any chance of escaping. Better but hardly saving Black is 27. ... Bc8 when White slowly but surely penetrates Black's position: 28. Rf6! Qd7 29. Rdf1! Qg7 30. Qxe4 Qg8 31. Rxc6 Rg7 32. Qh4 Qh7 33. Rf8+! and it is game over for Black. **28. Qf4! Ba4 29. d7+!** and **Black resigned** as mate follows on the next move. **Hovhanisian - Meessen** Belgian ch (Bruges) 2020. **TACTIC VII. 26. Rxe8! Rfxe8** If 26. ... Bxh6 then 27. Re7! Bg7 (or 27. ... Rf7 28. Rxf7 Qxf7 29. Qxc3+ and White is winning) 28. Rbe1 Qd4+ 29. Kh1 Qd5+ 30. Be4 Nxe4 31. Ng6+ Kg8 32. R7xe4 and White wins. **27. Ng6+! Kxh7 28. Nf8+ Kxh6** Also 28. ... Kg8 29. Qh7+ Kf7 (or 29. ... Kxf8 30. Bxg7+ Qxg7 31. Rf1+) 30. Rf1 and it is curtains for Black. **29. Qh7+ Kg5 30. Qh4+ Kf5 31. Qf4 mate.** A nice king hunt. **Ding Liren - Carlsen** Carlsen Tour Final 2020. **TACTIC VIII. 21. Rxf8+!** Two tempting but insufficient alternatives are: 21. Nxd5? Rxf2! 22. Kxf2 Kh8 23. dxc5 gxh6 24. Nf6 Qf7 25. Rd7 Be7 when White has compensation for the sacrificed piece; and 21. Bxg7 Qxg7 22. Rxf8+ Kxf8 23. Qxe6 Bg5 24. Nxd5 Rd8 and Black wards off the white aggression. **21. ... Kxf8 22. Rd2!** This rook lift allows White to sidestep Black's safety measures without allowing Black time to organize his defense. **22. ... Bc7 22. ... Kg8** is met by 23. Nxd5! Kh8 24. Qf3 and Black is winning. **23. Rf2+ Kg8 24. Nxd5! Kh8 25. Bxg7+ and Black resigned.** **Shirov - Martins** Online Olympiad Div2 2020. **TACTIC IX. 19. Qf3!!** This little queen move creates a variety of threats, targeting both Black's vulnerable king and the loose pieces on the kingside. In the game, White won after **19. Qd2 Be7?!** (Black should have played 19. ... b6! 20. Re3 Kb7 21. Rc3 Qe8 22. Rc7+ Ka8 23. Qc3 g5 24. Be5 Bxe5 25. dxe5 Kb8 and Black has excellent survival chances) **20. Re3 Kd7 21. Rc3 Qb6? 22. Bc7** (White is winning) **22. ... Qa5?? 23. Bxa5 and Black resigned.** **19. ... Kd7** Black has to address the threat of the rook lift to the third rank followed by Rc3. The alternative is 19. ... Rd7 20. Rd3 Qa6 21. Bh6 Bd8 22. Rc3+ Bc7 23. Qf6 Re8 24. Bf4 Qa5 25. Ree3 and Black is tied in knots. **20. Bd2 Be7 21. Qxf7 Rdf8 22. Qg7** and White has a large advantage. **Visakh - Piesik** Titled Tuesday 2020.

Page 49 / ABCs OF CHESS

PROBLEM I. Mating Net: Black mates by 1. ... Bh2+ 2. Kxh2 Qxh4+ 3. Kg1 Qh1 mate. **PROBLEM II.** Black mates in two: 1. ... Qh2+ 2. Qxh2 Rxh2 mate. **PROBLEM III. Mating net:** It's mate in one: 1. ... Qg2 mate. **PROBLEM IV. Mating net:** Black mates by 1. ... Qa4+ 2. Kc3 Rc2 mate. **PROBLEM**

V. Mating net: Black mates after 1. ... Rxe4+ mate. If 2. fxe4, then 2. ... Qxe4 mate; if 2. f4, then 2. ... Rxf4 mate. **PROBLEM VI. Mating net:** Black mates in two moves: 1. ... Qh1+ 2. Kg3 Ne4 mate.



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MY BEST MOVE

Grayson Rorrer

14-year-old national master and budding chess journalist

I received my first chess set for Christmas in 2015, and while it took me a little while to warm to the game, soon I was hooked. I played my first tournament in March of 2016, and with new competitions nearly every month thereafter, my adventures in chess quickly took off.

Fast forward to Thanksgiving 2019. I was on a long road trip—more than 13 hours each way!—from my small hometown in Texas to the prestigious Saint Louis Chess Club. Walking into the Club, I couldn't help but feel awed by all the legends of chess who had passed through those doors, and now I was among them. But I had to clear my head quickly. I was here on business.

I came to St. Louis to play in their Thanksgiving Open. At the time, my rating was 2081, and I was working hard to make progress. (I still am.) Going into the fourth round of the tournament, I had two points out of three, and I knew I would be in for a tough game. I was due black, and my opponent was rated well over 2200. Masters are tough! Before this game, my only two wins against masters were filled with errors, and if I'm honest, I was more than a little lucky.

This particular game was a psychological turning point for me. Never had I felt that I'd *earned* a win against a master before, and how could I become a master without really defeating one? I worked to push these thoughts from my mind as I sat down at the board, and in the end I managed to play a convincing game, proving to myself that I really could hold my own against master-level competition.

Out of a sharp opening my opponent missed a chance to gain a large edge; beyond that, I think I played very well. We reached this position, and two key moves transformed the game in my favor.



... I had to clear my head quickly. I was here on business.

MY BEST MOVES

Caleb Denby (2224)

Grayson Rorrer (2081)

SLCC Thanksgiving Open (4), 11.30.2019



WHITE TO PLAY

22. Kf1?

This changes the evaluation from even to nearly lost for White. My opponent could still have salvaged a draw with 22. e5! when after 22 ... Qc5+ 23. Kh1 Qxc3 24. Qf6+ Ke8 25. Qh8+ Ke7 26. Qf6+ we have our expected perpetual.

22. ... Nc6!

This transforms one type of advantage in to another. Other moves may allow White's pressure to become overwhelming. This idea is the first element of MY BEST MOVES.

23. Nd5+ Qxd5!

A crucial move that had to be foreseen.

24. Qxa8 Qd3+ 25. Kf2 Nd4

By this point we were both in serious time pressure (there was no second time control), but I felt my position was a lot easier to play, apart from the king on e7.

26. Qxa7

I had already seen the clincher:

26. ... Qd2+ 27. Kf1 Nxf3!

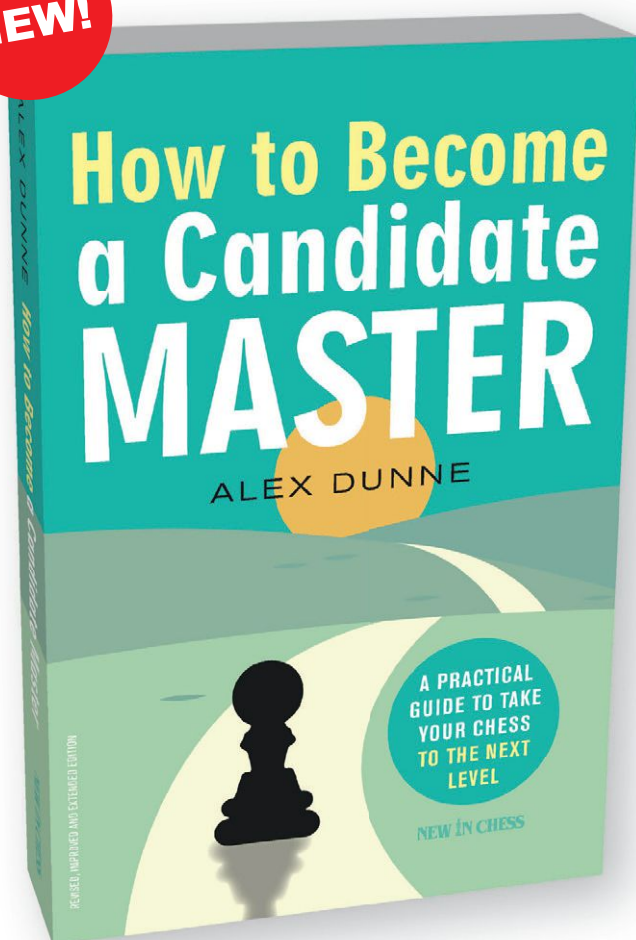
This is the culmination of MY BEST MOVES. Black is clearly on the attack, and while my technique was a bit sloppy, I eventually won in 40 moves. ♠



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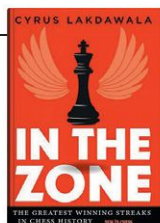
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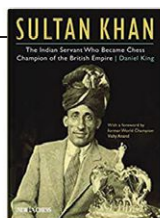


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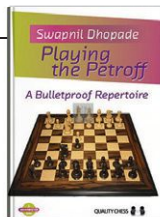


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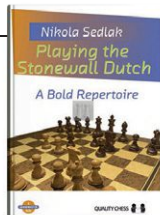


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At the U.S. Championship in 1989, Stuart Rachels seemed bound for the cellar. Ranked last and holding no IM norms, the 20-year-old amateur from Alabama was expected to get waxed. Instead, he pulled off a gigantic upset and became the youngest U.S. Champion since Fischer. In this elegantly written and highly personal memoir, he passes on his knowledge of chess. Included are his duels against legends such as Kasparov, Anand, and Spassky, but the heart of the book is the explanation of chess ideas interwoven with his captivating stories.

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