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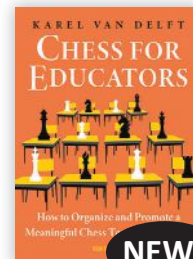
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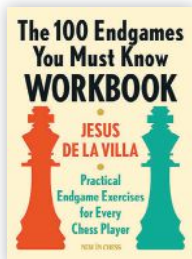
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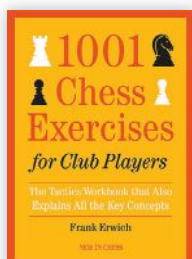
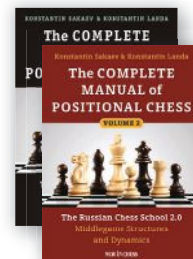
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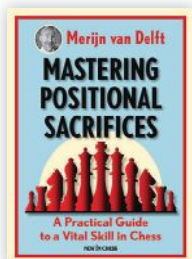
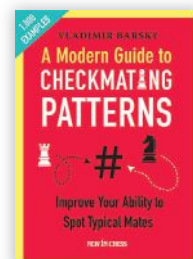
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Merijn van Delft

"Excellent examples. Will have a major impact on your positional progress."

IM Gary Lane, Chess Moves Magazine

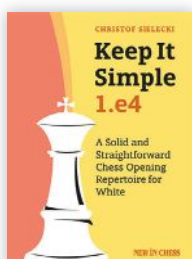
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This fascinating book has a thematic structure, which, together with Lakdawala's uniquely accessible style, makes its lessons easy to digest. Sometimes even Magnus gets outplayed, sometimes he over-presses and goes over the cliff's edge, and sometimes he fails to find the correct plan. Lakdawala explains the how and the why.



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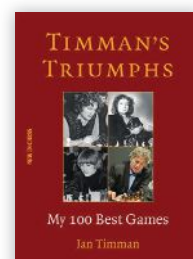
US National Master Timothy McGrew

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.

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Chess Life is the official publication of the US Chess Federation

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APRIL

GM Hans Niemann

(Cover Story) is a newly-minted Grandmaster and one of America's top junior players. He is currently playing professionally in Europe while he mulls over his college acceptance decisions.

WGM Tatev Abrahamyan

(Opera Euro Rapid) is one of the top rated female players in the country. She has been a member of the Olympiad team since 2008, representing the U.S. in five Olympiads and four World Team Championships. She finished second in the 2019 U.S. Women's Championship.

Abel Talamantez & Dr. Judit Szatary

(Pan Ams) Abel Talamantez is the Chess Director of the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club in San Francisco. He is also a FIDE Arbiter and US Chess Senior Tournament Director.

Dr. Judit Szatary is General Manager of Youth Outreach and Events at the Mechanics' Institute Chess Club and is a FIDE Arbiter and US Chess Senior Tournament Director. She was the 2017 US Chess Organizer of the Year.

Al Lawrence

(Winston) was the 2019 Chess Journalist of the Year, the third time he was selected for this honor by the Chess Journalists of America. He is the former executive director of both US Chess and the World Chess Hall of Fame and is currently the managing director for the US Chess Trust. His latest book, with GM Lev Alburt, is *Chess for the Gifted & Busy*.

John Hartmann

(van Foreest) is the editor of *Chess Life* and *Chess Life Online*. He was named the 2020 Chess Journalist of the Year by the Chess Journalists of America.



FAREWELL, FRANKIE!

Our Creative Director Francesca "Frankie" Butler has left US Chess after a 15-year tour of duty with us. Frankie has helped give *Chess Life* its trademark visual feel and style, winning awards from the Chess Journalists of America for her work, and in recent years she has led our efforts in social media and video.

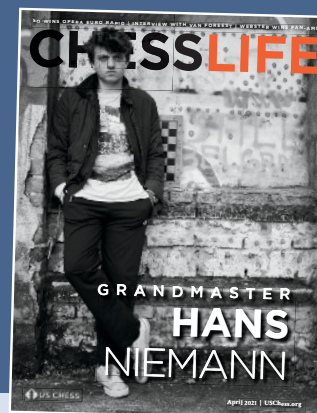
Frankie won't be going far, though — she has joined the team at PlayMagnus to help build their media empire! See you on "the Tweeteers," Frankie!

ON THE COVER

GM Hans Niemann ...

We get a real sense of GM Hans Niemann's personality in this gritty Belgrade photoshoot by Braca Nadezdic, with direction in her final cover shoot by our outgoing creative director, Frankie Butler.

PHOTO BY BRACA NADEZDIC



Chess Life

APRIL

PHOTO: BRACA NADEZDIC

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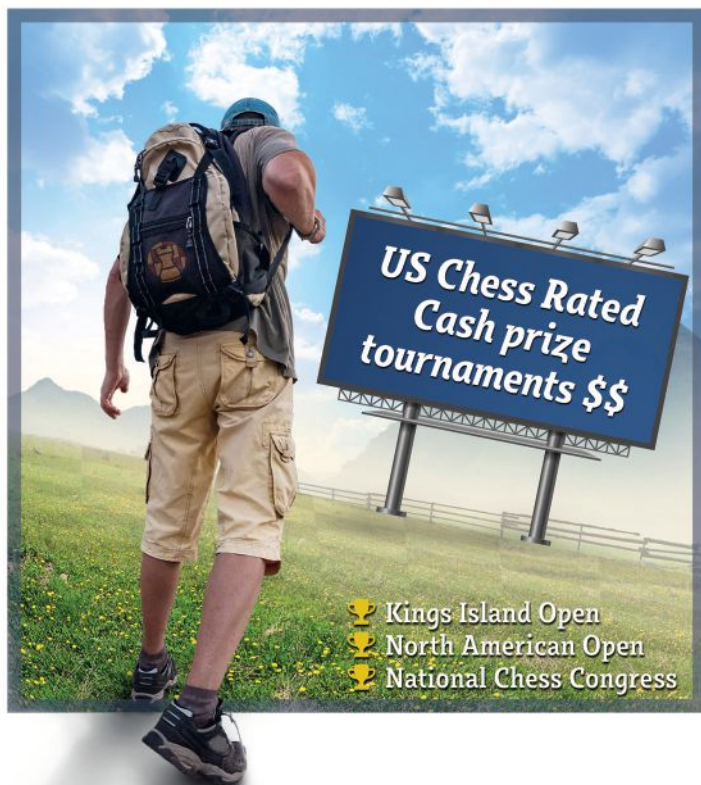
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It used to be that you could read Chess Life once a month to keep up with the world of chess. Today's media landscape has changed, and in our 24-hour, always-on world, US Chess is doing its best to provide members news and information in the formats they prefer. Our internet and social media presence is growing with each passing day, so don't be left behind!

Visit our CLO section of uschess.org for all our latest chess news. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter to get updates every day. Check out our YouTube channel for instructive videos.



CHESS LIFE ONLINE (CLO) is our **news page**. Here you'll find the latest information about US Chess events, tournaments both large and small, and features like Wednesday Workouts and our series of podcasts.
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USCHESS.ORG This is our **front page**, and the front door to the world of US Chess. Here you can find your way to your rating, to the latest news articles at CLO, to governance information, and to TLAs. And that's just the start. www.uschess.org



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LINKEDIN We're still building our LinkedIn page, and **we'd love to have you swing by and follow us**. This is where we plan to share updates on our **progress and development** as a non-profit, and **accomplishments** we're proud of as we go along. www.linkedin.com/uschess



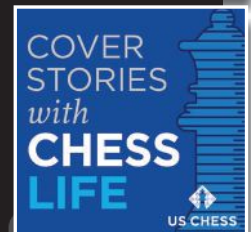
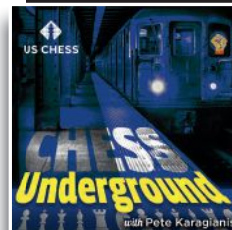
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YOUTUBE Our YouTube presence is one of our new areas of emphasis. We're ramping up our content production with **interviews with America's top players**, and introducing new series like Jen Shahade's "Class is in Session" recordings and John Hartmann's "Leveling Up" **instructive videos**.
youtube.com/USChessFederation

Is it Tuesday? Then it's podcast Tuesday.

Did you know that there's a new podcast every week from US Chess?



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PODCASTS
FROM  **US CHESS**

Letters

A LETTER OF THANKS

This is a letter of thanks to the publishers of this fine magazine. I have only just recently subscribed to *Chess Life* and I find that it has helped me stay connected to what's going on in the chess world. Living in a small town, and with the COVID-19 pandemic, there is nobody around to play chess with in a safe manner. *Chess Life* keeps me in touch with the chess world and the events that occur. I find this very important, especially for young people like myself who miss connecting with other people face-to-face. Reading about other people's chess experience is keeping my head in the game during these unprecedented times. Thank you.

Gabriel M. Wilder
via email

Thanks to you, Gabriel, for your letter and for being a member! It's always nice to hear that what we do is being received well by a reader. ~ed.

THANK YOU, ALEX DUNNE!

Please thank FM Alex Dunne for all his work running the correspondence tournaments. Mikhail Botvinnik spoke of researching your opponent's games. Tell Dunne that after a mild heart attack and two strokes, I have been working to rewire my brain. After studying our game through books of Nimzovich, Capablanca, Reshevsky, Botvinnik, Karpov, and Fischer... watch out chess software! I can give them lessons! And he will too.

Edward Schweikert
via email

A REAL, UNPROMPTED LETTER

Dear *Chess Life* Magazine,

I was looking through your magazine and I was very upset to see that my uncle, John Hartmann, did not have a picture in the magazine. He is the Chief Editor, and he does so much hard work, he deserves to have a photo in your magazine. Please take my suggestion and give my uncle a photo in the next issue. Thank you,

Jovie Hartmann, Age 9
via email



Dear Jovie:

Thanks for your note! You will be glad to know that my picture has been in the magazine before, but because we want to make our new readers happy, we decided to attempt to fulfill your request.

Unfortunately I could not find a good recent photo of yours truly, so I asked your cousin, Avery, if she could provide an artistic rendering. I think she did a great job. The hair and beard are just right! ~ed.

A GRANDMASTER PERSPECTIVE

"Call it whatever you may; at some (fast) point it ceases to be chess."

So wrote Richard J. Arnold in a letter to the editor in February. I wholeheartedly agree, except that I'd add SERIOUS before "chess." Jon Crumiller and I addressed the issue of dwindling time controls in our February 2020 *Chess Life* article. My remedy: let us have events with all kinds of controls. Blitz is great as blitz, and rapid is great as rapid. But let's not forget about classical time controls, and even the old-fashioned "Botvinnik" controls. May they all blossom!

GM Lev Albut
via email

Send your letters to letters@uschesstrust.org. Letters are subject to editing for style, length, and content.

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US CHESSTRUST

The New Jersey Crown Chess League

Growing New Jersey chess in a COVID-19 world

By **BOB WHITESIDE, MATT IACOVIELLO, AND NICHOLAS CARLSON**

In March of 2020, the Toms River Chess Club (TRCC) was forced to stop all club events and meetings due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Toms River Chess Club member Pierre Adams had the idea to move those club activities to an online format using *Chess.com*. This worked for a short while, but it soon became clear that attendance was falling, and the *Chess.com* experiment was soon abandoned. Like so many other chess clubs, the once prestigious Toms River Chess Club went completely dormant.

Six months later, Nicholas Carlson, a member of the Toms River Chess Club and the president of the Osprey Chess Club at Stockton University, sent an email proposition to the Toms River Chess Club. The Osprey Chess Club, like the Toms River Chess Club, was experiencing a rapid decline in active membership. But the Osprey Chess Club was determined to try and continue to host club meetings during the pandemic.

The Osprey Chess Club took inspiration from Pierre Adams' idea, but added a twist: they ran a *Chess.com* virtual club with a Zoom video call for those participating in the *Chess.com* meetings. Even so, the Osprey Chess Club was getting an average of just four participants a week on its own but was going to need more than that in order to survive. Knowing this, Nicholas Carlson sent an email to Stephen Shoshin, the president of the Toms River Chess Club, in an attempt to revive the active member population of

both chess clubs before it was too late. The two agreed to work together to renew their respective clubs.

The first collaborative meeting between the Osprey Chess Club and the Toms River Chess Club took place on October 1, 2020, with a total of eight participants. This number would continue to grow

with an email from Carlson to his fellow club presidents. The idea was simple: "I propose a new chess league be born that continues our current setup that has been working and allows for us to more easily expand and grow, as well as giving us an official united identity."

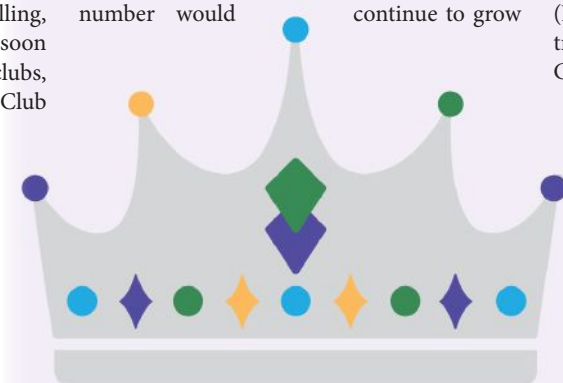
And so the New Jersey Crown Chess League (NJCCL) was founded, a new association of traditional chess clubs trying to survive the COVID-19 pandemic in a new online world.

The League meets once a week, on Thursdays from 6 to 8:30 p.m. and uses a hybrid system of Zoom and *Chess.com*.

Zoom is used for club interaction, while *Chess.com* is where the chess action is being facilitated. The advantage of adding the Zoom call is that it allows for chess players from in and around the State of New Jersey to "meet" and talk virtually online, allowing players to get to know one another while playing chess.

The use of both Zoom and *Chess.com* allows for participants to both enjoy casual online chess, while at the same time being able to interact with each other with more ways than just the game chat. While it is encouraged to participate in both the Zoom meeting and on *Chess.com*, it is not necessary to participate in both. Some members enjoy just joining the meeting on Zoom and watching the games. Others prefer to focus on their chess and only play on *Chess.com*, avoiding joining the Zoom meeting.

The *Chess.com* arena has an interesting game format, with games played at a time



NEW JERSEY CROWN CHESS LEAGUE

Est. 2020

as the partnership began to stabilize into a weekly format. Seeing the success of the chess partnership between the Osprey Chess Club and the Toms River Chess Club, other traditionally over the board chess players began to seek interest. Soon the little partnership between the Toms River Chess Club and the Osprey Chess Club grew into a tiny chess community with several organizations.

This led to a chess league proposition going out to club leaders on November 2, 2020

control of seven minutes with one second increment. This was made in compromise because half of the league wanted to play 10-minute blitz while the other half of the league wanted to play five-minute blitz. When people first join, they are both mildly confused and entertained by the time format. However, after playing it for a while, most people prefer the format over the alternatives.

The Zoom and *Chess.com* format allow for fun chess club banter among the members. Typical topics for discussion includes stories of COVID-19 experiences, comments on ongoing games, “The Queen’s Gambit” Netflix limited series, and, of course, some friendly trash talk. The league even held

a virtual holiday party in the last week of December.

Carlson envisions larger tournaments as word spreads and the league grows, with play broken down into multiple time controls and rating levels in different sections of *Chess.com*. He hopes other states create leagues as well, and that inter-league tournaments can be held in the future.

The leaders of the NJCCL are still reaching out to clubs within and around the state of New Jersey and even accepting individual memberships. Together, the members of the NJCCL are keeping chess growing on a personal level, developing and maintaining friendships, and easing the stress of the current pandemic for chess players. ♠

FACES ACROSS THE BOARD

By AL LAWRENCE



**GEORGE
UMEZINWA**
COLUMBUS, OHIO

*“Chess was a place I
could go.”*

At the chessboard, you can put aside the tangles of life. The more dilemmas fate arranged for George Umezina, the better he got at the game.

In September of 1977, at 18, George came from Nigeria to enroll at Lake Forest College in Illinois. He spoke English but still faced culture shock. “Coming from a Black majority country, I readily learned about America’s racial differences.” It wasn’t until he transferred to Iowa State University two years later that he learned the pieces and their moves. Chess provided solace. “I was by myself a lot.” George was a quick study, earning a class B rating in his first official event. Eventually he transferred to Loyola in Chicago.

But George suddenly had to drop out when his father, a high-court judge in Nigeria, died. “I was broke and could not travel home.” He found the “P-K4 Chess Club,” organized in a barber shop. “It was a Black establishment. They played blitz for money. I couldn’t. So they’d say, ‘Here’s the Nigerian who doesn’t play for money!’” FM Emory Tate and NM Marvin Dandridge used to drop in. Later, George discovered the Chicago Chess Club on Halsted, run by artist-cartoonist Jules Stein. “Chess was a place I could go.”

One rewarding rung on the ladder was winning the World Open Under-2000 section in 1985. “I believe I won the largest prize in any open tournament at that point, \$12,000. My class prize was more than the open section prizes!”

Despite his late start, by 1993, George topped 2400. He earned the elite title of Original Life Master — recognizing 300 official games as a master. He still holds an active NM rating.

Along the way, George got his green card and his U.S. citizenship — “Being a US Chess member helped.” He got a degree in finance, built a successful business in Columbus, Ohio, won the state championship, and met his wife Carol. “Our courtship was chess,” she said. “I saw the respect he received from everyone.”



THE AUTHORS: BOB WHITESIDE (TOP), MATTHEW IACOVIELLO (LOWER LEFT), NICHOLAS CARLSON (LOWER RIGHT). ALL PHOTOS COURTESY SUBJECTS.

US CHESS AFFAIRS

2021 EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTION

Candidates' statements will appear in the April, May, and June issues of *Chess Life*. They are listed in a random order determined by an online random list generator during a video conference call conducted by the Executive Director and observed by an Election Committee member. Ballots with the candidates listed in the same order will be distributed to all registered voting members whose US Chess membership is current as of May 5, 2021 and expires on or after June 30, 2021. The deadline to register to vote is May 1, 2021.

To check if you are currently a registered voter, search for your name among the list of registered voters on the Link to new Registered Voters page (<https://new.uschess.org/registered-voters>). Learn more about being a voting member on this page: <https://new.uschess.org/us-chess-voter-registration>.

To register to vote or alter an existing voter status, log in to new.uschess.org. On your profile dashboard under your membership expiration date you will see an invitation to register to vote in the form of a button or you will see that your status is "Active" and whether you have chosen

2021 ANNUAL SAMFORD FELLOWSHIPS ANNOUNCED

The Frank P. Samford Jr. and Frank Samford III Chess Fellowships are pleased to announce the 35th consecutive annual awards. The Fellowships were 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.

The Fellowships are open to American chessplayers who are under the age of 25 at the start of the Fellowships, 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 Chess Fellows 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 Fellowships (including stipend, training, study materials, and tournament travel) is \$60,000. The Fellowships are 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 Fellows will be selected by the Samford Chess Fellowship Committee ("Committee"), consisting of Paul Samford, grandmaster Yury Shulman, and international master John Donaldson. Each applicant, who can be male or female, 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
1623½ Martin Luther King Junior Way
Berkeley, CA 94709
Or: (510) 644-1285 and imwjd@aol.com

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.

PREVIOUS WINNERS

Many Samford Fellows have become strong grandmasters, members of the United States Olympiad team, and U.S. Champions. Four of the five members (Wesley So, Hikaru Nakamura, Sam Shankland and Ray Robson) of the 2016 and 2018 U.S. Olympiad teams are former Samford Fellows.

1987 Joel Benjamin	2008 Irina Krush
1988 Maxim Dlugy	2009 Ray Robson
1989 Patrick Wolff	2010 Robert Hess
1990 Alex Fishbein	2011 Alex Lenderman
1991 Ilya Gurevich	2012 Timur Gareev
1992 Alex Sherzer	Alejandro Ramirez
1993 Ben Finegold	2013 Sam Shankland
1994 Gata Kamsky	2014 Daniel Naroditsky
1995 Josh Waitzkin	2015 Samuel Sevian
1996 Tal Shaked	Kayden Troff
1997 Boris Kreiman	2016 Wesley So
1998 Dean Ippolito	2017 Jeffrey Xiong
1999 Greg Shahade	2018 Awonder Liang
2000 Michael Mulyar	Samuel Sevian
2001 Eugene Perelshteyn	2019 Awonder Liang
2002 Varuzhan Akobian	Sam Sevian
2003 Dmitry Schneider	Christopher Yoo
2004 Rusudan Goletiani	2020 Nicolas Checa
2005 Hikaru Nakamura	Awonder Liang
2006 David Pruess	Carissa Yip
2007 Josh Friedel	Christopher Yoo
2008 Vinay Bhat	

to vote by mail or online. If you would like to change your voting method, click the "Update Registration" button.

E-mail governance@uschess.org if you have any questions. –Ken Ballou, US Chess Election committee chair

Youth category

Any Youth category member who wants the May candidates' statements may receive them on request since they do not receive the May issue of *Chess Life*. This applies only to Youth members who will be age 16 or older by June 30, 2021, since otherwise the Youth member will not be receiving a ballot. See the contact information below for Jennifer Pearson.

Call for ADMs

Advance delegate motions (ADMs) for the delegates' meeting at this year's U.S. Open are due before May 24, 2021. They can be faxed to (931) 787-1200; mailed to Jennifer Pearson, c/o US Chess, P.O. Box 3967, Crossville, TN 38557; or e-mailed to governance@uschess.org.

CANDIDATES' STATEMENTS

Randy Bauer



Forbes highlighted one positive result from my previous US Chess Executive Board service:

"Rex Sinquefield was having dinner nine years ago with Randy Bauer, who serves as Director of the consulting firm Public Financial Management. Sinquefield was interested in sponsoring a study to examine St. Louis' finances. But the conversation at one point turned to chess.

"Bauer, as it turns out, is a national master who serves on the board of the United States Chess Federation which was, at the time, looking for a place to hold the U.S. Chess Championship.

"I didn't have a clue," said Sinquefield.

"Sinquefield mentioned that he'd love to host a U.S. Championship at some point. Bauer then told him that the search for a host for the coming tournament was still ongoing. So the club put in a bid and hosted the next Championship. They've hosted every one since."

John C. Fernandez



My name is John Fernandez, a born and bred New Yorker, currently living in Hannibal, Missouri, with my wife and twin toddler boys.

Before I embarked on a successful two-decade-long software career, I was immersed in the chess world, playing all over the U.S. and abroad. At the Manhattan Chess Club, I learned the game, worked in the bookstore, and organized events. At the Internet Chess Club, I became public relations director charged with growing the business globally. I served on the Marshall Chess Club Board of Governors, and organized events such as Kasparov vs. X3D Fritz and the New York Masters, while teaching chess to children.

In the next two issues of *Chess Life*, I will share how I am the right person to support US Chess in this next phase of growth and create a roaring twenties for US Chess. I look forward to discussing more with you soon.

Kevin Joseph Pryor



Dear Fellow Chess Enthusiasts,

I am a newly retired corporate leader spending 38 years with Johnson & Johnson. As an MBA, my skillsets were global operations, Six Sigma projects, high performing cross-functional teams, and developing outstanding people for one of the most respected companies in the world.

I am honored to be a 2021 candidate. I thank the Nominating Committee who identified me for Executive Board service. It was chess service that set me apart while a comparatively newer Life Member.

My novice chess player ability is primarily due to my steadfast support of providing chess opportunities for others, but as a chess doer I have found my true calling. Currently, I am the Florida Chess Association president, senior tournament director, event organizer, and serve on two committees for US Chess. I humbly ask for your vote to answer this call to serve nationally. Learn more at www.KP4EB.org.

Ryan Velez



I am grateful to have served for one term on the US Chess Executive Board. I never thought I would find myself doing so during a worldwide pandemic. When I ran for my first term, it was on the premise that we needed to protect the reserve fund just in case we needed it. US Chess would be in a far worse spot if the reserve fund were tapped for other purposes. This turned out to be critical.

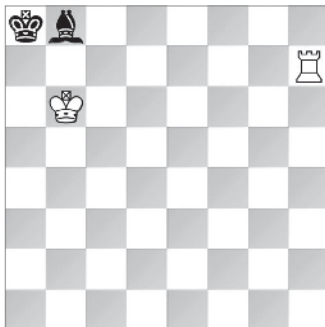
As I sit here writing this initial *Chess Life* candidacy statement, I can say that we have four good candidates running for the board. While I do not get to read candidate statements in advance, I suspect the voters will be happy with the choices. I believe any combination of three candidates in this election will serve US Chess well.

The Philosophy of Short Moves

Myopic, clock-friendly, and right-handed moves

By GM ANDY SOLTIS

ENDGAME BOOKS ARE NOT KNOWN for being funny. But I had to smile when I ran across this position in a new book.



WHITE TO MOVE

You can find a diagram like this in many endgame textbooks. Black can draw by making safe bishop moves. For example, 1. Ka6 Bd6 2. Rh8+ Bb8.

White should set a trap with **1. Re7!**. It works best “if the clock is on the queenside and Black is in time trouble,” according to authors GM Karsten Müller and Yakov Konoval.

Their joke, in *Understanding Rook vs. Minor Piece Endgames*, is that to draw Black has to move the bishop across the board (to h2, g3 or f4). Then he has to stretch his arm back to hit the clock.

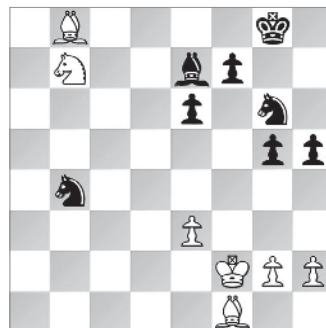
Instead, the human tendency is to save time and energy with **1. ... Bd6??**.

But that loses to **2. Ra7+! Kb8 3. Rd7!** followed by Rd7xd6 or Rd7-d8 mate.

There’s another reason why Black may not consider 1. ... Bh2! or 1. ... Bg3!. It is the phenomenon of blitz myopia: When very short of time we stop looking at the entire board.

TUNNEL VISION

GM Sergey Erenberg
GM Judit Polgar
World Blitz Championship, Rishon Le Zion,
09.07.2006



BLACK TO MOVE

Living on a two-second increment, Judit Polgar chose **40. ... Na6??**.

The game continued **41. Ba7?? Ne5?? 42. h3?? h4??**.

Her last move almost forced White to look at a part of the board, the lower right, that had been off his radar for some time. He finally found **43. Bxa6!** and won.

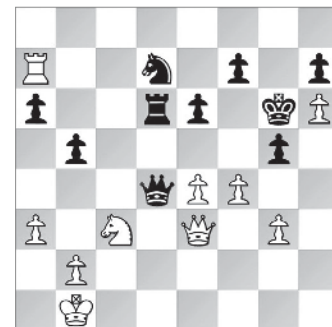
Blitz myopia is accidental. But we can make the same kind of mistake by adopting the practical policy of playing short moves when short of time.

SHORT ISN'T SWEET

GM Jeroen Piket
GM Anatoly Karpov
Match, Monaco, 03.01.1999

(see diagram top of next column)

In mutual time trouble, White can glide into a favorable endgame (38. Qxd4 Rxd4 39. Rxa6! with the idea 39. ... Nc5 40. Nxb5!).



WHITE TO MOVE

The game went **38. Qe1?? Qd3+??** and it was eventually drawn after **39. Ka1 Qd4 40. Rc7 Qd3**.

But how could Black, a former world champion, overlook 38. ... Qxa7?

I didn't overlook it, GM Anatoly Karpov said after the game. He explained that he only had two seconds to make three moves. (This was played before Fischer increments.) So he played safe — and short — moves that he didn't have to think about and could execute quickly.

The English grandmaster Tony Miles is perhaps best remembered for beating Karpov as Black in a game that began 1. e4 a6!?. He gave various explanations for his first move. But some of his fans joked that he simply made the move that was easiest for his right hand to play and quickly hit the nearby clock.

Most of us are righthanded and there may be something psychological about making moves that are closest to that hand. GM Alexander Morozevich said that may explain why no one starts a game with 1. Nc3, while the right-handed version, 1. Nf3!, is common.

There have been cases when a grandmaster blundered by stretching his right hand across the board to his far left.

QUIZ FOR APRIL

This month's quiz features games from the early career of the late Lubomir Kavalek. In each of the diagrams, taken from a Kavalek game, you are asked to find the fastest winning line of play. This will usually mean the forced win of a decisive amount of material. But be careful to find the fastest win, not just the more obvious one. Lubos liked to win endgames but he preferred to deliver checkmate. Solutions on Page 55.

PROBLEM I.

Lubomir Kavalek
Wolfgang Pietzsch



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM II.

Ladislav Alster
Lubomir Kavalek



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM III.

Shimon Kagan
Lubomir Kavalek



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM IV.

Karel Opocensky
Lubomir Kavalek



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM V.

Hristos Kokkoris
Lubomir Kavalek



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM VI.

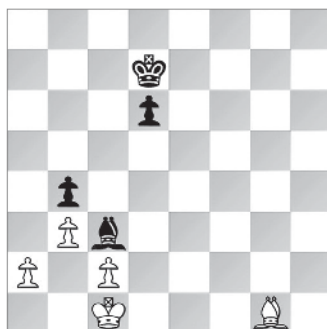
Lubomir Kavalek
Jacek Bednarski



WHITE TO MOVE

QUITE A STRETCH

GM Vasyl Ivanchuk
GM Bu Xiangzhi
Karabkh International, Stepankert,
10.02.2005



BLACK TO MOVE

This looks bad for Black because he is a pawn down and may lose the one at b4. White has two winning ideas:

- (a) Bg1-e3-d2 threatens to trade bishops into a won pawn ending, and
- (b) Bg1-b6-a5 would win if it can be followed by a2-a3!.

But Black has 45. ... Kc6!. Then 46. Be3 Kd5 47. Bd2 allows 47. ... Bxd2+ 48. Kxd2 Kd4!, with the opposition.

Or 46. Kd1 Kd5 47. Bb6 Kc6 48. Ba5 Kb5!.

In mutual time pressure, Black blundered with 45. ... Ke6??.

White, a world-class player, had two minutes to calculate the consequences. He must have looked at continuations such as 46. Be3 Kd5 47. Kd1 Bd4.

There were other things to calculate. But he eventually saw that 46. Bb6! would allow him to execute plan (b) faster than after 45. ... Kc6.

For example, 46. Bb6! Kd5 47. Ba5! and now 47. ... Kc5 48. a3 wins.

And 47. ... Kd4 48. Kd1! or even 48. Kb1! is *zugzwang*, i.e., 48. ... d5 49. Kc1! K-moves 50. a3.

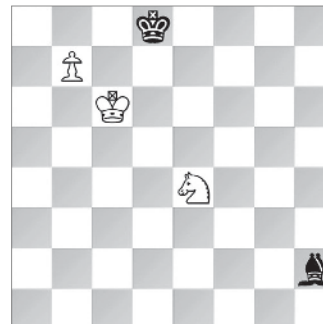
But White had spent nearly all of his two minutes to see this. His right hand was stretching across the board with the bishop to play 46. Bb6 when he forfeited.

Now you may be thinking: "Yeah, but long moves, short moves, right-handed moves — none of this matters to me when I play on-line. I don't stretch to move with my computer mouse."

True, mouse moves are more clock-friendly. But when the first big COVID-19 era tournament was held last year I wondered about the risks of making long and short right-handed moves.

CYBERMOVES

GM Magnus Carlsen
GM Ian Nepomniachtchi
Magnus Carlsen Invitational, 04.28.2020



BLACK TO MOVE

Black's bishop has enjoyed free range. In the last eight moves it had gone from g1 to h2, b8, f4, b8, g3 and then h2 again.

But Magnus Carlsen had figured out a way to threaten to win with 78. Nd6!. There is one bishop move that draws and it's one of the long ones, 77. ... Bc7!.

Then 78. Nd6 Bb8! or 78. Nc5 Bb8! and White can't make progress.

Black fell into a psychological trap with 77. ... Bb8??. He found himself in *zugzwang* after 78. Nc5!.

He resigned after 78. ... Bh2 79. Ne6+ because of 80. Nc7!. Alternatively Black could have tried 78. ... Ba7, which is met by 79. Na6! Ke8 80. Kc7 and then maneuvering the knight to c6 via the b4-square. The long right-handed move was fatal. ♠



In Memoriam: Harold J. Winston

March 27, 1945–February 11, 2021

By AL LAWRENCE

For more than half a century, Harold Winston was the gentlemanly but passionate voice of democracy and inclusiveness in American chess. Many of us saw him once a year at the annual delegates' meetings he came to unfailingly for all those decades. It's natural that we think of him as we've recently seen him, a man in his mid-seventies.

George R. R. Martin, author of *Game of Thrones*, preserves Harold as a young man in the story "Unsound Variations." There he's Martin's old friend and opponent "Hal Winslow," but we know it's Harold — as a chess team player-captain holding a clipboard, a tad disheveled in the excitement of the moment. Martin, a student at Northwestern University, and Harold, while at University of Chicago, met over the board in the late 1960s.

Winston was president of the US Chess Federation from 1987 to 1990, overseeing our organization's 50th anniversary. That was during my first years as the organization's executive director. Forty years later, until his death, we served together in essentially the same relationship with the US Chess Trust, a national charity supporting at-risk kids and promising chess prodigies, among other causes. In between those times, we often worked together when Harold led the decision process about who would be inducted into the World Chess Hall of Fame, and he personally gavelled in those enshrined each year.

Winston was born in the Bronx, New York, where he played on chess teams for the Bronx High School of Science and then for City College. He was top collegian in New York City's scholastic congress in 1968. Moving to the University of Chicago for graduate school, he captained its chess team and even won the decisive game in the Pan-American Intercollegiate Chess Championship that same year to make the University of Chicago national champions.

Harold served his whole adult life as a passionate volunteer chess leader, without remuneration. He was tireless and effective, always interested in getting the job done. He made a major impact on our national chess government as a young man, pushing to make the organization more democratic — always a goal for Harold.

Harold organized major chess competitions. He served as president of the Intercollegiate Chess League of America, once a separate organization until Harold brought it into the US Chess Federation, a huge step. He was president of the Illinois Chess Association. He co-founded and served as president of the Chess Journalists of America, helping to develop and recognize the sports writers of chess.

For many years, he was the *terra firma* of the US Chess Federation, chairing its bylaws committee safely through attempts to bring advantages to some groups over others. Harold was perhaps the longest-serving continuous delegate at our annual meetings. But he also worked on numerous committees for many hours between these conventions. Harold was determinedly inclusive, advocating and sponsoring school chess, chess for the elderly, and particularly girls' and women's chess.

After finishing his course work for a Ph.D. in history at University of Chicago, he heard the call to the courtroom and switched to Loyola Law School. Attending at night and working a fulltime day job for Social Security, he nevertheless graduated *magna cum laude*. "He could have made a lot of money joining a private law firm," his younger brother Marvin said. "But Harold was always more concerned about helping others than making money."

Many of those in our realm of 64 squares and a ticking clock — where the debates only *seem* like life and death — had little knowledge of Harold's prominence in the world of real life-and-death arguments. He supervised dozens of attorneys for the Legal Resource Division of the Cook County Public Defender, taking on the most difficult cases. He won new trials for people convicted of murder in at least seven separate cases. "He was our rock and grandmaster," Assistant Public Defender Robert Drizin said. Winston's most famous case was that of Alton Logan, a man incarcerated for 26 years for a murder he did not commit. Logan was freed, and his case was featured in a segment of television's *60 Minutes*, in which Winston appeared. Always, Harold cared deeply about all those who needed help.

Many didn't know about Winston's legal successes on behalf of others because he was modest — and he remained humble in a crowd never famous for being self-effacing. Harold was approachable by all and would listen to everyone's concerns, famously producing a trusty legal-sized yellow writing pad to scribble notes summarizing someone's concerns — resulting in pages a few inches too long for me to easily file.

Harold was renowned as a gentleman. But despite his calm, diplomatic manner, at times there were those who disagreed — and, even though brothers in chess, went too far in their passionate rhetoric. Like Joseph in Genesis, Harold quickly forgave his brothers. In all our years together, I never once saw Harold act on anything but his understanding of what was fair and best for all. I never knew him to nurse a grudge.

Harold had an easy, appreciative humor — and who can forget his outrageously infectious laugh? Sometimes hundreds in a delegates' meeting had to laugh in response, even though they hadn't heard the joke. I'm glad that Harold lived to see the fruits of his tireless labor in the vineyard of chess. I'm grateful that he got to see chess at its height of popularity, and to see the U.S. as a chess superpower, and to see the wonderful home of the World Chess Hall of Fame in St. Louis. The last was a project he devoted countless hours to as president of the US Chess Trust.

Sometimes in life, the challenge to admirers is to gently retire a legend who has contributed so much. But Harold Winston is a legend we never, ever wanted to retire. All of us at the US Chess Trust, especially, will miss our leader and colleague. How do we continue without Harold? Thankfully, we have his example and his memories.

Harold J. Winston passed away, shortly before turning 76, after continuing heart complications. Of all his passions, his family ranked first. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Carol Weinberg; his daughters, Elizabeth and Katherine Winston; his brother and sister-in-law, Marvin and Ellen Winston; and his nieces and nephews, Emily Winston, Sarah and Steve Platovskiy (Ava and Jake), and Jessica and Kevin Bulmer (Frankie). ♠



REMEMBERING HAROLD

by E. Steven Doyle, President, US Chess Trust and former president, US Chess

Harold Winston walked into my life via a note he wrote to me describing the U.S. Open delegates meeting and what was then the concerns voiced by GM Arnold Denker and Fred Cramer that all the funds for the life members until 1976 had been spent and not a penny saved.

Our correspondence continued and I attended my first delegates meeting in Chicago in 1979. From that point forward, Harold and I worked together on many projects.

Even when we were on different sides, Harold maintained a calm demeanor as we debated and negotiated to try and find common ground — Harold, the social progressive, and me, the fiscal conservative. He liked broad programs for prisoners and to encourage women to play. He liked to encourage college chess competitions. I was a club and master promoter. We found lots to agree on.

Harold wanted openness and access and each member having a way to vote. We all found our way to what we have today. And Harold was a big part of all that.

He loved chess and US Chess and recorded all our history on long yellow pads upon which he wrote lengthy notes for decades.

I have no doubt that Harold is organizing a heavenly chess club with fair play rules and inclusion for all. That's what Harold Winston was all about. He lived it his entire life. And we all owe him a debt of gratitude.

IN THE NEWS

by JOHN HARTMANN

WESLEY SO BECOMES U.S. CITIZEN



Reigning U.S. Champion GM Wesley So took the final step in his American Dream, becoming an American citizen after his naturalization ceremony on February 26, 2021 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Public Affairs Officer Debbie Cannon passed along this interview with So.

USCIS: Why did you come to the U.S.?

So: For a better future, because this is the land of opportunity.

USCIS: What do you like about the U.S.?

So: I love that anyone can strive to succeed. You are not held back by your color, lack of connections or the amount of money you have. If you work hard, you have a better chance of making it here than anywhere else in the world. I came here ready to work hard, and it turned out just as I dreamed. That does not mean I don't love the Philippines. I have good memories from there. But I did not have the connections needed to succeed in that culture. I was from the province, not a city boy. [I] had no money. ... I wanted to go further, and there was only one country where "a nobody" can make it — the USA!

USCIS: Why are you becoming a U.S. citizen?

So: I want to give back to a country that has been so good to me. From the moment I landed here I was encouraged and enabled to become better than I was. I like this attitude and the tremendous generosity of American culture. Most people here

have no idea what it is like anywhere else in the world, and they don't appreciate the amazing spirit of this country. I have competed in most countries of the world and I can say... I love it here!

USCIS: How did you feel when you became a U.S. citizen?

So: I got so hyper and excited I was talking [loudly] all day. It was literally a dream come true. I am now a part of the American Dream. I am part of the most successful country on earth, ready to make my own contribution and have my own legacy here.

USCIS: What will this mean for your future in the field of chess?

So: Well, that I cannot say. Chess is a sport, and like other elite sports, your efforts can go up and down for all sorts of reasons. I know I will try my best to pay back what has been done for me. I plan to be a good citizen and help others the way I was helped. God Bless America!

ARONIAN PLANS MOVE TO U.S.

The Saint Louis Chess Club announced — also on February 26! — that GM Levon Aronian plans to relocate to St. Louis and represent the U.S. in international competition.

Writing on his personal Facebook page, Aronian decried a lack of support from the Armenian government under the current Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan. Aronian therefore decided to take Rex Sinquefeld up on a "repeated offer" to assist with a move to the United States and represent the Stars and Stripes.

For his part, Sinquefeld said in a press release:

Levon played in our first-ever Sinquefeld Cup in 2013. I've come to know him over the years to be a fierce competitor and true gentleman. He represents the best of our sport," said Rex Sinquefeld, co-founder of the Saint Louis Chess Club. "When he came to us with interest in moving to St. Louis and representing the U.S., I could think of no one better. We welcome him with open arms.

US Chess President Mike Hoffpauir was quoted as saying:

The US Chess Federation welcomes the news of Super-GM Levon Aronian's intent to relocate to the United States. Until such time

that he is living in the United States, the US Chess Federation has no jurisdiction with regard to his status with FIDE. As with all transfer matters, the US Chess Federation does not allow for inviting or paying for the transfer of any player. Our role is to process the player's administrative paperwork as required by FIDE.

While the timing and specifics of this move remain up in the air, *Chess Life* plans more coverage of this momentous event in the coming months.

MIKHAEVSKI IS ISRAELI CHAMPION



A familiar figure on the American swiss circuit, GM Victor Mikhalevski is the winner of the 2021 Israeli Championship (March 7-15, 2021). Mikhalevski scored 7/9 to finish a half-point ahead of FM Ido Gorshtein and GM Tamir Nabaty at 6½/9. IM Yuliya Shvayger took the Women's Championship by two full points at 8/9, ahead of Nadejda Reprun.

The always well-prepared Mikhalevski used the Bayonet Attack in the Mar del Plata variation of the King's Indian to great effect in his round five victory over Ohad Kraus.

KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE (E97)

GM Victor Mikhalevski (2552)

Ohad Kraus (2363)

Israeli Championship 2021 (5.4), 03.11.2021

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 0-0 5. Nf3 d6 6. Be2 e5 7. 0-0 Nc6 8. d5 Ne7 9. b4 a5 10. bxa5 Rxa5 11. a4 b6

Very rare. 11. ... Nd7 or 11. ... c5 are more common.

12. Bd2 Ra8 13. Ne1 Nd7 14. Nd3 f5 15. f3 Nf6 16. Nf2 Re8 17. Nb5 Bf8? 18. a5! c6

No better is 18. ... Ba6 19. axb6 cxb6 20. c5! bxc5 (20. ... dxc5 21. Bg5!) 21. Ba5.

19. dxc6 Nxc6 20. Bg5

Threatening to remove the defender on f6 and play Qd1-d5+, winning material.

20. ... Kg7 21. exf5 gxf5 22. Bxf6+ Kxf6 23. Qd5 Bd7 24. Qg8!

A mysterious move that, upon inspection, turns out to be not-so-mysterious! White's big idea is 25. Ng4+! (or 25. Ne4+, which amounts to the same thing) 25. ... fxxg4 (after 25. ... Ke7 26. Qxh7+ Ke6 27. Qg6+ mate follows) 26. fxxg4+ Ke7 27. Qf7 mate.

24. ... Bg7 25. Qxh7 Re6



26. Ne4+!

Here 26. Ng4+ is less precise, but it still does the job.

26. ... Kf7

Black can't accept the piece: 26. ... fxe4 27. fxe4+ Ke7 28. Qxg7+ Ke8 29. Qf8 mate (or 29. Rf8 mate).

27. Nbx6+ Kf8

After 27. ... Rxd6 28. Nxd6+ Kf6 29. c5! White is crashing through the Black position.

28. Nxf5 Bf6 29. Ng5, Black resigned.

The key idea is 29. Ng5 Bxg5 30. Qg7+ Ke8 31. Qg8 mate.

DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS

GM Hovhannes Gabuzyan, currently a member of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley chess team, won the 2021 Armenian Championship (February 16-28, 2021) with a dominating score of 8½/11. Entering the event ranked ninth out of twelve players, Gabuzyan had a performance rating of 2790 and finished one-and-a-half points ahead of GMs Arman Pashikan and Samvel Ter-Sahakyan, who shared second place with 7/11.



The Women's Championship was won by WIM Susanna Gaboyan (she of the famous photograph, above, by David Llada; also seen here in a less intense moment) with a score of 6½/9.

NAKAMURA AND SO ADVANCE IN MAGNUS CARLSEN INVITATIONAL

With the qualifying rounds (March 13-15, 2021) just completed as we go to press, GMs Hikaru Nakamura and Wesley So have advanced to the knockout rounds (March 16-21) of the 2021 Magnus Carlsen Invitational. Pairings for the rapidplay knockout are: GMs Magnus Carlsen (#1 seed) versus Levon Aronian (#8), Anish Giri (#2) versus Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (#7), Wesley So (#3) against Alireza Firouzja (#6), and Hikaru Nakamura (#4) against Ian Nepomniachtchi (#5).

So, who finished with 9½/15, had one of the best games of the qualifying event, defeating Aronian in stunning fashion.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E32)

GM Wesley So (2770)

GM Levon Aronian (2781)

Magnus Carlsen Invitational (6.8), 03.14.2021

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. Qc2 O-O 5. Nf3 d5 6. Bg5 h6 7. Bh4 dxc4!? 8. e4 g5 9. Bg3 b5 10. e5 Nh5 11. Qe4 Qd5 12. Qg4 Ng7 13. Be2 f5?

Logical enough, but it turns out this is a blunder. Black holds the balance with 13. ... Nc6.

14. Qh3 g4 15. Qxh6 gxf3 16. Bxf3 Qxd4 17. O-O!

Perhaps this is what Aronian missed. Just plain bad was 17. Bxa8? since it allows 17. ... Bxc3+ 18. bxc3 Qxc3+ 19. Ke2 f4!?

17. ... c6 18. Rad1 Qb6 19. Ne4!?

Winning almost on the spot was 19. Bh4! with Bh4-f6 to follow.

19. ... fxe4 20. Bxe4 Rf5 21. Bxf5 exf5



22. e6! Bf8 23. Be5

The threat is 24. e7.

23. ... c5 24. Bxg7 Bxg7 25. e7! Bd7

Note that 25. ... Qxh6 fails to 26. e8=Q+ Kh7 27. Qxc8.

26. Qh5 Qc6 27. Rfe1! Be8 28. Rd8! Na6 29. Re6!!

The star move, trying to deflect the queen from the defense of the e8-square.

29. ... Qd7

After 29. ... Qxe6 30. Qxe8+ Kh7 31. Qh5+ Bh6 32. e8=Q there's no back-rank mate since the new queen covers everything!

30. Rxa8 Nc7 31. Rd8 Nxe6 32. Rxe8+ Nf8 33. Rxf8+, Black resigned.

So has it all under control: 33. Rxf8+ Bxf8 34. e8=Q and the back-rank is still safe, i.e. 34. ... Qd1+ 35. Qxd1.

Nakamura scored a professional +3 (9/15), taking short strategic draws to save strength. Certainly his final round game against GM Magnus Carlsen, the winner of the qualifying event with 10½/15, will go down in the annals of opening theory history. (Yes, this is really what they played.)

"THE BONGCLOUD"(C20)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2847)

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2736)

Magnus Carlsen Invitational (15.3), 03.15.2021

1. e4 e5 2. Ke2 Ke7 3. Ke1 Ke8 4. Ke2 Ke7 5. Ke1 Ke8 6. Ke2 Ke7, draw.

Look for complete coverage of the Magnus Carlsen Invitational in an upcoming issue. ♠

ANOTHER WIN FOR WESLEY SO!

So defeats Carlsen in Opera Euro Rapid.

By **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMAYAN**

While we await the safe return of over-the-board tournaments later this year, the Meltwater Champions Chess Tour has become a staple on the chess calendar, with a top-level event scheduled for each month.

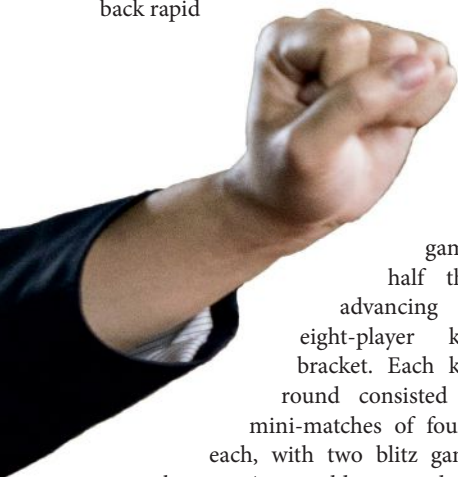


PHOTO: LENNART OOTES

Chess24 has made the tour accessible to fans across the globe by providing commentary in nine different languages, with three streams of English language commentary, each geared to players of different levels. I spent a lot of time watching the “expert” commentary team of GM Peter Leko and IM Tania Sachdev (plus their multiple guests) which provided both entertainment and educational value.

The third stop of the tour, the Opera Euro Rapid, kicked off less than a week (February 6 through 14) after the completion of the Wijk aan Zee super tournament. With the notable absence of GM Fabiano Caruana, the field included many of the “usual suspects.” American GMs Leinier Dominguez and Sam Shankland made their debuts on the 2021 tour, while GMs Hikaru Nakamura and Wesley So returned for the third time.

The schedule of the tournament was grueling: the preliminaries consisted of three days of five back-to-back rapid



games, with half the field advancing to the eight-player knockout bracket. Each knockout round consisted of two mini-matches of four games each, with two blitz games and then an Armageddon round deciding matters in the case of a tie.

With the starting time set at 5 p.m. CET, some of the players also had the hurdle of the huge time difference. GM Ding Liren's results suffered enormously as he had to play his last game of the day at 4 a.m. local time, while the eventual winner of the tournament Wesley So was quite thrilled about his 10 a.m. start time. The American enjoyed the fact that the games started soon after he rose, not leaving a lot of time for him to get nervous about the games. Hikaru Nakamura has also previously mentioned being quite fine with an early start time in his new California home, calling himself a morning person.

Day one of the preliminaries was quite eventful with many decisive results, missed opportunities, and even an unfortunate mouse slip by GM Alexander Grischuk against GM Anish Giri, which somehow did not end in a disaster: **1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 Nf6 4. Kf1** when, of course, White meant to play 4. 0–0. (See above for a screenshot of the critical moment). The game ended in a draw on move 52.



The tournament kicked off in the best possible way for Wesley So.

KNIGHT MOVES

GM Wesley So (2741)
GM Magnus Carlsen (2881)
Opera Euro Rapid | Prelims (1,2),
02.06.2021



WHITE TO MOVE

41. Ne6!

Using the threat of mate on h7 (after Ne6–g5) to maneuver the knight to the kingside.

41. ... Rc2 42. Ng5 Rg7

White is only helped by 42. ... Nxg5 43. fxxg5 as it allows a check on d4.

43. Rb8+ Rg8 44. Rxg8+

44. Rb6! looks devastating but White has to navigate Black's tactical resource: 44. ... Nxg5 (only move) (if 44. ... Qg7 45. Rh6 Nxg5 46. fxxg5 followed by g5–g6 and White is winning) 45. Rxg6 Nf3+ 46. Kg3! Nxh4 47. Rxg8+ Kxg8 48. Kxh4 Kf7 49. Kg5 and White will win this.

44. ... Kxg8 45. Nxe4 dxe4 46. Kh1 Kg7

This must have been a mouse slip. It makes no sense for the black king to stay on the g-file as White is clearly preparing to play g2–g4. The black king is still unsafe after 46. ... Kf7, but the game continues.

47. g4 Kf7 48. gxf5 Qxf5 49. Rg5

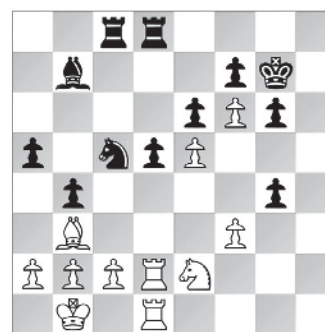
Now it's game over as the h7–pawn falls. Black must lose material or be mated.

49. ... Rc1+ 50. Kg2 Rc2+ 51. Kf1 Rc1+ 52. Ke2 Rc2+ 53. Ke1, Black resigned.

The World Champion came back with a vengeance, winning the next four games and ending the first day on top of the leaderboard. In the final round he chose the unorthodox hybrid Dragonordorf against Dominguez, which almost cost him the game.

CHOOSE A SQUARE

GM Leinier Dominguez (2786)
GM Magnus Carlsen (2881)
Opera Euro Rapid | Prelims (5,4),
02.06.2021



BLACK TO MOVE

27. ... Kh6??

The king needs to go back with 27. ... Kg8.

28. Rh1+

Dominguez missed an opportunity, but the win is very difficult to spot. 28. Rd4!! covers the e4-square and threatens checkmate with 29. Rh1+ Kg5 30. f4+ Kf5 31. Ng3 mate. Black is forced to give up material with 28. ... Ne4 (28. ... gxf3 loses to 29. Rg4 Kh5 30. Rg3 followed by a checkmate on the h-file) 29. fxe4 Kg5 30. exd5 and White has a winning advantage.

28. ... Kg5 29. f4+ Kf5 30. Rh1 g5 31. Nd4+ Kg6

QUARTER



WESLEY SO

United States
Rapid rating: 2741
World Rank: #21



MAGNUS CARLSEN

Norway
Rapid rating: 2881
World Rank: #1



TEIMOUR RADJABOV

Azerbaijan
Rapid rating: 2758
World Rank: #14



MAXIME VACHIER-LAGRAVE

France
Rapid rating: 2860
World Rank: #2

Black eventually went on to win the game but it turns out he had a better move here. 31. ... Ke4!! is a terrifying move to play in an actual game, but the king survives in the middle of the board! 32. fxf5 (White fares no better after 32. Re2+ Kxd4 33. Rd1+ Nd3 34. Rxd3+ Kc5 and now 35. fxf5 is bad due to 35. ... Ba6 winning an exchange.) 32. ... Kxe5 and now the king will run safely to the queenside.

32. f5+ exf5 33. Nxf5 g3 34. Rg2 Ne4 35. Nxf3 Re8 36. Nxe4 dxe4 37. e6 fxe6 38. f7 Rf8 39. Bxe6 Rc5 40. Rg3 Re5 41. Bg4 e3 42. Kc1 Rxf7 43. Rxf7 Kxf7 44. Kd1 Kf6 45. Ke1 Bd5 46. a3 bxa3 47. bxa3 Be4 48. Rxe3 Bxc2 49. Kd2 Rxe3 50. Kxe3 Ke5 51. Bf3 Bf5 52. Bc6 Kd6 53. Bf3 Kc5 54. Be2 Bg6 55. Bf1 Bh5 56. Ke4 Bd1 57. Ke3 g4 58. Ba6 Bf3 59. Bf1 Bc6 60. Kf4 Kd4 61. Kxg4 Kc3 62. Kf5 Kb2 63. Ke5 Kxa3 64. Kd6 Be8 65. Kc5 a4 66. Bc4 Kb2 67. Kb4 a3 68. Bd5 Bg6 69. Be6 Bb1 70. Bd5 Ba2 71. Be4 Bf7 72. Bb1 Bb3, White resigned.

Carlsen's post-game verdict? "Apparently I could have been mated at some point, but he didn't see it and neither did I, so who cares!"

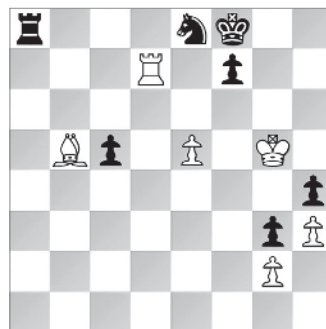
Sam Shankland defeated Ding Liren on his way to an even score at the end of the first day.

MISSING A DEFENDER

GM Sam Shankland (2609)
GM Ding Liren (2836)
Opera Euro Rapid | Prelims (3.4),
02.06.2021

(see diagram top of next column)

45. ... Ng7??



BLACK TO MOVE

It's crucial for Black to find a way to defend the f7-pawn: 45. ... Rc8 46. Bc4 Rc7 47. Rxc7 Nxc7 gives some fighting chances.

46. Bc4 Ne6+ 47. Kf6 Nd8 48. Bxf7 Nxf7 49. Rxf7+ Ke8 50. Rh7 Ra2 51. Rh8+ Kd7 52. e6+ Kc6 53. e7 Rf2+ 54. Kg5, Black resigned.

Day two did not dramatically shake up the standings. A one-move blunder by Nakamura in round 10 allowed Carlsen to stay ahead of the field. So suffered a seventh-round loss at the hands of his compatriot Dominguez, but maintained a second-place tie with Giri, giving him solid chances to qualify to the next stage.

TOO GRABBY

GM Leinier Dominguez (2786)
GM Wesley So (2741)
Opera Euro Rapid | Prelims (7.3),
02.07.2021



BLACK TO MOVE

19. ... Bxb2?

The position is uncomfortable for Black as White maintains the bishop pair, but this pawn grab proves to be quite costly.

20. Rb1 Bf6 21. Bh3!

Dominguez finds a way to exploit the back-rank issues.

21. ... Nf5 22. Bxf5 Qxf5 23. Bd6 Rfd8 24. Rxb7 Bd4

The bishop is of course untouchable: 24. ... Rxd6 25. Re8+ Rxe8 26. Qxe8 mate.

25. Be5 Bb6 26. Bc7!

Exchanging the bishops by using the same back-rank tactic. White goes on to collect more pawns on the seventh rank.

26. ... Bxc7 27. Rxc7 h5

If 27. ... Rxc7 then 28. Re8+ Rxe8 29. Qxe8 is mate.

28. Rxa7 Rb8 29. h4 d4 30. Re5 Qf3 31. Kh2 Kg8 32. Re4 Rf8 33. Ra5 Rb5 34. Rxb5

FINALISTS



DANIIL DUBOV

Russia

Rapid rating: 2770
World Rank: #12

ANISH GIRI

Netherlands

Rapid rating: 2731
World Rank: #25

JAN-KRZYSZTOF DUDA

Poland

Rapid rating: 2774
World Rank: #10

LEVON ARONIAN

Armenia

Rapid rating: 2778
World Rank: #8

cxb5 35. Rxd4 Ra8 36. Rf4 Qd5 37. a3 Qc5 38. Qb4 Qxc2 39. Qxb5 Qa2 40. a4 Rd8 41. Qc4 Qxc4 42. dxc4 Rc8 43. Kg2 Kf8 44. Rf3 Ke7 45. a5 Ra8 46. Ra3, Black resigned.

The third and final qualifying day saw a lot of action and drama. Carlsen, So, and Giri were in a secure position to qualify, whereas GM Ian Nepomniachtchi, who entered the day in fourth place, failed to make the cut after a disastrous collapse.

The big fan favorite, GM Daniil Dubov, was the last player to advance to the knockout round. His success came at the expense of Nakamura, who fell to Shankland in the final round, and in a completely winning position.

TOUGH TRANSPOSITIONS

GM Hikaru Nakamura (2829)
GM Sam Shankland (2609)
Opera Euro Rapid | Prelims (15.4),
02.08.2021



WHITE TO MOVE

35. Qh8+?

Nakamura chooses the wrong move order. 35. Bd3! first was more accurate as it precludes Black's defensive resources.

35. ... Kf7 36. Bd3 Qf8! 37. Qh7

Here 37. Bg6+ Ke7 38. Bd8+ doesn't work as after 38. ... Kxd8 the black queen is defended by the bishop.

37. ... fxe5 38. Bd8 e4 39. fxe4 Qd6

Now Black is the one playing for a win.

40. Bh4 dxe4 41. Bc2 Qa6 42. g5 hxg5 43. Bxg5 Qxa7 44. Qg6+ Kf8 45. h6 Qg1+ 46. Ka2 Bd5+ 47. b3 Qf2 48. Kb1 Bc3 49. Bc1 gxh6 50. Qxh6+ Kg8 51. Qg5+ Ng7 52. Qd8+ Qf8 53. Qc7 Bf6 54. Qxa5 Nf5 55. Ba3 Qc8 56. Bc5 Nd4 57. Bd1 Nxb3 58. Bxb3, White resigned.

The always-animated Nakamura was visibly distressed on camera, showing complete disbelief and disgust at his own play.

Dubov played what most would consider the wildest game of the tournament. Here I will only highlight the key moments, but I would encourage the reader to delve further into the game and enjoy analyzing it.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT DECLINED, MERAN VARIATION (D48)

GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda (2774)
GM Daniil Dubov (2770)
Opera Euro Rapid | Prelims (13.1),
02.08.2021

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. Nc3 c6 5. e3 Nbd7 6. Bd3 dxc4 7. Bxc4 b5 8. Bd3 Bb7 9. O-O a6 10. e4 c5 11. e5 Nd5 12. Ng5 Nxc3 13. bxc3 Be7



WHITE TO MOVE

14. Nxe6!?

The beginning of the fireworks!

14. ... fxe6 15. Qh5+ g6

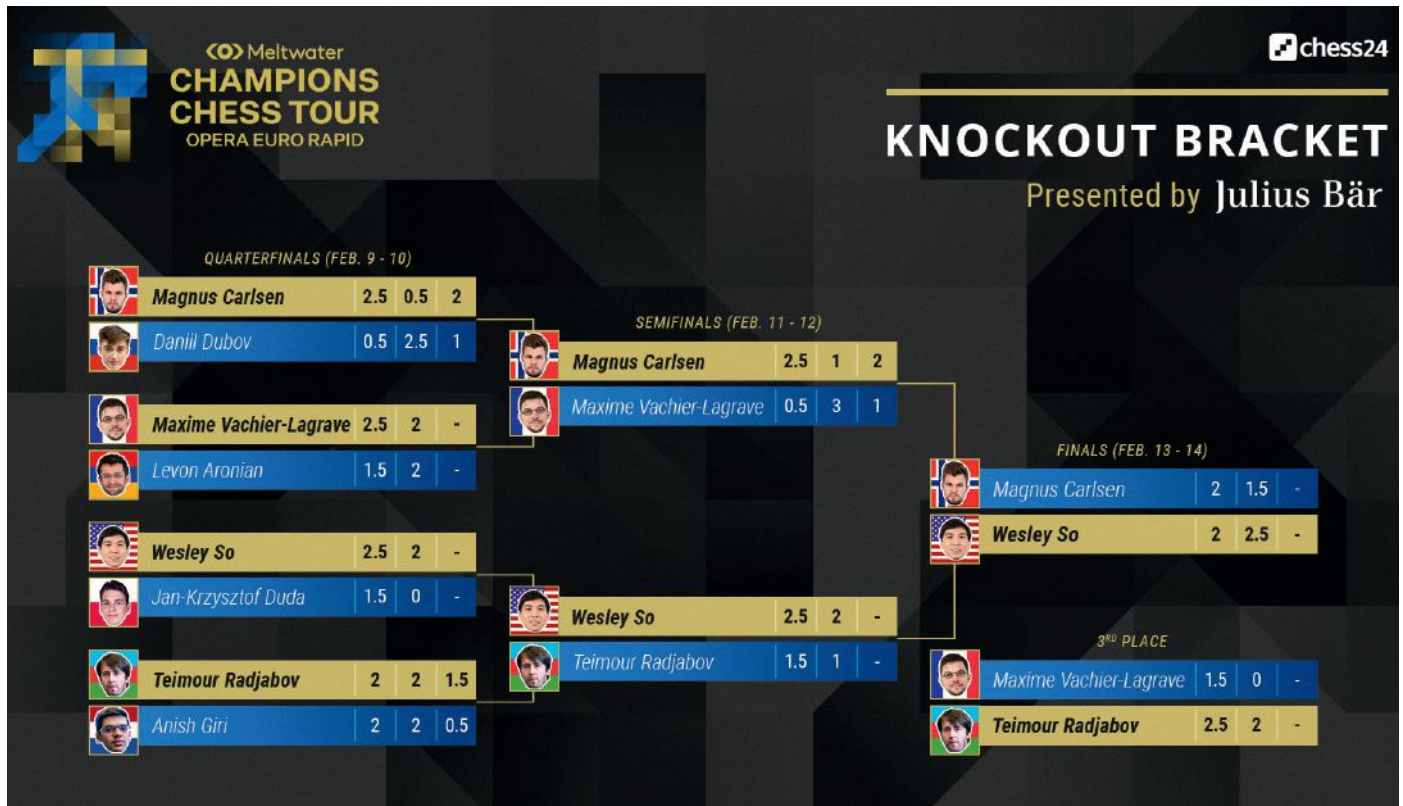
After 15. ... Kf8 16. f4 Kg8 the engine thinks the king is safe, but the position looks very scary for Black to human eyes!

16. Bxg6+ hxg6 17. Qxg6+ Kf8 18. Bh6+ Rxh6 19. Qxh6+ Kg8 20. Qg6+ Kh8 21. Qh6+ Kg8 22. Qxe6+ Kg7 23. Rad1

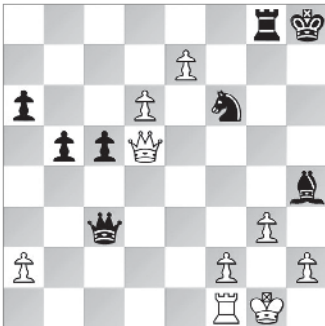
We have reached a position with an unusual material imbalance: rook and four pawns for three pieces.

23. ... Nf8 24. Qg4+ Kh8 25. d5 Nh7 26. d6 Bh4 27. e6 Qf6 28. e7 Bc6 29. g3 Rg8 30. Qh5 Qxc3 31. Rd5

It's mate in four after 31. Qxh4? Qf3.



31. ... Bxd5 32. Qxd5 Nf6



WHITE TO MOVE

33. Qxg8+!! Nxg8 34. e8=Q Bf6 35. Qh5+ Kg7 36. Rd1 Nh6 37. d7 Nf7 38. Qg4+ Kf8 39. Qe6 c4 40. Rd5 b4 41. Rf5 Kg7 42. Kg2 b3 43. axb3 cxb3 44. Qxa6 b2 45. Qb6 Bd8 46. Rxf7+ Kxf7 47. Qxd8 Qc6+ 48. f3 b1=Q??

A natural move, but a mistake! White has to settle for a draw with 48. ... Qc2+ 49. Kh3 Qh7+ 50. Kg2 (If White tries to win with 50. Kg4 he loses! The key line runs 50. ... Qg6+ 51. Kh4 Qh6+ 52. Kg4 Qe6+ — covering the e8-square prevents White from getting a second queen — 53. Kh4 b1=Q) 50. ... Qc2+ with equality.

49. Qe8+ Kg7 50. Qe5+ Kh7 51. Qh5+ Kg7 52. Qg4+ Kh6 53. Qf4+ Kh5 54. g4+ Kg6 55. d8=Q

How often do we see a position with four queens?

55. ... Qcc2+ 56. Qdd2, Black resigned.

THE QUARTERFINALS

Dubov's qualification set up a repeat clash with Carlsen from the Airthings Masters (see our "In the News" report in the March issue ~ed.), where he defeated the World Champion in the quarterfinals. Here Carlsen won the first set with a round to spare, but day two proved to be more tumultuous. It is very rare that we see the World Champion lose two games back-to-back.

LOL?

GM Magnus Carlsen (2881)
GM Daniil Dubov (2770)
Opera Euro Rapid | Knockout (6.1),
02.10.2021



WHITE TO MOVE

13. Bxh6

Carlsen started laughing on camera after playing this move. Later, when asked what was so funny, he stated that he did not recall!

13. ... f5

Of course not 13. ... gxh6?? 14. Nf6+ Kg7 15. Nxd5.

14. c4 Qc6 15. Bd2 fxe4 16. Bxa5 Qg6 17. Qe2 Rf4 18. Bd2?

It appears that the World Champion missed the point of Black's previous move. After 18. f3 exf3 19. Rxf3 Bg4 20. Rg3 Bxe2 21. Rxg6 White will enjoy his extra pawn for a long time.

18. ... Bg4 19. f3

White has no real choice. The alternative 19. Qe3 Bf3 20. g3 Qh5 leads to checkmate on the light squares.

19. ... Bxf3 20. Qf2 Rg4 21. g3 Rf8 22. Rae1 Rf6 23. dxe4 Qh5 24. Re3 Bxe4 25. Qe2?

A rare collapse by Carlsen, but the position was already tough. 25. Qe1 was mandatory.

25. ... Rxg3+!!, White resigned.

The key line is 25. ... Rxg3+ 26. Rxg3 (26. hxxg3 Qh1 mate) 26. ... Qxe2 with an easy win.

THAT OLD BACK-RANK...

GM Daniil Dubov (2770)
GM Magnus Carlsen (2881)
Opera Euro Rapid | Knockout (7.1), 02.10.2021

(see diagram top of next column)

Black went pawn hunting with his last move, leaving his kingside quite vulnerable.

22. Rd2 Qc3 23. Nd1!!

A venomous move, containing a double threat to the queen and back-rank!



WHITE TO MOVE

23. ... Re8

If Black tries to save the queen with 23. ... Qa3 the game is over: 24. Qxf8+ Kxf8 25. Rd8+ Ne8 26. Rdx8 mate.

24. Rxe8+

Good enough, but 24. Qd8 would pick up more material.

24. ... Nxe8 25. Nxc3, Black resigned.

Note that White could stumble at the finish with 25. Qc6. It looks like all of Black's pieces are hanging but he has a miraculous save: 25. ... Qe5!! 26. Qxb7 Qe1+ 27. Kg2 Qxd2 and Black is doing quite well here!

After splitting two blitz games, Carlsen reached a winning position in the Armageddon playoff when Dubov flagged. The Norwegian called it "a very disappointing day of chess" and a "disgusting performance" — perhaps a harsh assessment, but one that showed both his high standards and ongoing difficulties.

Among the other quarterfinal pairings, the tightest match was between Radjabov and Giri. Their duel was decided in the second blitz playoff game where Radjabov's two bishops prevailed in the endgame.

So obliterated Duda in both of their quarterfinal matches. After losing by a score of 2½-1½ on day one, and losing the first game in day two, Duda had no choice but to go all out to win the mini-match. But an interesting king walk in game two sealed the deal for So.

TAKE A HIKE!

GM Wesley So (2741)
GM Jan-Krzysztof Duda (2774)
Opera Euro Rapid | Knockout (6.3),
02.10.2021

(see diagram top of next column)

32. Nh4 Nxf2+ 33. Kg2 Bh3+ 34. Kg3 Qf7 35. Ng6+ Kh7 36. Nxe7+ e4 37. Nxe4 Be5+ 38. Kh4 Bf5 39. Nxf5 Qxf5 40. Nxf2, Black resigned.

Vachier-Lagrave took the lead on day one by scoring a victory with his beloved Grünfeld Defense. Day two saw an exciting battle between the two players, but in the end, Aronian was not able to win on demand in the final game of the day and was thus knocked out.



WHITE TO MOVE

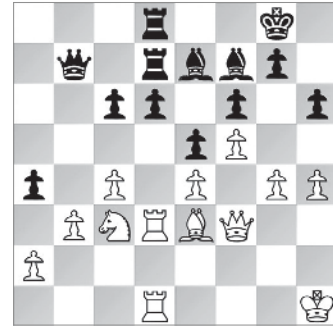
As the quarterfinals progressed, two things became clear to me, and to some other commentators. First, something was off with Carlsen's play. Second, So is a very pragmatic, risk averse player, but he is also an excellent tactician who will go for the win when given the chance. As we'll see, these observations held up as the event continued.

THE SEMI-FINALS

The semi-finals saw Carlsen paired with Vachier-Lagrave, while So met Radjabov. The first set between So and Radjabov was surprisingly combative, given the reputation that the two have as extremely solid players. The first game was a slugfest.

BLOW AFTER BLOW

GM Wesley So (2741)
GM Teimour Radjabov (2758)
Opera Euro Rapid | Knockout (12.2),
02.11.2021



WHITE TO MOVE

31. g5

So decides it's time to start operations on the kingside.

31. ... axb3 32. axb3 hxc5 33. hxc5 fxc5 34. Qg4 Bf6 35. Bxc5 Kf8

Black feels that the king will find safe haven on the e7-square.

36. Rh3 Ke7 37. Rh7 Qxb3

Radjabov seeks counterplay on the queenside, targeting the knight and the rook as there is not much he can do on the kingside.

38. Bxf6+

I can't blame So for playing this move after some thought. Given the nature of the position, it feels as though White should have some kind of winning blow. According to the engines 38. Qg3 is winning. White defends everything and is ready to take on g7, undermining the f6-bishop.

38. ... gxf6 39. Rxf7+ Kxf7 40. Qg6+ Kf8 41. Qxf6+ Ke8 42. Qh8+

TOUGH DAYS FOR TEAM USA

Wesley So may have been the sole qualifier to the knockout rounds, but three more American players were in the qualifying field at the Opera Euro Rapid. Hikaru Nakamura was eliminated on tiebreaks after finishing tied for eighth place with Daniil Dubov. Sam Shankland tied for 10th place in the preliminaries, while Leinier Dominguez ended in a tie for 12th place.



LEINIER DOMINGUEZ

Rapid rating: 2786
World Rank: #6



HIKARU NAKAMURA

Rapid rating: 2829
World Rank: #4



SAM SHANKLAND

Rapid rating: 2609
World Rank: #168

White at least has a draw. The burden falls on Black to avoid blundering into a loss!

42. ... Kf7 43. Qh5+ Kf8??

Giving the game away.

Black holds the draw after 43. ... Kg8 44. Rg1+ Rg7 and here we see the difference with the game, where this move is impossible! 45. Rxg7+ Kxg7 46. Qg5+ Kf7 47. Qxd8 Qxc3 48. Qd7+ Kg8 49. Qe6+ Kh8 and neither side can play for the win.

44. Rg1! Rf7 45. f6!

A nice tactical motif! White takes away the e7-square.

45. ... Rxf6 46. Qh7, Black resigned.

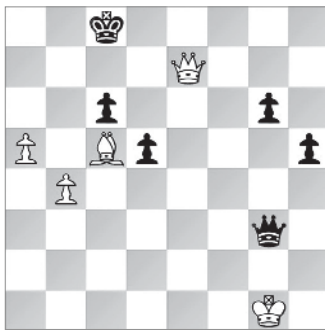
After losing the second game, the American scored his second victory with another king march.

GREAT TIMING

GM Wesley So (2741)

GM Teimour Radjabov (2758)

Opera Euro Rapid | Knockout (14.2),
02.11.2021



WHITE TO MOVE

44. Kf1 Qd3+ 45. Kf2 Qd2+ 46. Kf3 Qd1+ 47. Kf4 Qg4+ 48. Ke5 Qe4+ 49. Kf6

The endgame works out perfectly for White as he covers everything just in time.

49. ... Qxe7+ 50. Kxe7 h4 51. Kd6 h3 52. Bg1 d4 53. Kxc6 d3 54. a6 Kb8 55. b5 d2 56. a7+ Ka8 57. b6, Black resigned.

After So took the first set with a draw in game four, day two of the semifinals was less dramatic. So won the third game and punched his ticket to the finals with a 2-1 result.

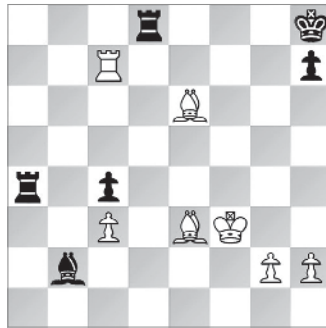
The World Champion, on the other hand, had to play another Armageddon to secure his spot in the finals. While he won the first set against MVL, it was not smooth sailing. After showing high class in the first game to win in a dominant fashion, Carlsen missed a simple tactic in game three.

COUNTERSTRIKE

GM Magnus Carlsen (2881)

GM Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (2860)

Opera Euro Rapid | Knockout (14.1),
02.11.2021



WHITE TO MOVE

34. Bd4+?

So tempting! But MVL saw further. Carlsen missed that 34. Rc8!! wins on the spot. The rook is untouchable, i.e. 34. ... Rxc8 35. Bd4 mate.

34. ... Rxd4 35. cxd4 Bxd4 36. Bf5 Ra7 37. Rxc4 Bf6 38. h4 Kg7 39. Kg4

White went on to win the game, but it was not an easy task.

39. ... Be7 40. Kh5 Ra5 41. g4 Ra7 42. Rc6 Bf8 43. g5 Rb7 44. Bc2 Bb4 45. Kg4 Bd2 46. Rh6 Kg8 47. Rd6 Bc1 48. Be4 Rc7? 49. Rd8+! Kf7

The alternative 49. ... Kg7 is impossible as it runs into 50. Bd5 h6 51. Rg8+ Kh7 52. g6 mate.

50. Bxh7, Black resigned.

The World Champion was visibly upset after not spotting the simple tactic. "You are not really supposed to miss mate in twos," he lamented after the game.

Day two brought even more trouble as Vachier-Lagrave won the set to force tiebreaks. Carlsen mouse slipped and hung his queen in the final rapid game, but his position was already falling apart. After the blitz playoff ended in a tie, the Armageddon went wrong for the Frenchman as he found himself in a bad position after the opening and resigned another 25 moves later.

THE FINALS

And so the final round rematch was set between Magnus Carlsen and Wesley So. While the World Champion had to be considered the favorite, So did defeat him in their head-to-head match here in the preliminaries as well as in the finals of the Skilling Open. (See our February issue for more on this big win. ~ed.)

In the first set of the match, Carlsen decided to test both So's tactical skills and also his new Chessable course! Playing White in game two of the first set, the American played a sharp line in the Fried Liver from his 1. e4 Chessable course, forgot the theory at a crucial moment, and lost the game. Has a super grandmaster ever been more relatable to us mortals?

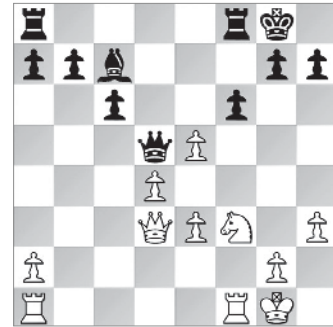
Carlsen took a break in the next game and drew quickly with the White pieces, but he paid the price for his decision in the fourth game of the set.

SHATTERED POSITIONS

GM Wesley So (2741)

GM Magnus Carlsen (2881)

Opera Euro Rapid | Knockout (26.1),
02.13.2021



WHITE TO MOVE

22. exf6 gxf6

Ugly and forced, this is a move that Carlsen didn't like playing. If 22. ... Rxf6 White plays 23. e4 with advantage.

23. e4 Qd7 24. Rad1 Rad8 25. Nh4!

The knight is headed to f5 where it will make a nuisance of itself.

25. ... Kh8 26. Nf5 c5 27. d5 Be5 28. Rb1 b6 29. Qc4 Rfe8 30. Kh1 Bd4 31. Rf4 Rxe4 32. Rxe4 Qxf5 33. Rbe1 Rxd5??

Total collapse. 33. ... Be5 closes the entry of the rooks on the e-file. The position is still bad but Black has a fighting chance.

34. Rg4! h5

If 34. ... Rd8 35. Qf7 leads to mate.

35. Re8+ Kh7 36. Re7+ Kh8 37. Qc1!, Black resigned.

Naturally, So was very happy to win on demand to even the score. What surprised me was hearing Carlsen say that he was fairly happy with a drawn set in the postgame interview. The World Champion is rarely satisfied with such a result, especially after having the upper hand.

It all came down to the final mini-match, held on Valentine's Day. Who would feel the love, and who would suffer heartbreak?

In the first game, and in an unpleasant position, Carlsen decided to sacrifice a piece out of nowhere but failed to get any compensation for it and lost quickly. Coming back against the super solid U.S. Champion is no easy task, but with three games to go, the match was still up for grabs. Unfortunately, there was some uncertainty and lack of trust in Carlsen's decision making as he repeatedly

failed to spot tactical ideas. The World Champion was quite honest about his struggles after the match, admitting that he didn't trust himself in the key moments.

The decider was the final round game where Carlsen had the best chance to take the match into the playoffs. He felt that the position was winning after the opening but was unable to find the accurate moves necessary to get it done.

FOR ALL THE MARBLES

GM Magnus Carlsen (2881)

GM Wesley So (2741)

Opera Euro Rapid | Knockout (30.1),
02.14.2021



WHITE TO MOVE

23. Bd1

Crushing was 23. Kh1!! axb3 24. Rg1+ Kh8 and 25. e6!! was the key move that Carlsen missed in his calculation. The threat is to play Bh2-e5 and if 25. ... f6 26. Qf5 the

h5-bishop can no longer slide back to g6, so Black has to try something like 26. ... Qe8 27. Be5!

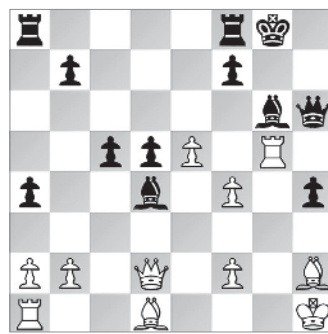
23. ... Qg5+ 24. Kh1 Bg6 25. Qe2

The position still looks scary for Black. The rook is coming to g1 and the black queen will get kicked around.

25. ... Bxd4 26. Rg1 Qh5 27. Qd2

27. Rg4 was another missed opportunity: 27. ... c5 28. Bc2 pinning the bishop and quickly bringing the other rook into the game. Essentially, 27. Rg4 was a quick way for White to double the rooks. Play continues 28. ... Kh8 29. Bxg6 fxg6 30. Rag1 with a strong attack for White.

27. ... c5 28. f4 Qh6 29. Rg5



BLACK TO MOVE

29. ... f6!

Turning the tables. Now it is White's king that will come under fire.

30. exf6 Bxf6 31. Qxd5+ Kh8 32. Bf3 a3!

Striking on the other side of the board.

33. Rag1 axb2 34. Rxg6 Qxg6 35. Rxg6 b1=Q+ 36. Rg1 Qh7 37. f5 Rg8 38. Re1 Rae8 39. Re6 Rxe6 40. Qxe6 Qh6

Threatening ... Qh6-c1+. Black is winning.

41. Bd1 Qg5 42. Qe4 Qd2 43. Bg4 Qg5

So offers a repetition as only a draw is needed to secure the match win.

44. f3 Qc1+ 45. Kg2 h3+ 46. Kxh3 Qh6+ 47. Kg3 Rd8 48. Bh3 Qg5+ 49. Bg4 Qh6

49. ... Qh4+ would have been checkmate after 50. Kg2 Rd2+.

50. Bg1 Qh4+ 51. Kg2 Rd2+ 52. Kf1 Rd1+ 53. Kg2 Rd2+ 54. Kf1 Rd1+ 55. Kg2 Rd2+, draw.

One of the big differences between over-the-board and online tournaments is the amount of emotion the players are willing to show both during and after the game. So celebrated with a fist pump and a big smile after securing the draw.

The new champ was quite ecstatic in the post-game interview, saying "to beat Magnus in any match is a huge honor and it's a real pleasure to do so... and to beat him twice in a match is just unheard-of really."

Congratulations to Wesley So on another well-deserved victory! The U.S. Champion has truly mastered these fast, online tournaments. Will it translate to greater success in classical time controls? Time will tell! ♠





ROAD TO THE FINALS

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3RD PLACE (9/15)

5 WINS ♦ 8 DRAWS ♦ 2 LOSSES

QUARTERFINALS
BEAT JAN-KRZYSZTOF DUDA

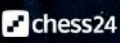
DAY 1: 2.5 - 1.5 ♦ DAY 2: 2 - 0

SEMIFINALS
BEAT TEIMOUR RADJABOV

DAY 1: 2.5 - 1.5 ♦ DAY 2: 2 - 1



Wesley So
U.S. CHAMPION

 chess24

CHAMPIONS AGAIN

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY WINS 2020-2021 PAN-AMERICAN INTERCOLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIP

By **ABEL TALAMANTEZ** and **DR. JUDIT SZTARAY** | Annotations by **GM NICK DE FIRMIAN**



We cherish tradition, particularly with institutions that have endured across generations. That which meets the test of time does so because there is something special about it: in a place, an event, or in the people who participate to make up the collective whole. The Pan-American Intercollegiate Chess Championship has been

around since 1946, bringing colleges and universities from the western hemisphere together in the ultimate open team event. There are no rating limits, strength meets strength, and yet, it is open to all. An event like this brings friends and classmates together, and memories made will last a lifetime.

The University of Toronto was set to host

the annual over-the-board tournament in 2020. It was a special year for the club, marking the 125-year anniversary of the Hart House Chess Club at the University of Toronto. The COVID-19 pandemic caused the cancellation of the in-person tournament and threatened the continuous lineage of this historic event. The Mechanics' Institute was awarded the bid

PHOTO: COURTESY OF WEBSTER

to organize an online version of this event, stepping in to carry the mantle forward and continue the tradition.

Sixty-one teams participated in this year's online event. The Red Raiders of Texas Tech were the returning champions after beating out Webster University last year and ending their seven-year reign. This year's event would be even more daunting, as the online format expanded the event to nine rounds instead of the traditional six, and with a faster time control of G/25+5. No one knew what to expect — this was the first national-level online team event. The games were fast but exciting, and after and three days of furious action, Webster University dominated the field en route to their eighth title in nine years.

The event started off with a bit of controversy in the first round. The University of Texas-Dallas' A team had to forfeit their second through fourth boards against Texas Tech D when their second board suddenly fell ill. Under the Pan-Am rules, if any player has to forfeit, all boards under that player also go down as a forfeit for the purposes of team scoring, though the rated results of the games still stand. This gave an early boost to Texas Tech and put UT-Dallas' A team in something of a hole, but with nine rounds of play, there was certainly time to catch up.

By round five the top contenders were doing battle, with a table one pairing of the Webster and Texas Tech A teams. Boards two through four were drawn, making Webster's board one, GM Lazaro Bruzon Batista, the hero of this match with his win over Tech's GM Evgeny Shtembuliak.

ENGLISH OPENING (A22)

GM Evgeny Shtembuliak (2681)

GM Lazaro Bruzon Batista (2725)

2021 Pan Am Intercollegiate Championship
(5), 01.05.2021

1. c4 Nf6 2. Nc3 e5 3. Nf3 Nc6 4. e3 Bb4 5. Qc2 Bxc3 6. bxc3

Shtembuliak takes doubled pawns to discourage Black's 6. ... e4.

6. ... d6 7. d3 O-O 8. Be2 h6 9. O-O Ne7!? 10. e4 Ng6

Black is fully equal, having proceeded with a very logical plan of development with knights on the kingside and the c-pawn is now ready to join the battle for central squares.

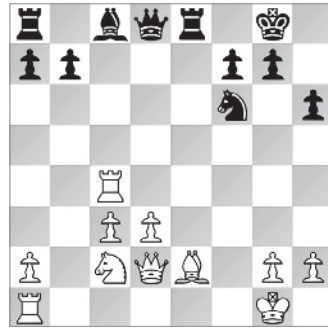
11. Ne1 c6 12. f4?!

This allows Black to trade away the one plus White has in the position — the bishop pair.

12. ... exf4 13. Bxf4 Nxf4 14. Rxf4 Re8 15. Qd2 d5!

Opening the game right away keeps White a little off-balance.

16. exd5 cxd5 17. Nc2 dxc4 18. Rxc4



18. ... Ne4 19. Qe1 Qb6+ 20. Nd4 Nd6 21. Rb4 Qc5 22. Kh1 Bd7 23. Qd2 Rac8 24. Rc1 b6

Black has a more solid and compact pawn structure. He has only a slight edge, but that's enough for White to suffer against such a strong grandmaster as Bruzon Batista.

25. Bf3 Qg5 26. Qxg5 hgx5

In the endgame the black kingside pawns are mobile and will restrict the white pieces.

27. c4 g4 28. Bd5 g6 29. Kg1 Kg7 30. Kf2 f5 31. a4 Re5 32. Ra1 f4 33. a5 b5 34. a6 Rce8 35. Rb2 bxc4 36. dxc4 Re3 37. c5

White could try the Exchange sacrifice with 37. Rb7 Nxb7 38. axb7 g3+ 39. hxg3 fxc3+ 40. Kf1 a5 and Black is still better in a sharp position.

37. ... Ne4+?!

Both 37. ... Nf5 and; 37. ... g3+ 38. hxg3 fxc3+ 39. Kf1 R3e5 40. Bf3 Nc4 would keep a clear advantage for Black.

38. Bxe4 R8xe4 39. Rd1?

White needed to try the tactical 39. Rb7! g3+ 40. hxg3 fxc3+ 41. Kf1 Rxd4 42. c6 which should hold the draw with best play.

39. ... g3+ 40. hxg3 fxc3+ 41. Kf1 Rh4

Now the black pieces and the g3-pawn create mating threats that White cannot defend.

42. Nf3 Rh1+ 43. Ng1 Be6 44. Rc1 Bc4+! 45. Rxc4 Rxc1+ 46. Kxg1 Re1 mate.

In round six, Webster defeated the second-ranked Saint Louis University, thanks to the board three heroics of GM Aram Hakobyan and his win over GM Benjamin Bok.

KING'S INDIAN ATTACK (A07)

GM Aram Hakobyan (2667)

GM Benjamin Bok (2668)

2021 Pan Am Intercollegiate Championship
(6), 01.05.2021

1. Nf3 d5 2. g3 g6 3. Bg2 Bg7 4. O-O e5 5. d3 Nc6 6. e4 dxe4 7. dxe4 Qxd1 8. Rxd1 Bg4 9. c3

White's play looks unambitious, allowing the queen trade into an even ending. It was around here that Benjamin Bok offered a draw, but Hakobyan refused as he likes to play this type of structure.

9. ... Nf6 10. Re1 O-O 11. Na3 h6 12. Nc4 Rfe8 13. a4 a6?!

Why not play 13. ... a5?

14. Nfd2 Be6 15. b4 Red8 16. Bf1 b5?

Just losing a pawn. It's a little hard to figure out what Bok was thinking.

17. axb5 axb5 18. Rxa8 Rxa8 19. Na3 Na7 20. Nf3 c6?!

Black would have some compensation for the pawn after 20. ... Ne8 21. Nxb5 Nxb5 22. Bxb5 Nd6 23. Bd3 Ra2.

21. Nxe5 Nd7 22. Nxd7 Bxd7

Not 22. ... Bxc3? 23. Re3.

23. e5 Re8 24. f4

Now White's extra pawn is strong, controlling important squares. Black tries to break out.

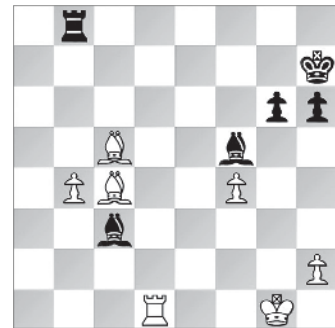
24. ... f6 25. Rd1 Bf5?!

Better is 25. ... Bg4 26. Rd6 fxe5 27. Be3! Nc8 28. Rxg6 Bf3 29. Bc5 when White keeps a clear edge, but at least it's messy.

26. Be3 fxe5

Black avoids 26. ... Nc8 27. Bc5 fxe5 28. Nxb5! cxb5 29. Bxb5 winning back the material with an easy conversion.

27. Bxa7 Ra8 28. Nxb5 cxb5 29. Bc5 exf4 30. gxf4 Bxc3 31. Bxb5 Rb8 32. Bc4+ Kh7



33. b5!

This pawn runs down the board now. There is no good way to stop it.

33. ... Rc8 34. b6! Rxc5 35. b7 Rc8

The computer suggests there are hopes of a fortress after 35. ... Rxc4 36. b8=Q but practically speaking, it's just a different way to lose.

36. bxc8=Q Bxc8 37. Rd6 Bf5 38. Bd3

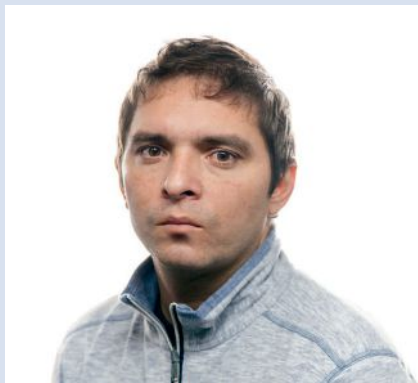
Up an Exchange, this is a technical win.

38. ... Bb4 39. Rd5 Bxd3 40. Rxd3 Kg7 41. Kg2 Kf6 42. Kf3 Be7 43. Ke4 Ke6 44. Rg3

WEBSTER A: THE PLAYERS

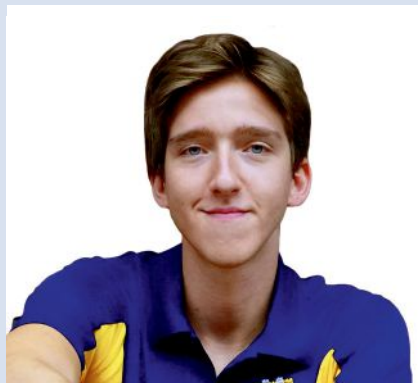
BOARD ONE

GM LAZARO BRUZON BATISTA



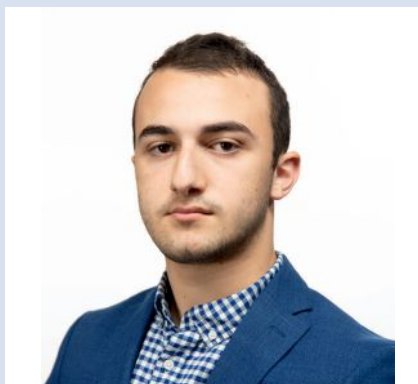
BOARD TWO

GM BENJAMIN GLEDURA



BOARD THREE

GM ARAM HAKOBYAN



BOARD FOUR

GM ALEX LENDERMAN



Kf7 45. Rb3 Bf6 46. Rb6 Ba1 47. h3 h5 48. Ra6 Bc3 49. Rc6 Bb2 50. f5!

Simplifying more, but to a clear win.

50. ... gxf5+ 51. Kxf5 h4 52. Rc7+ Kf8 53. Rh7 Bc1 54. Kg6 Kg8 55. Rxh4, Black resigned.

With a perfect team score of 6/6 going into the final day, and being a full point ahead of the field, it seemed like Webster was going to run away with the tournament. But in a stacked tournament like this one, teams were always going to be tested. Webster's test came in round seven, where the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley A team upset Webster A in a match with three decisive games. GM Aleksandr Lenderman won on board four for Webster, but GM Vladimir Belous of UTRGV defeated GM Aram Hakobyan on board three and GM

Mateusz Bartel of UTRGV defeated GM Lazaro Bruzon Batista on board one.

This round seven loss by Webster opened the door for other teams to try and catch up. But sometimes you are both skillful and lucky, and luck went Webster's way in round eight, as they defeated the University of Texas Dallas C team. Webster also benefited from drawn matches between Saint Louis University against University of Missouri, and University of Texas Rio Grande Valley A and Webster B. These results allowed Webster to gain a half-point on the field and take a full-point lead going into the final round.

In the final round, Webster A only needed a draw to reclaim the title, and they would face one of the Cinderella teams of the tournament. The Cal A team was vastly outrated but had shown grit and fight throughout the tournament. Alas, it wasn't to be, and Webster

defeated Cal 3-1, claiming their eighth Pan-American championship in nine years.

The final round had more on the line for several teams, as qualification to play in the President's Cup — the "final four" of college chess, which determines a national champion — was also at stake. Congratulations to Webster University, Saint Louis University, UTRGV, and Texas Tech, who all move on to the President's Cup.

The event was organized in the same format as many of the high-stakes online tournaments: players had to connect to a Zoom meeting with two cameras, in both front facing and side view modes. Background noise was also monitored. All players in a match were in the same Zoom meeting, creating a safe and fair environment for all. The required Zoom call also contributed towards the fun and exciting nature of any team tournament: getting to play together as a team.

All games were scanned by renowned anti-cheating expert Dr. Ken Regan. His help in making sure that the games were played without outside assistance was integral to the success of this event and much appreciated. Due to the integrity of the players, and the deterring nature of the fair play measures, we are happy to announce that no fair play violations were found, making the tentative results final.

Special thanks to the amazing organizing and tournament directing team that put together a big event in a short time, with utmost quality and professionalism. Chief Organizer Dr. Judit Sztaray, Chief Tournament Director Glenn Panner, and Assistant Chief Brian Yang did an amazing job answering every question regarding logistics and tournament rules. National TD John McCumiskey ran the computer pairings and made sure there were no glitches. We were supported by an all-star cast of TDs, including several National TDs such as David Hater, Martha Underwood, and Al Losoff, along with many volunteers. Thanks also to our amazing commentary team of GM Nick de Firmian and FM Paul Whitehead, and all the special guests who joined the broadcast over the three days, including GM Sam Shankland, GM Patrick Wolff, WIM Alexey Root, WIM Yvette Garcia Morales, FM Kyrion Griffith, and IM John Donaldson.

The Mechanics' Institute was proud and honored to organize this unique event. We see first-hand the power of chess to bring communities together, and we were happy and excited to see so many college students come together over three days in the spirit of competition, camaraderie, and friendship. It was inspiring to watch, especially during the final day when there were much more troubling things going on in our nation's capital. Congratulations to Webster on the championship, and special thanks to all the teams who participated. ♠

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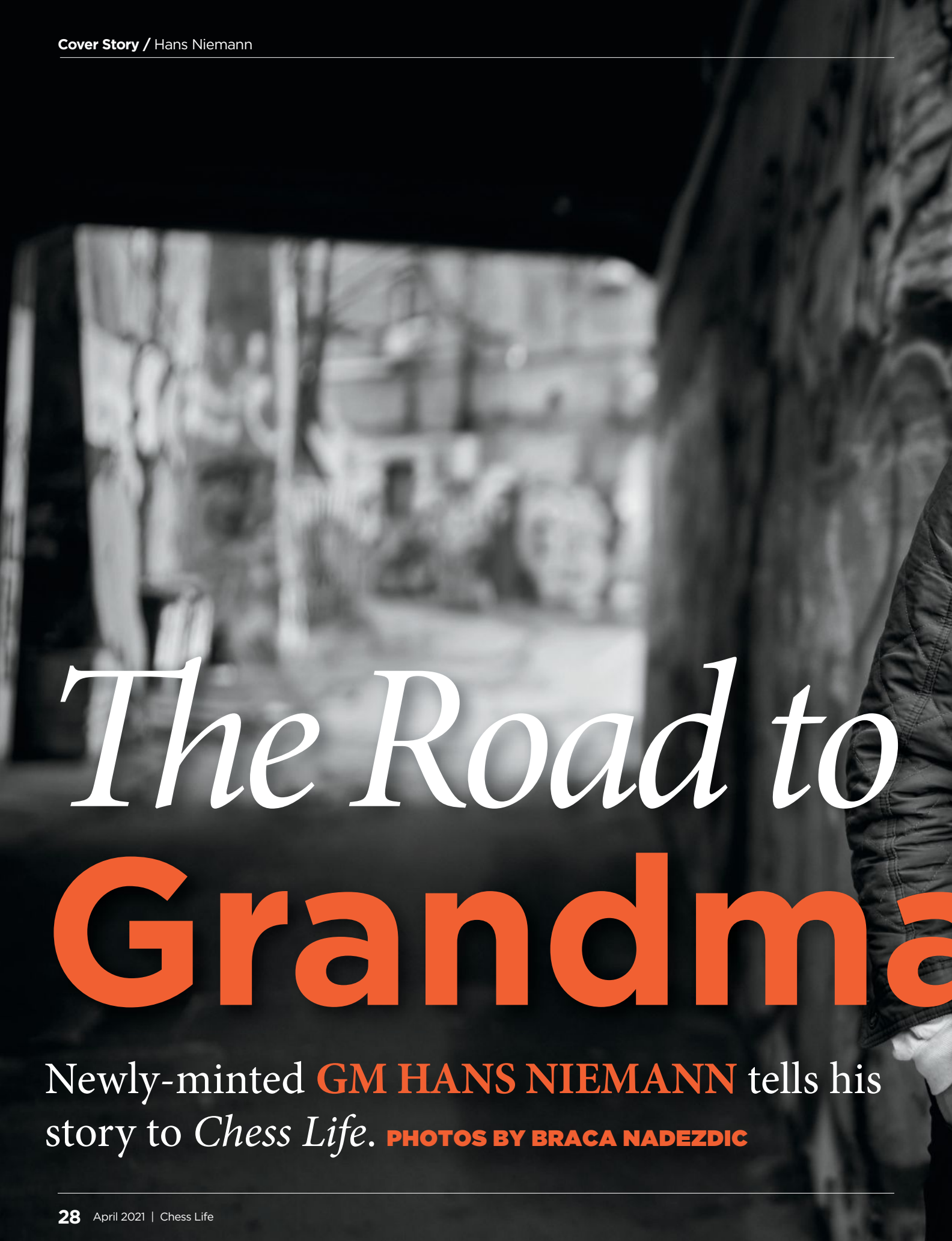
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The Road to **Grandma**

Newly-minted **GM HANS NIEMANN** tells his story to *Chess Life*. **PHOTOS BY BRACA NADEZDIC**



aster

I began playing chess in the Netherlands at the age of eight, which is considered late in this day and age! I showed some minor talent in my first year of casual play, reaching a rating of 1000. But things were looking bleak at the beginning of my chess journey. I was discouraged when the chess teacher at my school didn't allow me to represent the school at the national championships. As I was also actively competing in cycling, and advancing much more rapidly there, chess wasn't my priority until I moved back to the United States.

My family settled in Orinda, California, a suburb of Berkeley. The Bay Area is one of the chess hubs of America, comparable to New York or Dallas. While I continued cycling upon my initial return to the States, finding myself ranked third for my age nationally, chess soon won me over. I had access to so many tournaments, including those run by the Mechanics' Institute, the Berkeley Chess School, the NorCal House of Chess, and Bay Area Chess.

I played my first US Chess rated tournament in December 2012 at Fremont Middle School. I scored 1½/3 in my quad, but what stands out most in my memory is just how many kids were playing chess in the auditorium. I also vividly recall defending a king and pawn endgame where my opponent had two pawns and I managed to wrangle a stalemate. This was the beginning of my chess career.

I played just over one hundred tournaments in my first year back in the U.S., raising my rating from 1000 to 2000 in the process. I quit cycling and really focused on chess, which helped immensely. I think it was also important that my parents never pressured me into playing chess. I simply loved the game — if I had had the opportunity, I would have played a chess tournament every day of the week. If it were possible, I would have played multiple tournaments every day.

I progressed in chess quite quickly, reaching 2400 after three years of competitive play, but my life took a new direction at age 12, when I moved from the Bay Area to Connecticut. My family felt there were better schools on the East Coast, and that I might have access to more diverse chess opportunities there. The Marshall Chess Club was only an hour away in New York City, and I would play there two or three times a week.

I moved in the middle of sixth grade and was homeschooled through my seventh-grade year. You might think that my skyrocketing rating meant that I was working extremely hard, but in fact, the opposite was true: at this point in my career, winning tournaments took little effort on my part. So my “study plan” combined Madden Mobile on my iPad, some Netflix, and the occasional 15 minutes of glancing at Garry Kasparov’s *My Great Predecessors*. It’s no surprise that I had a very rude awakening ahead.

I hit 2400 on January 18th, 2016, when I was in seventh grade. Two and a half years later, I was only rated 2434, and I really started to hate chess. Looking back, I believe my return to regular school in the eighth grade contributed to the slowdown in my ratings climb. Going back to school full-time meant that I was unable to play a significant number of tournaments. If I had spent that extra year homeschooling — AND if I’d taken my chess more seriously! — I think I had a better chance to advance more quickly, and my chess career would look much different.

While my parents supported my chess career, they made it very clear that they wanted me to get a college education. I resented my parents’ decision to send me back to school, and I treated middle school as a big joke. Instead of paying attention in class, I chose to play games on my phone. (My phone got taken away *a lot*.) I had zero

interest in what I was learning. All I wanted was to play chess.

I tend to believe that everything happens for a reason. In hindsight, sending me back to school wasn’t that bad a decision — most parents don’t envision professional chess in their child’s future. But chess is a cruel game in many ways. If you don’t become very strong at a young age these days, you aren’t going to get sponsors. Without sponsors, you face financial adversity, and with financial adversity comes anxiety and the temptation to simply quit.

While I struggled with the stagnation of my chess progress, I decided that I should just get good grades in high school, go to a good college, and achieve a financial freedom that, unfortunately, most professional chess players cannot attain. I didn’t study or play that much chess during my freshman year, dramatically improving my grades. As much as I hated school, I began to realize that my grades were important. I had turned away from the idea of a career as a chess player because I knew — and still know — that chess wasn’t likely to lead to a comfortable financial existence.

As my sophomore year began, that old hatred towards chess began to grow again. As I think about it now, the reason for this hatred was the extremely high standards and pressure I created for myself. A single loss was enough to ruin my mood for a week, and a bad tournament would be disastrous for my mental health. If I’m honest, this is still more true than I’d want to admit. Every loss is always devastating, but with more experience, I have gotten better at forgetting about my losses and focusing on just playing good moves.

The school year is always a kind of offseason for my chess, but summers provide an opportunity to play a lot of tournaments. The summer of 2019, between my sophomore and junior years, should have been the end of my career. I was not playing well and I managed to lose 43 rating points in a month. I almost recovered in the U.S. Masters, but I missed a grandmaster norm by half a point, a setback that was absolutely devastating. Looking back, and remembering what that felt like, it’s hard to believe that I continued on and reached my goal.

I moved to New York City in the fall of 2019 when I transferred to Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School on a scholarship. My family stayed in Connecticut — you try finding an apartment in New York for a family of six! — and so I was on my own. With rent to pay, I was working 20-30 hours a week teaching chess, while also trying to focus on grades and getting into a top university. Teaching chess helped reignite my passion for the game, and my ambition returned. Still, my confidence was in tatters.

I managed to get my second grandmaster norm in December 2019 when I tied for first

in the Marshall Chess Club Championship, but then the pandemic hit, and my teaching jobs evaporated. I had been playing on the internet to simply get some games in, but now I began streaming as well. My success in blitz against some of the top players in the world did wonders for my confidence — and also helped me gain followers and even earn some money. Streaming also helped provide the financial freedom to travel to tournaments without hardship, something that is really important for my mindset. Once norm tournaments slowly began to return, I was soon able to pursue my third norm and my grandmaster title.

In early October 2020, I started very well in the Charlotte Chess Center GM Norm Invitational, standing at 5½/7 after seven rounds, and only needing two draws for the norm. I asked my friends and fellow streamers to do commentary on my Twitch channel as I played, and the support from the thousands of people watching my stream was really motivating. As it turned out, I would have gotten my third norm even if I didn’t win my eighth-round matchup with IM Abhimanyu Mishra, but I felt that this game was emblematic of my strengths and weaknesses as a chess player.

GIUOCO PIANO (C55)

IM Abhimanyu Mishra (2342)

IM Hans Moke Niemann (2465)

Charlotte CCCSA Fall GM (8), 10.04.2020

With 5½/7, I only needed two draws to get my third and final grandmaster norm. I could have easily decided to play solid chess and “draw out,” but I wanted to win. I believe my recent uptick in results comes from my refusal to think about rating or titles, and my choosing to focus solely on improving my play. With an opponent who was having a tough tournament, I wanted to pounce, and from an initially quiet opening, things got complicated quickly!

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Nf6 4. d3 h6

If you look at my recent games in the database, I’ve played this quite a lot, so I assumed he had prepared. But I trust my knowledge of the variation, and it has been successful for me.

5. c3 d6 6. 0-0

After 6. Nbd2 g5 7. Nf1 g4 is the move here, which is important because White has not castled yet.

6. ... g5 7. Nbd2

My arrogance in this opening variation — thinking I knew it all better than Mishra — was actually my saving grace!



FIDE
REGULAR

2526

QUICK

2327

BLITZ

2492

US CHESS
REGULAR

2618

QUICK

2402

BLITZ

2576

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18 DAYS
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NATIONAL MASTER

15 YEARS
7 MONTHS
2 DAYS
NIEMANN BECOMES AN
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*CURRENT AS OF MARCH 15, 2021

7. ... g4

I played this confidently, like it was my preparation, but it turns out I had confused my lines. I remembered the correct position but forgot the order, as a transposition is possible.

8. Ne1 h5

Here I began to realize that I had messed up my preparation. Luckily my “bluff that I didn’t realize was a bluff” worked out!

9. f4

The alternative is 9. Nc2 Bh6 10. Ne3 (or 10. Bb3, 10. f3, or 10. Nb3) 10. ... h4 and this was as far as I remembered, but of course White is not forced to play this way.

9. ... exf4 10. Rxf4

According to the computer 10. d4 is the only way to gain an advantage. But this move is not human at all, and allows Black to get a dangerous attack. After a deeper analysis of this position, I’m convinced that Black is practically equal.

10. ... Bh6 11. Rf1 Qe7 12. Nb3 Ne5 13. Bxh6 Rxh6 14. Nd2 Bd7

I should have played 14. ... g3 immediately, as 14. ... Bd7 gives White crucial time to prepare against ... g4–g3. I think my opponent underestimated the strength of this idea, though.

15. Bb3 g3 16. h3 Nfg4 17. Qe2 Nh2 18. Qe3 Rh7 19. Rf4 h4 20. d4 Ng6 21. Nd3 0–0–0



I calculated to this position when deciding to play 15. ... g3. The h2–knight is an amazing piece: it restricts the king’s movement, something that was crucial in the endgame, and it covers the key f1– and f3–squares.

22. Re1 Re8

The computer suggests I should take immediately with 22. ... Nxf4 23. Nxf4 Qg5; I saw this idea but misevaluated the position.

23. e5 Nxf4 24. Nxf4 c6 25. Nc4 d5 26. Nd6+

After 26. Nd2 the computer says that Black is just slightly better here, but I really don’t get it. From a human perspective it seems like

I’ll play ... f7–f6 at some point and the white position will collapse.

26. ... Qxd6 27. exd6 Rxe3 28. Rxe3 Rh6 29. Ne2 Re6

I assume he missed this move, which forces the trade of rooks and leads to a completely winning endgame for me. I’m pleased that I went one step further in my calculation to foresee this. The relationship between (depth of) calculation and evaluation is something I’m constantly working on.

30. Rxe6 Bxe6 31. Bc2 Kd7 32. Nf4 Kxd6 33. b4 b5

This move left a sour taste in my mouth. Up to here, I was really happy with my play, but I pushed the pawn forward too quickly and without proper consideration of long-term structural weaknesses.

34. a4 bxa4

I thought that I could respond to 34. a4 with 34. ... a6 but after 35. a5 the a6–pawn will be very weak, especially if the knight reaches the c5–square.

35. Bxa4 Bf5 36. Bb3 Be6 37. Ba4 Bc8 38. Bd1 Ba6

Once my bishop reaches this diagonal the game is over. I put the bishop on the b5–square and run the king up.

39. Be2 Bxe2 40. Nxe2 Ke6

I would have had a smoother win had I walked the king the other way around with 40. ... Kc7, but I calculated everything precisely and correctly.

41. Nc1 Kf5 42. Nb3 Ke4 43. Na5 f5 44. Nxc6 f4 45. b5 f3 46. gxf3+ Nxf3+ 47. Kf1 Ng5 48. Ne5 Nxh3 49. Ng6 g2+ 50. Kxg2 Nf4+ 51. Nxf4 Kxf4 52. Kh3 Ke4 53. Kxh4 Kd3 54. Kg4 Kxc3 55. Kf5 Kxd4 56. Ke6 Kc5, White resigned.

With my last norm out of the way, I felt like I was on top of the world. Now I needed just 13 FIDE rating points to raise my rating to 2500 and receive the title. I played absolutely terribly at the SPICE Cup that same month, losing 14 points. The setback shattered my confidence once again, but I resolved not to let this defeat me. In the past, I’d lose all motivation after a disappointing result, but now I began working extremely hard. I cut down my streaming hours significantly and began training six to 10 hours a day — even while attending online school.

I played two small tournaments, gaining back 12 points. I played in online classical tournaments, run by the Continental Chess Association on the Internet Chess Club, where I was able to test myself against many strong grandmasters. I played these tournaments

every weekend and would spend the rest of the week training and analyzing those games, breaking only for school work as needed.

My initial plan for December was to head to Charlotte to play in two events: the North American Youth Championships (U20) and then a grandmaster norm event. Soon it occurred to me that Europe was another option. It was a possibility to play a tournament in Spain and then two in Italy immediately thereafter. These tournaments were very strong, and I really wanted the opportunity to play against the best players in the world. Despite the logistic and financial difficulties this decision forced on me, I decided Europe was the way to go. This may have been the best decision of my life so far.

I crossed 2500 in the ninth round of the 2020 Sunway Sitges Chess Festival when I defeated GM Sebastien Maze.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE (E47)

IM Hans Moke Niemann (2478)

GM Sebastien Maze (2557)

7th Sunway Sitges (9), 12.22.2020

This game was the ultimate test of my ability to maintain emotional control after a very disappointing loss. In the past I have struggled to maintain equilibrium after a loss, but I had a different mindset during this tournament. Ignoring the fact that the GM title was in my reach, I was solely focused on proving that my improvement efforts would pay off over-the-board.

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6

A slight surprise: I prepared for the King’s Indian for about five hours. (There’s lots of time to prepare in tournaments with one round a day!) However, I was still ready for the Nimzo, as I noticed that he often employed the opening against lower rated youngsters, hoping to avoid heavy prep.

3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3

I got the sense that he didn’t really do any preparation at all, so I was out for blood in the opening. You have to try to read your opponent in the opening and fully punish gaps in their theoretical knowledge.

4. ... 0–0 5. Bd3 b6

Inaccurate. Combining 4. ... 0–0 and 5. ... b6 allows for White to take space in the center.

6. Nge2 Bb7 7. a3 Be7?!

Black cannot afford to give White this much space. Instead 7. ... Bxc3+ 8. Nxc3 d5 (8. ... Bxg2 9. Rg1 Bb7 10. e4 when White’s attack is decisive) was necessary, and I did some prep here. There are many options, but the two bishops provide a long-term advantage. Both 9. 0–0 and 9. b3 look reasonable.

8. e4 d6 9. 0-0 c5

A simple move like 9. ... Nbd7 has significant consequences, because after 10. f4 the space advantage is too much. Black is forced to play 10. ... e5; otherwise, White will play e4-e5.

10. ... c5 is another possibility, but the position will become locked and White will control all of the key pawn breaks. After 11. d5 e5 12. f5 a kingside push will be decisive as the queenside can be shut down by playing a2-a4 and preventing the ... b6-b5 break forever. Without that break, White's space advantage will suffocate the black pieces while I slowly expand on the kingside.

10. d5 e5

In this move order, I do not get f4-f5.

11. Ng3

If I play 11. f4 I give up the e5-square. This is crucial: Black can set up a blockade on e5 with 11. ... exf4 12. Bxf4 Nbd7.

11. ... Ne8

This position reminded me of the positions I was studying in GM Jacob Aagaard's *Grandmaster Preparation: Positional Play*, which I highly recommend you check out. I read the book when I was traveling to Italy and I feel that it really helped me properly evaluate the position. Here I immediately understood that if I could prevent the exchange of the dark-square bishops, his dark squares would become very weak.

Preventing this trade was quite difficult, so I decided to play...

12. Nf5

Now if my opponent wants to trade the bishops, he's going to have to give up a lot of time doing so.

12. ... Bf6

I was beginning to feel like the game was already over here. Maze's pieces are on awful squares.

13. g3 Bc8

These bishops are never going to be traded, as I can respond to 13. ... Bg5 with 14. f4 exf4 15. gxf4.

14. h4 g6 15. Nh6+ Kh8 16. Kg2

I'm not going to pretend that it takes a genius to look at the pieces on the eighth rank and conclude that the black position is already lost.

16. ... Bg7 17. h5 g5 18. Ng4

Another option was 18. Nf5, but I didn't want to let him trade off a single piece.

18. ... Qd7

It's true that 18. ... Bxg4 19. Qxg4 would have ruined my "win without taking a single piece" theme, but I would have the f5-square for my knight!

19. f3 h6 20. Rh1

Now I'm preparing to play Ng4-e3 and then eventually break with b2-b4. Black has no pawn breaks himself, so I control all the tension in the position, and I have the time to place my pieces to prepare for the final assault.

20. ... a6 21. Ne3 Nc7?

I had briefly considered this move and noticed that it was game over. But I didn't think he would play it.

22. Na4, Black resigned.

22. Na4 just wins material. If 22. ... Ra7 (of course 22. ... b5 23. Nb6 picks up the Exchange) 23. Nxb6 Qe7 24. b4 White is dominating the entire board.

I finished in a large tie for sixth through 12th place with a score of 7/10, and a performance rating of 2560, thereby gaining the necessary points for the GM title. Despite my amazing result, I was still extremely disappointed by my performance. The games I lost were terrible, and my last round loss was tragic. You might notice a common pattern here, where I refer

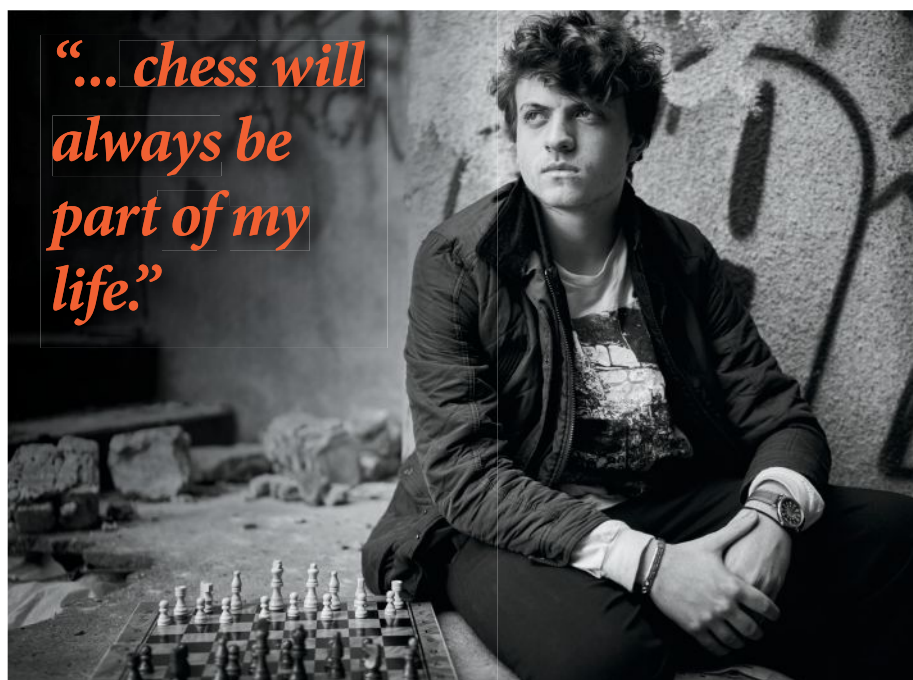
to results where I gain a lot of rating points as terrible, but I'm trying to focus on my level of play, not the results. I have learned that focusing on singular games and rating inhibits long term growth.

I continued my European tour in Italy and gained 30 points across two tournaments, raising my rating to 2525. With my new title in hand, one might think that I'd rest, go back to America, and focus on school. Nope. I had a different plan in mind.

I spent 20 days living in Belgium with a friend, preparing for a marathon of tournaments. From January 29 through April 5, 2021, I plan to play in 10 tournaments, wrapping up just as this story reaches your mailbox. As I write these words, I have finished two of those events, where I gained 11 more rating points, and I am in the middle of my third tournament.

In closing, I must thank the people who have made all of this possible. My family, and especially my parents, have always supported me the best they could throughout my chess career. I've had many coaches along the way, but I would like to specifically thank GM Maxim Dlugy and two former U.S. Champions who have since died: IM John Grefe and GM Walter Browne. Although I haven't worked with any of them in some years, these coaches were crucial in igniting passion for chess that motivates me up until this day.

What does the future hold? I don't know, which is part of why I decided to travel to Europe in a pandemic. I have applied to two colleges, and will have to make a decision soon that will help define my chess career once again. Whatever happens, wherever I end up, I know chess will always be part of my life. ♠



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Man of Steel

An Interview with **GM** **Jorden van** **Foreest**

Chess Life is an American chess magazine, and as such, we tend to focus on American chess players and stories. But chess is also a global game, and Chess Life has a long tradition of bringing the best in news and analysis from around the world to its readers.

This interview with GM Jorden van Foreest was conducted on Zoom just a few weeks after his stunning victory at the 83rd Tata Steel Masters, which we covered in our March issue. Look for more interviews with interesting, and sometimes surprising, personalities in upcoming issues. ~ed.

CL: *First things first: Congratulations on an absolutely tremendous tournament victory. How has your life changed since the end of the Tata Steel Masters?*

Jorden: Nothing much has changed. I had some interviews just after I won the event, but now everything is basically back to normal and I'm doing precisely the same things I was

doing before the tournament. I kind of like it that way.

What I do hope will change is that I get some more tournament invitations, but nothing much has come yet. [Right now] there are not many tournaments, so it's normal that there are not many invitations. And the online tournaments usually send their invitations quite late.

CL: *Tell us about the final moments of that Armageddon playoff. For those of us watching online it was incredibly dramatic, and the final result was surprising because we lost the transmission around move 58! So what happened? And what was it like to have to play your friend, colleague, and sometimes employer GM Anish Giri?*

Jorden: It was very weird how things went. Some things happened before [move 50 and] it wasn't a good game. But by move 50, we started hitting the clock because our [clock] times were getting low and we felt like someone would lose on time. In that case the position doesn't matter anymore. But what we both forgot is that after move 60 you get three seconds increment [after each move]. And well, I knew there was this rule — Anish completely forgot about it — but I just thought, "We're never making that, so

it's going to be decided on time," because you don't know which move you're at, you're not writing down the moves.

I blundered a bishop, but I didn't really care because I was just trying to win on time. And he was doing the same — he was also not making any normal moves anymore. But then we both made move 60 and we realized, "Ah, we're not losing on time. So it's all about position now." And then suddenly I had a pawn, I think on g2, which was going to promote to a queen, and his position was lost. So a bit of panic there from both of us.

And to play Anish... it was very strange because, like you said, he's also [often] my employer. We had some training sessions just a couple months before Wijk, and we played a lot of blitz games there just for fun. We didn't really expect that we were training for the Wijk aan Zee Armageddon!

Anyway, it was nice to play Anish, although I don't like to beat him. He was playing some amazing chess. And I think both of us were already very happy about the fact that there was going to be a Dutch winner before we played the tie-breaker.

CL: *What were your general impressions of the event? How was it different this year with all of the COVID-19 regulations and precautions?*

Jorden: Usually Wijk is the place where many visitors and spectators come with friends and family to visit the tournament. It's one of the few tournaments in the world that is really popular for visitors. Nowadays, chess gets often followed on the internet and not many spectators are drawn to the tournament hall themselves. But here it's usually not that case.

Of course, this year no spectators were allowed. So that was different from other years. And it was very quiet in the playing hall — the playing hall had undergone a transition and was even nicer. I think the organizers did a great job and the players all had a great time. Everything was really well organized. I mean, at least aside from the chess work, I think everyone seemed satisfied. It was different, but as soon as you start playing, you get into the game and you kind of forget everything else around.

CL: *Do you think any of your games stood out from this event?*

Jorden: Well, definitely my last round against [GM Nils] Grandelius. In other games, nothing particularly crazy happened... But winning that last game, getting a share of first [place] — that of course was quite a surprise to many people, and I had to win to get a share of first. And it was also, I think, in a good style.

I think this is really one of my best games ever, honestly. Because, okay, I made some inaccuracies, but aesthetically, it was pleasing,

the ending. And then if you add the stakes, which were quite high, on top of that, I really rank it very highly.

CL: *So how has the lockdown affected your chess and your career, with limited opportunities to play over the board? Although I did see you got to play in some team tournaments, I guess, in the summer and the fall.*

Jorden: I played some.

CL: *But with the transition online, has that changed the way you train or the way you prepare? Have you had to modify things to match the situation?*

Jorden: Yeah, it's hard for many players to keep the motivation [because] you don't know when it's [the pandemic] going to end. You don't know if you should be focusing on your online skills or your classical skills, and it's hard to choose how to work. And of course, sometimes when there's no tournament in sight, it's hard to keep on working.

When the pandemic started in March, I didn't do a whole lot until May or so. But after that, I started working with chess again. And I started playing more online. I think that's the main difference — maybe [it's] not in like the Magnus Carlsen Tour, but just for fun and try to work on that a bit, to get some practice in.

And like you said, I could play some tournaments. So it was not at all a complete disaster for me. I played, I think, in a total of five tournaments. I played maybe 50 games — I didn't do the math. But it was not insanely low. And let's say, for comparison, you go way back to like the Botvinnik days... I think for him, five tournaments a year [would] be crazy.

I think by now — or I hope that by the end of this year — we can all go back to [something] like a normal world again. I have some tournaments planned already, and it's just a bit less [than before]. You play fewer tournaments and you work more in between. I think that's the difference.

CL: *Let's talk a little bit about your life in chess. You come from a very prominent chess family. You have a great-grandfather who was a national champion, and his brother was also a national champion. All of the children in your family are chess players, including your brother who is a grandmaster, and with whom you shared the 2019 Dutch title, is that correct?*

Jorden: Yep, that's correct.

CL: *And all of the children in your family, if I've read correctly, were homeschooled, sort of like the Polgars were, to allow for enough time to focus on chess. Can you talk about how your parents came to this decision and what*

it was like to take chess so seriously so early in life?

Jorden: I've actually been in school most of my life. My other siblings were more homeschooled than I was. I was in school from four until 10 or 11. Then I was homeschooled until 15, and from 15 until 18 I was back in school.

The reason my parents decided to homeschool us was [that they] thought the Dutch school system was not perfect. This way we could focus more on chess and do school as well, all together. My father is a university teacher, so he knows how to manage these things.

There's always been a lot of chess in our family. But it's never like we were pushed. My father taught me the rules at the age of six and I didn't really like [it at first]... I mean, I liked the game, but I wasn't playing a whole lot, and I didn't play my first tournament until I was nine. So [it all came along] slowly but surely.

Once I started playing chess, my little brother Lucas — who, like you said, shared first with me and is a grandmaster — started after my father and I [played] a bit. And that's how he picked it up. And then, somehow everyone started playing chess!

It was never the plan of my parents, like with the Polgar sisters, to make us chess geniuses. I just liked the game and [then] my siblings [did] too.

Not all of [my five siblings] play chess anymore. One likes hanging out with friends, and the other works. Now only Lucas, my sister, and I play a lot of chess. The others are doing other things.

CL: *I watched the documentary on your family from 2017. And even for someone who doesn't speak Dutch, it was absolutely fascinating to get that sort of look at your family and all of the chess that was in that film. One of the things I noticed is the presence of the Stappenmethode or "Steps Method," and all the Steps worksheets everywhere in this documentary. Were you brought up on the Steps? And what do you think of their value for improving players?*

Jorden: I never watched the documentary myself. So now I know we did some good commercials for the Steps Method!

CL: *Oh, it's all over the place.*

Jorden: I did a little bit [of the Steps training] and my siblings [did] too. I think it's a great way for beginners to really get going with the game [and] up to expert level. They start out with the very basics and they work up to a very advanced level.

In the Netherlands, it's common [to study the Steps]. At the Dutch Junior Championships... when I was competing, let's say in under-12, it was normal to ask your



TO THE VICTORS GO THE SPOILS: GM ANISH GIRI, SECOND PLACE AT THE 2021 TATA STEEL MASTERS (L); GM JORDEN VAN FOREEST, WINNER (C); GM ANDREY ESIPENKO, THIRD PLACE (R).

opponent before the game, “So which Step are you at?” And I think we were at Step 4 or 5 at the time, all of us. Basically, every Dutch kid has learned this. I think it revolutionized chess in the Netherlands. Everyone is being brought up [on] it and they tackle everything in that course. The creators did a great job.

CL: *Do you still think sometimes in terms of search strategies and [patterns] in the way that the Steps teach you to think? Or have you transcended that?*

Jorden: I don't know, I never thought about it. I don't recall them giving certain tips on how to think. I just recall solving the exercises. But there's this common [idea] ... people are always saying that you should do “this,” and books are dedicated on how to think [in chess]. I read them, but I never managed to apply it myself. Like candidate moves and stuff ... I think every chess player knows that you don't really look at the candidate moves and start calculating one, then the second, and it all goes through each other. You're calculating one line, then you switch back to another, and then you go back to the line you were just calculating. I don't know why it happens, but I think that's how it goes for almost everyone. Trying to think like a machine — I don't think it works like that.

CL: *The Netherlands is a relatively small country in terms of population, but it continues to produce an outsized number of grandmasters and strong players. Why do you think that there is such success in producing chess talent in the Netherlands?*

Jorden: I think for such a small country, we are doing quite a good job of it. Yeah, now that I think about it, chess has always been recognized in the Netherlands. It was popularized, I think, by Max Euwe when he

became world champion, then later on by Jan Timman. I think we have a great many chess players now [because of] these players — they contributed a lot to the chess scene. So maybe just having a world champion and Jan Timman, who was also almost a world championship challenger — maybe the fact that we have a rich chess history is one of the reasons.

CL: *Who was your teacher and who were your trainers through the years? And is there anyone you work with today?*

Jorden: Currently, I'm not really working with [anyone]. I help Anish sometimes as a second, and we have some training camps together, but he's not being my trainer.

I have worked with several people on a consistent basis. My first trainer was Geon Knol ... a really Dutch name! He was about 2200 FIDE strength, and he was the first teacher who brought me all the way up to about 1800 or 1900 FIDE. Then I was coached by GM Sipke Ernst, who lives in my hometown. And GM Sergey Tiviakov, who's perhaps a more familiar name. He was almost top 10 in the world. Both Ernst and Tiviakov shaped my chess and I've worked with both of them for something like three years.

All of these teachers lived in the Dutch town of Groningen, [which is] where I was brought up. They were always in walking distance or cycling distance from my house. That's one of the great things about Netherlands. We have a lot of strong players and it's a very small country; especially in the city where I was brought up, we have a lot of strong chess players. So I never had any problem finding a good trainer.

CL: *What do you consider to be the milestone events, the most important events in your playing career? And were*

there any setbacks that in hindsight seemed very noteworthy to you?

Jorden: Well, I think the first moment I realized I was quite good at the game was when I won the Open Under-10 Dutch Championship. I was racking up a lot of points there, and I was beating [all] the players my age. So that was the first moment I realized I was good.

Winning the European Under-14 Championship was also a very big moment for me. I was about 2200 when I was 14, but I made a big jump upwards and it started by winning the European Under-14 Championship.

I was in a good upward trend until I won the Dutch Championship at age 17. Then I kind of hit a roadblock or something... I stopped improving. Maybe that was because the level got tougher, or because I wasn't working the right way. It's always hard to say why you're not improving or why you *are* improving. I don't know why it is.

I was standing still around a 2600 rating for a long time. It was only recently, start[ing] last year in Wijk aan Zee, that I made another jump to 2670, and now I'm 2700. But of course I have to remain there. So it probably gets tough again.

CL: *There was a 2017 interview with IM Dorsa Derakhshani, where you said you couldn't recall reading a book from start to finish, but that you were working on GM Garry Kasparov's My Great Predecessors. And you said that you'd been through IM Mark Dvoretsky's books three times. So what are your favorite chess books? And are you reading anything right now?*

Jorden: I think you just named my favorite chess books! Especially Kasparov's books on his matches with Karpov.

“... follow my chess games and I will try to show some good chess always.”



What I meant by not reading from start to finish is that I always just opened up at a certain page and then I [started reading]. I opened up at random pages, and when I didn't find any more new pages, I went on to the next book. So that's how I did it. And it was usually just on the couch, reading there without the chess board.

As for my favorite chess books, I like Kasparov's, especially his matches with [GM Anatoly] Karpov, ... [but] I only owned one, I think it's about [GM Bobby] Fischer and [GM Samuel] Reshevsky. And I also read some other books... [IM Mikhail] Shereshevsky, it's quite a famous book on the endgame. And the Dvoretsky books — not [just] the *Endgame Manual*, but also his older books — I think it's called *Secrets of Chess Training*. I like these a lot, [where he] was talking about his students [GM Sergey] Dolmatov and [GM Artur] Yusupov. These books... I read them so many times until I didn't see anything new.

CL: *Do you have any advice for people who are looking to improve their chess?*

Jorden: Pick something you really enjoy about chess, whether it's playing a game, working on openings, studying the middlegame, solving tactics, whatever... and do it a lot. As long as you're busy with the game and you're enjoying it — that's the best way to go. Just enjoy the game.

CL: *Do you have any favorite opponents, or “customers” as the Russians used to say? And is there anyone who is particularly difficult for you to play against?*

Jorden: Well... difficult opponents, I'm drawing a blank. So maybe I just forget about all my losses there! But usually the strong grandmasters are tough.

As for favorite opponents... well, of course, [GM Magnus] Carlsen is really special for me. As for customers, I have some nice customers in the Dutch chess scene, especially [GM] Benjamin Bok, who is now studying in America, in St. Louis.

CL: *He may see this.*

Jorden: Okay, good. (laughter) So yeah, I have a good score against him. Please write that down! I think I beat him as a kid quite often. It's five draws and five wins for me and no losses. Another person is [GM] Erwin L'Ami, who is a great guy, but somehow I always score well against him in classical. In blitz, he usually crushes me, but in classical, I also have five wins and five draws against him.

I like to play these two. I always have a good feeling about my chances!

CL: *What are your goals in the chess world? For the short term, what's the plan for the next few months? And then, long term, where do you see yourself, say, five years from now?*

Jorden: I'm usually not really thinking about long-term goals. I'm doing everything hastily and fast!

For the near future, it's hard to plan because [right now] you don't know what's coming. I want to play... My main goal is to keep up the level I showed in Wijk aan Zee. I think this will be very hard because the level I showed there was extraordinary. But just keeping this high level of play...

It's easy to relax now, [so] when the [next] tournament comes, you're not fully prepared and you're not going to perform well. I am trying to make sure that I continue in this good way so I play [a] good tournament. My next tournament is in April, so it's not that far off. [This is the Tepe Sigeman & Co. Tournament, scheduled for April 24-30. — ~ed.] I'm looking forward to playing there, and I'm preparing for that tournament now.

CL: *Just out of curiosity, how do you go about preparing for a tournament like that? Is it mostly opening work at your level? Are you doing calculation training? What is it that you do?*

Jorden: Yeah, I have been working a lot on openings over the last few years. By now I'm fed up with it a bit. But it's professional — you have to do it no matter if you like it or not. You have to make sure your openings are in shape.

But I'm now going back to the basics. For once I'm studying a book from front to end. It's [GM Vladimir] Kramnik's *My Life and Games* and I'm really enjoying that book. And I'm playing some chess on the internet, of course. I think it's always good practice. And I noticed —

CL: Did I see you playing [GM Alireza] Firouzja [on Chess.com] yesterday? Was that you?

Jorden: Yeah, I think I got crushed like five to one — he's very good and very fast. I'm not a worthy competitor in blitz chess with him! In classical [time controls], he's also better than me, but there I can fight. In blitz he's so fast and so tricky. He's insanely good.

It's very good practice for me to play these guys. And playing on the *Chess.com* servers, there's always some good competition around. I think it's great practice, and I'm

also solving some tactics. So that's basically what I'm doing.

CL: Do you ever solve endgame studies?

Jorden: Yes, but it's hard to do them by yourself and easier when there's a coach who picks them out. Sometimes you need someone to point you in the right direction or tell you where to keep on looking and stuff. But I still do try to solve them sometimes by myself.

CL: So how can people keep up with you if they're interested in knowing more? Are you on social media? Do you have a website?

Jorden: Yeah, I have a website. Wait, let me look it up... it's *vanforeest.com/jorden*. I'm on there, but if you want to keep up with me... I'm not that active on social media, but I post from time to time on Twitter. And I'm not like my countryman, Anish Giri, who is posting every day.

CL: I was going to ask you if you were going to try to up your Twitter game to keep up with Anish now.

Jorden: Maybe I should, but I don't have his humor on Twitter. He's really good at that. And I don't know where he finds the time, honestly, for all this stuff. Because I don't have the time.

CL: Especially since he has a kid, too. I mean, as a dad, it's hard [enough] and then —

Jorden: Yeah, he's doing so many things at the same time. I don't know how he does it. I'm not that good at multitasking or doing all the kinds of things he's doing. I just like to read Twitter, and sometimes I post something, or [post an] Instagram picture. So yeah, you can follow me there. Mainly you can follow my chess games. If you want to keep up with my chess, follow my chess games and I will try to show some good chess always.

GM Jorden van Foreest writes:

This was the first game I managed to win in the 2021 Tata Steel Masters.

I started with five draws, and although the result was decent, I wasn't satisfied with my moves. This game marked the moment when my play started improving and my first step towards tournament victory.

RUY LOPEZ (C84)

GM Jorden van Foreest (2671)
GM David Anton Guijarro (2679)
83rd Tata Steel Masters (6), 01.22.2021
Annotations by GM Jorden van Foreest

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. O-O Be7

Anton usually opts for the Open Spanish with 5. ... Nxe4, but it seems that for this tournament he had other intentions.

6. d3 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 O-O 9. h3

I had prepared this subtle move before the tournament. If Black isn't booked up he can easily drift and end up in a slightly worse position.

9. ... h6

A decent move, but I think that 9. ... Bb7 offers Black an easier game.

10. a4 Bd7 11. Bc2

Prophylaxis versus ... Nc6-a5 and ... c7-c5, which is Black's main idea.

11. ... b4

This move, in combination with 10. ... Bd7, seems rather odd to me. If you want to play 11. ... b4 why not play it one move earlier?

12. Nbd2 Re8 13. a5

This is a typical idea, fixing the pawn on a6 and grabbing some space as well. Sometimes the a5-pawn can become a weakness, but more often than not it is a strength.

13. ... Bf8 14. Re1 Rb8 15. d4!

Although I was already out of my preparation I was still playing quite quickly and confidently. The White moves come quite easily and I liked my position. The alternative is 15. Nc4!? opting for a slower and more strategic struggle. I was looking for more dynamic positions instead.

15. ... bxc3 16. bxc3 exd4 17. cxd4 Nb4 18. Bb1

(see diagram top of next column)

After 15. d4 this position is reached almost by force. It has a strong resemblance to the Zaitsev system, and I knew some of the classic Kasparov-Karpov games which featured the opening frequently. In general with his strong center White is aiming for an attack, while Black should be trying to undermine the White center.

18. ... g6 19. Ra3



THE ROUND SIX MATCHUP BETWEEN GM JORDEN VAN FOREEST (R, PLAYING WHITE) AND GM DAVID ANTON GUIJARRO (L, PLAYING BLACK.)

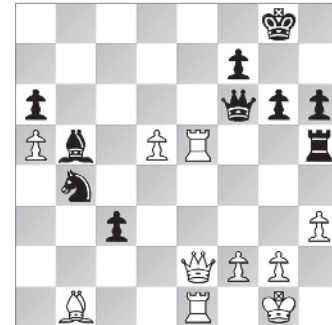


complete domination over the board. Notice how out of play the black rook and bishop are. White has the simple intention of pushing his pawns and there is nothing to do for Black. Chess can be truly beautiful at times!

28. ... Bxe5 29. Nxe5 dxe5 30. Bxe5 Rxe5!

The only try, and it was this that I had been calculating for some time. Other moves such as 30. ... Qd8 lose swiftly: 31. Bc3! Rxe3 32. Qxe3 Nxd5 33. Qd4 and the threats along the long diagonal can't easily be parried.

31. Rxe5 c3



The last critical moment in the game has appeared. At first, I thought there was no real difference between Qe2-e4 and Qe2-e3. In my calculations I had been mostly counting on Qe2-e4, thinking it would be more forcing, but luckily I noticed one of Black's resources in time.

32. Qe3

After 32. Qe4 it was the funny 32. ... Rh4! that I had not seen at first.

There is one more idea which saves the day for black however. And it is simply stunning! 32. ... c2! 33. Rxh5 Nd3!! Not taking any piece, and at the moment while Black is down a rook and an Exchange. Still the evaluation is 0.00! A sample line is as follows: 34. Bxc2 Qxf2+ 35. Kh2 Nxe1 36. Rxh6 Nxe2 37. Rxe6+ fxe6 38. Qxe6+ Kf8 39. Qxe2 with equality.

32. ... c2

The other defense doesn't yield much hope either: 32. ... Rxe5 33. Qxe5 Qxe5 34. Rxe5 f6!? (the best try; if 34. ... c2 35. Bxc2 Nxc2 36. d6 and White wins) 35. Re7 c2 36. Bxc2 Nxc2 37. d6 Kf8 38. Re6! and White should win without too much difficulty.

33. Rxh5 gxh5 34. Bxc2 Nxc2 35. Qe5 Kg7 36. Re4 Bd3?

A blunder in a tough position. Black would have had somewhat better hopes of defending after 36. ... Qxe5 37. Rxe5 although the final result shouldn't be in doubt. Threats to the weak kingside pawns in combination with the passed d5-pawn are too much for Black to deal with.

37. Qg3+, Black resigned. ♠



This is a common idea. The rook will find itself useful on the third rank, with a possible transfer to the kingside being among the plans.

19. ... Bg7?!

It was probably better to clarify the situation in the center with 19. ... c5 instead.

20. Nf1 Rb5

Activating the rook on the fifth rank seems good to me.

This is particularly true since 20. ... c5 now doesn't work out for Black after 21. Bf4!

21. Ng3 Nh5?

With this move Black is completely on the wrong track and immediately finds himself

in a dreadful position. Much better was 21. ... Nh7!, intending to play ... Nh7-g5 and start putting the White center under pressure.

22. Nxh5 Rxh5 23. d5!

It was this strong move that my opponent had underestimated. The rook is stuck on the edge of the board with no clear aim. Perhaps my opponent was dreaming of ... Bd7xh3 sacrifices, but these are just dreams.

23. ... c5 24. Bf4 Bb2!?

An interesting try in a bad position. Intending to harass the White pieces on the queenside and hope for counterplay with the c-pawn. It is hard to believe that things will work in Black's favor, saddled as he is with the h5-rook.

25. Rae3 Qf6 26. Bg3 c4 27. Qe2 Bb5 28. e5?!

It was this natural breakthrough that I had been envisioning for some time now. But what a beautiful sacrifice I had missed!

After 28. Bxd6! c3 I stopped my calculations, since I am about to lose my queen. What is amazing is that White is in fact completely winning after 29. Qxb5 axb5 30. Bxb4! with

OUR HERITAGE 2020 US CHESS YEARBOOK

The information in this yearbook is substantially correct and current as of December 31, 2020. For the full version of the 2020 Yearbook, including contact information for US Chess delegates, please see the governance section of uschess.org. To notify US Chess of corrections or updates, please e-mail mmatthews@uschess.org.

US CHESS ANNUAL MEETINGS, MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS, AND FUND BALANCES

Year	U.S. Open Business Meeting	Membership (1)	Fund Balance (2)
2019	Orlando, Florida	90,861	2,516,082.00
2020	Online: COVID-19	81,334	2,615,898.00

(1) Membership totals are given as of May 31. Totals exclude Junior Tournament Players and tournament members.

(2) Figures enclosed in parentheses are deficits.

US CHESS PRESIDENTS & EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Presidents

2018-2020 Allen Priest
2020-current Mike Hoffpauir

Executive Directors

2013-2017 Jean Hoffman
2017-current Carol Meyer

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

U.S. CHAMPION

2019 Hikaru Nakamura

2020 Wesley So

ONLINE: COVID-19 • OCTOBER 2020

U.S. WOMEN'S CHAMPION

2019 Jennifer Yu

2020 Irina Krush

ONLINE: COVID-19 • OCTOBER 2020

U.S. SENIOR CHAMPION

2019 Alexander Shabalov

2020 Joel Benjamin

ONLINE: COVID-19 • OCTOBER 2020

U.S. JUNIOR CHAMPION

2019 Awonder Liang, Nicolas De T Checa

2020 John Burke

ONLINE: COVID-19 • OCTOBER 2020

U.S. GIRLS' JUNIOR CHAMPION

2019 Carissa Yip

2020 Carissa Yip

ONLINE: COVID-19 • OCTOBER 2020

U.S. OPEN

2019 Illia Nyzhnyk

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

NATIONAL OPEN

Edmondson Cup winner*

2019 Illia Nyzhnyk

2020 Dariusz Swiercz*, Timur Gareyev, D Gukesh

ONLINE: COVID-19 • NOVEMBER 2020

U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN

2019 Megan Lee

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

U.S. MASTERS

2019 Lazaro Bruzon Batista, Hovhannes Gabuzyan, Daniel A. Naroditsky, Isan Reynaldo Ortiz Suarez, Sergei Azarov, Elshan Moradiabadi, Steven Zierk, Bartłomiej Maciejka, Praveen Balakrishnan

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

ARMED FORCES

(Individual* Team)

2019 Eigen Wang* Navy

2020 Andrew Peraino* Navy

VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA • OCTOBER 2020

U.S. SENIOR OPEN

2019 Gurevich, Dmitry

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

U.S. JUNIOR OPEN

2019 Under 21: Christopher Yu-Shuo Shen; Under 15: Elton Cao; Under 11: Ruoxiao Xia; Under 8: Christopher Cheng, Angela Hu

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

U.S. CLASS

2019 Master: Francesco Rambaldi, Prasanna Raghuram Rao, Balaji Daggupati; Expert: Phillip Seitzer, Ashley Pang, Pranav Sairam; A: Ashik Uzzaman; B: Li Li, Ryan Tiong; C: Jason Chen; D: Brian Fong; E and Under: Serkan Sofuoglu; Unrated: Danny Rank

2020 Master: Hans Niemann, Eugene Yanayt; Expert: Guy Cardwell; A: Andrew Bledsoe; B: Samuel He; C: Anantha Kumar, Siddharth Kurup; D: Cole Frankenhoff; E: Ethan Shaffer, Daks Dudipala Jr.
DULLES, VIRGINIA • OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2020

U.S. BLIND

2019 Jessica T. Lauser

2020 Jessica T. Lauser

MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE • OCTOBER 2020

U.S. GAME/10

2019 Illia Nyzhnyk

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

U.S. GAME/15

2019 J. Timothy Sage

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

U.S. GAME/30

2019 Alexander Ipatov

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

U.S. GAME/60

2019 Illia Nyzhnyk, Alexander Ipatov, Mackenzie S. Molner

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

U.S. AMATEUR CHAMPIONS

2019 East: Gregory Matthew Nolan; North: Lawrence S. Cohen, Robert K. Both; South: Devon Martin Puckett; West: Carlos Boteo

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

U.S. AMATEUR TEAM

2019 East: Princeton Orange (Ethan Li, Kapil Chandran, Daniel Moreno, Zachary Holecsek); North: Liquid Knightrogen (Aydin Turgut, Rithwik Mathur, Arshaq Saleem, Benjamin Shoykhet); South: "Youngstars" Rising (Tony Burrus, Raghav Venkat, Ben Chen, Dmitry Sergatskov); West: BAC-1 (Kostya Kavutskiy, Rayan Taghizadeh, Vinesh Ravuri, Daniel Kou); National Playoff Winner: Team North

2020 East: Sig Calls (Atuly Shetty, Eric Most, Brian Luo, Justin Brereton); North: J'adoobie Brothers (Scott Ramer, John Randolph,

Bryan Lilly, Glen Gratz, Scot Henderson); South: E4 (Tianqi Wang, Neo Zhu, Alex Chen, Benjamin Yan); West: BCS (Best Chess School) (Gabriel Bick, Ladia Jirasek, Rayan Taghizadeh, Ben Lemkin); National Playoff Winner (Online: COVID-19): Team South • February-March 2020

GM ARNOLD DENKER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STATE CHAMPIONS

2019 Bryce Tiglon, Ben Li, Emily Nguyen

2020 Nicolas Checa

ONLINE: COVID-19 • JULY 2020

DEWAIN BARBER NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL CHAMPIONS

2019 Robert Shlyakhtenko, Jason Wang

2020 Evan Park, Jason Liang

ONLINE: COVID-19 • AUGUST 2020

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER III NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHAMPIONS

2020 Bryan Xie

ONLINE: COVID-19 • AUGUST 2020

WIM RUTH HARING NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF GIRLS STATE CHAMPIONS

2019 Martha Samadashvili

2020 Annie Wang

ONLINE: COVID-19 • JULY 2020

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT OF SENIOR STATE CHAMPIONS

2019 Shelby Getz

2020 Alex Fishbein

ONLINE: COVID-19 • JULY 2020

FM SUNIL WEERAMANTRY NATIONAL BLITZ TOURNAMENT OF STATE CHAMPIONS

2020 Nicolas Checa (2200+), Sandeep Sethuraman, Ryan Amburgy

(1600-2199), Kyle Ching (U1600)

ONLINE: COVID-19 • JULY 2020

SUSAN POLGAR NATIONAL INVITATIONAL FOR GIRLS

2019 Rebecca A. Lelko

2020 Priyanka Nutakki

ONLINE: COVID-19 • JUNE 2020

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY

2019 K-6: Vyom Vidyarthi, Abinav Rajiv Mundayat, Aghilan Nachiappan, Adi Murgescu, Evan Park, James Y. Oh; K-5: Cooper Ho; K-3: Omya Vidyarthi; K-1: Alexander Braun, Kyle Yiwen Wang

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY TEAM

2019 K-6: The Speyer Legacy School (NY); K-5: Joseph A. Williams Elementary (FL); K-3: P.S. 77—Lower Lab School (NY); K-1: Hunter College Campus School (NY)

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH

2019 K-9: Jason Metpally, Aydin Turgut, Maximilian Lu, Daniel Hung; K-8: Shunkai Peng

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH TEAM

2019 K-9: T.H. Rogers (TX); K-8: Canyon Vista Middle School (TX)

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

2019 Nicolas De T Checa, David Tianjian Peng, Matthew James Stevens

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TEAM

2019 Thomas Jefferson HS (VA)

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

NATIONAL K-12 GRADE CHAMPIONSHIP

2019 K: Lucas Yang; 1st: Mason Jin Li, Jeremy Tao; 2nd: Michael Xiao, Leo Yang, Eden You; 3rd: Rohan Rajaram, Andrew Jiang; 4th: Yuvraj Rudra Chennareddy; 5th: Erick Zhao; 6th: Bach Ngo; 7th: Wyatt Pak; 8th: Nathaniel Lande Shuman; 9th: Raghav Venkat; 10th: Elton Cao; 11th: Hans Niemann; 12th: Ansh Milinkumar Shah

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

NATIONAL K-12 GRADE CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM

2019 K: The Speyer Legacy School (NY); 1st: Dalton (NY); 2nd: Hunter College Campus School (NY); 3rd: NEST+m School (NY); 4th: The Speyer Legacy School (NY); 5th: Joseph A. Williams Elementary School (FL); 6th: Lincoln Middle School (FL), Westglades Middle (FL); 7th: I.S. 318 (NY); 8th: Dalton (NY); 9th: Hunter College Campus School (NY); 10th: Jericho High School (NY); 11th: Newark Academy (NJ); 12th: Edgemont High School (NY)

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

U.S. CADET

2019 Justin Wang

2020 Christopher Yoo

ONLINE: COVID-19 • SEPTEMBER 2020

NATIONAL JUNIOR CONGRESS

2019 6 & Under: Zephyr Teng Wang; 8 & Under: Shravan Sriram; 10 & Under: Brian Huang, Nitish Nathan, Marcus Vasquez, Daniel Shao; 12 & Under: Hersh Singh; 14 & Under: Destynn Keuchel; 18/16 & Under: Gabriel Sam

2020 6 & Under: Ethan Guo; 8 & Under: Vedant Talwalkar, Allen Yang; 10 & Under: Omya Vidyarthi, Andrew Guo; 12 & Under: Aghila Nachiappan; 14 & Under: Hersh Singh; 20/18/16 & Under: Arun Dixit (20 & Under), Anika Rajaram (18 & Under), Arul Viswanathan (16 & Under)
SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA • JANUARY 2020

AMERICAN CLASSICS**AMERICAN OPEN**

2019 Cameron Wheeler, Justin J. Sarkar

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

LINA GRUMETTE MEMORIAL CLASSIC

2019 Michael Casella

2020 Canceled: COVID-19

WORLD OPEN

2019 Liem Quang Le, Jeffery Xiong

2020 Panneerselvam Iniyan, Sanan Sjogirov

ONLINE: COVID-19 • AUGUST 2020

NORTH AMERICAN OPEN

2019 Hovhannes Gabuzyan, Zviad Izoria

2020 D Gukesh, Bryan Solano Cuya, Jakhongir Vakhidov

ONLINE: COVID-19 • DECEMBER 2020

PAN AM CHAMPIONSHIPS**PAN-AM INTERCOLLEGIATE INDIVIDUAL**

2019 Alexander Ipatov, Yannick Kambath, Aaron Grabinsky

2020 Andrew Tang

ONLINE: COVID-19 • JANUARY 2021 (FOR 2020/21 TITLE)

PAN-AM INTERCOLLEGIATE TEAM

2019 Texas Tech University - A

2020 Webster University Team A

ONLINE: COVID-19 • JANUARY 2021 (FOR 2020/21 TITLE)

AMERICAN WORLD CHAMPIONS**WORLD SENIOR TEAM, 50+ DIVISION**

2020 Alex Shabalov, Gregory Kaidanov, Joel Benjamin, Igor Novikov, Alex Yermolinsky

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC • MARCH 2020

CORRESPONDENCE CHESS**U.S. CORRESPONDENCE CHAMPIONS**

2007-2009 Thomas Biedermann, 2011 John Ballow

Lawrence Coplin

2013 Wolf Morrow, Carl Siefring

2010 Edward Duliba

2015 Grayling Hill

GOLDEN KNIGHTS CHAMPIONS

2007 Daniel Woodard

2011 James Tracz

2008 James Rhodes

2012 Michael Buss

2009 Wilbur Tseng

2013 Gary Adams

2010 Michael Buss

USCF ABSOLUTE CHAMPIONS

2007 Edward Duliba

2013 Wilbur Tseng

2008 Ciaran O'Hare

2014 Tony Kain

2009 Dave Sogin, Gary Walters

2015 Kristo Miettinen

2010 Harry Ingersol

2016 Danny Horwitz

2011 John Menke

2017 Harry Ingersol

2012 John Menke

2018 Robert Rizzo

ELECTRONIC KNIGHTS CHAMPION

2007 James Sawaski

2011 Tim Corkum

2008 Wilbur Tseng

2012 Anthony Kain

2009 Wilbur Tseng

2013 Samir Alazawi

2010 Stephen McGregor

2014 Chris Lewis

INTERNATIONAL TITLISTS

FIDE awards titles for outstanding achievement in three areas of chess competition: Over-the-board play, correspondence play, and composition.

GRANDMASTERS

Varuzhan Akobian • Lev Albur • Babakuli Annakov • Marc Arnold • Maurice Ashley • Julio Becerra Rivero • Joel Benjamin • Vinay Bhat • Peter Biyiasas • David Brodsky • Michael Brown • John M. Burke • Fabiano Caruana • Akshat Chandra • Nicolas Checa • Larry Christiansen • Fidel Corrales Jimenez • Nick de Firmian • Maxim Dlugy • Leinier Dominguez Perez • Roman Dzindzichashvili • Jaan Ehlfest • Sergey Erenburg • John Fedorowicz • Benjamin Finegold • Alexander Fishbein • Joshua Friedel • Timur Gareyev • Alexander Goldin • Renier Gonzalez • Boris Gulko • Dmitry Gurevich • Ilya Gurevich • Ron Henley • Holden Hernandez Carmenate • Robert Hess • Conrad Holt • Robert Hungaski • Alexander Ivanov • Zviad Izoria • Brandon Jacobson • Gregory Kaidanov • Gata Kamsky • Lawrence Kaufman • Lubomir Kavalek • Melikset Khachiyan • Jesse Kraai • Boris Kreiman • Irina Krush • Sergey Kudrin • Aleksandr Lenderman • Ruifeng Li • Awonder Liang • Mackenzie Molner • Elshan Moradiabadi • Hikaru Nakamura • Daniel Naroditsky • Hans Niemann • Igor Novikov • Alexander Onischuk • Semon Palatnik • Eugene Perelshteyn • Yuniesky Quesada Perez • Alejandro Ramirez • Ray Robson • Kenneth Rogoff • Michael Rohde • Gennadij Sagalchik • Gabriel Schwartzman • Yasser Seirawan • Grigory Serper • Samuel Sevian • Enrico Sevillano • Alexander Shabalov • Tal Shaked • Sam Shankland • Miron Sher • Alex Sherzer • Yuri Shulman • Bryan Smith • Wesley So • Andrew Soltis • Alexander Stripunsky • Dariusz Swiercz • Andrew Tang • James Tarjan • Kayden Troff • Michael Wilder • Patrick Wolff • Jeffery Xiong • Darwin Yang • Alex Yermolinsky • Gennadi Zaichik • Yaroslav Zhrebukh • Raset Ziatdinov • Steven Zierk

INTERNATIONAL MASTERS

Viktor Adler • Levon Altonian • Armen Ambatsourmian • Nilton Arias • Praveen Balakrishnan • Joel Banawa • Thomas Bartel • John Bartholomew • Leonid Bass • Alexander Battey • Mikhail Baturyn • Salvius Bercys • Gabriel Bick • Calvin Blocker • Andrei Blokhin • Michael Bodek • Jay Bonin • Safal Bora • Joseph Bradford • David Brodsky • Michael Brooks • John Daniel Bryant • Ronald Burnett • Omar Cartagena • Teddy Coleman • Alexander Costello • Richard Costigan • Kong Liang Deng • Dorsa Derakhshani • John Donaldson • Daniel Edelman • Tegshsuren Enkhbat • Marc Esserman • Larry Evans • Joseph Fang • Ali Farahat • Florin Felecan • Daniel Fernandez • Andrei-Costel Florean • Edward Formanek • Igor Foygel • Sanjay Ghatti • Dumitru Ghizdavu • Mark Ginsburg • Rusudan Goletiani • Aaron Grabinsky • Arthur Guo • Daniel Gurevich • Luke Harmon-Vellotti • Matthew Herman • Craig Hilby • Andrew Hong • Dean Ippolito • Brandon Jacobson • Ladia Jirasek • Alexander Kaliksteyn • Albert Kapengut • Julio Kaplan • Alexander Katz • Konstantin Kavutskiy • Igor Khmelitsky • Keaton Kiewra • Erik Kislik • Jake Kleiman • Cyrus Lakdawala • Yuri Lapshun • Matthew Larson • Michael Lee • Ben Li • Zhaozhi Li • Yian Liou • Dimitri London • Daniel Ludwig • John Ludwig • Blas Lugo • Josh Manion • Salvatore Matera • Vincent McCambridge • Eugene Meyer • Mario Micayabas • Lev Milman • Rade Milovanovic • Abhimanyu Mishra

TOP 50 FIDE-RATED AMERICANS

Active players from the January 2021 FIDE Rating List.

	Rtg.
1. Fabiano Caruana	GM 2823
2. Wesley So	GM 2770
3. Leinier Dominguez Perez	GM 2758
4. Hikaru Nakamura	GM 2736
5. Jeffery Xiong	GM 2709
6. Sam Shankland	GM 2691
7. Ray Robson	GM 2673
8. Gata Kamsky	GM 2665
9. Samuel Sevian	GM 2660
10. Alexander Onischuk	GM 2649
10. Dariusz Swiercz	GM 2649
12. Lazaro Bruzon Batista	GM 2639
13. Aleksandr Lenderman	GM 2624
14. Daniel Naroditsky	GM 2621
15. Yaroslav Zhrebukh	GM 2620
16. Varuzhan Akobian	GM 2614
17. Timur Gareyev	GM 2606
18. Zviad Izoria	GM 2602
19. Yuniesky Quesada Perez	GM 2593
20. Awonder Liang	GM 2592
21. Robert Hess	GM 2591
22. Alejandro Ramirez	GM 2567
22. Larry Christiansen	GM 2567
24. Sergey Erenburg	GM 2559
25. Elshan Moradiabadi	GM 2555
26. Igor Novikov	GM 2554
27. Patrick Wolff	GM 2552
28. Conrad Holt	GM 2549
28. Gregory Kaidanov	GM 2549
30. Alexander Goldin	GM 2542
30. Boris Gulko	GM 2542
32. Ruifeng Li	GM 2541
33. Andrew Tang	GM 2538
34. Akshat Chandra	GM 2536
35. Fidel Corrales Jimenez	GM 2532
36. Alexander Shabalov	GM 2528
37. Nicolas Checa	GM 2527
38. John M. Burke	GM 2522
39. Jaan Ehlfest	GM 2517
40. Robert Hungaski	GM 2514
41. Maxim Dlugy	GM 2513
42. Michael Brown	GM 2509
43. Joel Benjamin	GM 2506
44. Praveen Balakrishnan	IM 2500
45. Steven Zierk	GM 2499
46. Leonid Sokolin	IM 2497
47. Julio Becerra Rivero	GM 2495
48. Alexander Stripunsky	GM 2492
49. Brandon Jacobson	GM 2491
50. Alex Yermolinsky	GM 2486

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3. GM Tim Murray	2561
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5. SIM Kurt W. Stein	2538
6. SIM Bobby Johnson	2529
7. GM Jason Bokar	2522
8. SIM Jon Edwards	2519
9. SIM Wolff Morrow	2502
10. SIM Dan Perry	2497
11. SIM Neil Kulick	2490
12. SIM Thomas Biedermann	2486
13. SIM Wilbur Tseng	2482
14. SIM Kenneth M. Reinhart	2480
14. GM Carl L. Siefring	2480
16. IM Denny Marbourg	2477
17. SIM Wieland Belka	2475
18. SIM Ciaran O'Hare	2472
19. SIM Kenneth Holroyd	2469
20. IM Oliver Koo	2465
21. IM Kyle Biedermann	2463
22. IM Thomas Williams	2458
23. IM Larry Parsons	2448
24. IM Robert N. Fass	2441
25. IM Paul Muljadi	2440

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A Real Growth Industry

Questions of mindset and chess improvement

by **IM JOHN WATSON**

We increasingly see the word “mindset” used in the popular media in a wide variety of contexts, ranging from sports, to business, education, health, and (of course) self-help. It is a rather generic term that can be applied to almost any discussion relating to motivation, learning, and achievement. But there is a formal and well-defined academic field of mindset theory that stems from the work of Stanford University developmental psychologist professor Carol Dweck.

While this theory can’t be summarized in a sentence, it starts from the idea that people have different beliefs about the underlying nature of ability and can approach learning accordingly. Dweck coined the terms “growth mindset” and “fixed mindset” to describe different beliefs about ideas such as intelligence and talent. Someone with a growth mindset believes that intelligence and abilities can be developed through focused effort and learning from mistakes. Someone with a fixed mindset, however, thinks that intelligence and ability are fixed, tends to avoid the challenges involved in mastering new skills, and doesn’t believe in the possibility of becoming smarter.

The book *Chess Improvement: It’s all in the mindset* has one overriding theme: how to apply mindset theory to chess learning and practice. Its co-authors are Dr. Barry Hymer, a professor of psychology and a long-time authority on mindset theory, and Peter Wells, who is not only a strong GM but also an accomplished chess author and trainer. Peter has long been one of my favorite chess writers, both for his original takes and his eloquent style. For example, the best regular chess column I have read over my many years of studying chess literature was his *Strategy for ChessBase Magazine* (beginning in 2000), which consistently had extraordinarily insightful commentary on all types of middlegames not discussed elsewhere.

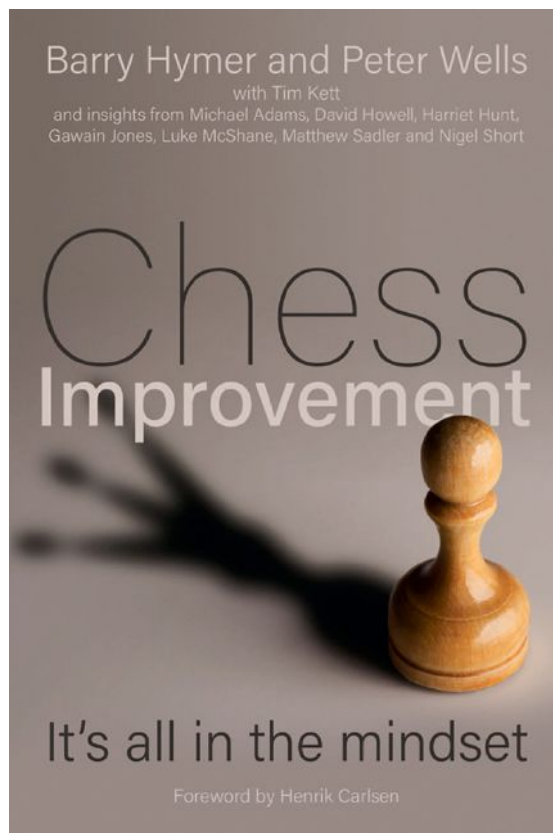
Both authors are fully involved in each part of the work, but there is a division of labor. Hymer specializes in explaining the theoretical educational issues, while Wells handles the practical applications and chess-specific content. Hymer opens each chapter with a theoretical slant on that chapter’s topic, and the end of each chapter includes specific recommendations. Although everyone can

A substantial part of the book is devoted to giving guidance to chess parents. Hymer and Wells supply insights from extensive interviews with most of the best British players of the past 20-30 years, including Michael Adams, David Howell, Harriet Hunt, Gawain Jones, Luke McShane, Matthew Sadler, and Nigel Short. The authors spend considerable time learning about the early development of these players and what mindsets they exhibited as their careers progressed. It’s hard to generalize about the details of how these leading British players were taught and motivated, but all the top players who were interviewed shared one thing: supportive parents who were also careful not to push them too hard. Presumably as a result, they are all strongly self-motivated.

Early in the book the authors present a chart that gives examples of a fixed mindset versus a growth mindset in various chess contexts. For example, with respect to ratings, a fixed mindset includes a “strong focus to the point of obsession. A rating is the foremost symbol of your status as a chess player. Chess challenges are prefaced by such inner voice questions as, ‘How will a win [or] defeat impact on my rating?’” (9)

Someone with a growth mindset might say “I’m not much interested in the status a rating brings *per se*, but in the accompanying opportunities to play in more challenging and hence more exciting events.” (ibid.) Needless to say, a growth mindset is seen as the one most conducive to improvement.

Or consider a player’s approach to defeats. Someone with a fixed mindset regards losses as something to be avoided at all costs. He or she might say that defeats are “a sign that I’m maxing out on my (limited) chess ability.” By contrast, someone with a growth mindset considers defeats as inevitable occurrences that “represent excellent learning opportunities.”



benefit from this book, I would say that there are three main audiences: the average amateur, primarily addressed by Hymer; the improving or advanced player with high chess ambitions, mostly Wells’ concern; and parents and coaches, addressed by both authors.

Someone with a growth mindset is “resilient in the face of adversity” (10) and welcomes both post-mortems and engine analysis to clarify where they went wrong.

The discussion of motivation (a major section of the book) further clarifies basic issues. Hymer distinguishes between intrinsic (or autonomous) motivation and extrinsic (or controlled) motivation. The former “is revealed in an intense focus on the processes of engagement — doing something for the thing itself (e.g., the joy it brings, the curiosity it excites or the challenge it presents) ... but the primary driver throughout is *the doing*.” (41) Extrinsic motivation “is revealed in the focus on the products of engagement — what the activity will bring as a reward or payoff (e.g. the praise, prizes or performance grades) ... the reason for doing it is substantially focused on *the bringing*.” (ibid.) As you might guess, intrinsic motivation best fits with the growth mindset, given its focus on improvement over immediate results. The rest of this chapter gives numerous examples of motivators to chess achievement and obstacles to motivation.

Throughout my own career as a teacher, two eternally-discussed questions are how to study and what is the best use of a student’s time. Hymer and Wells have a chapter called “The right kind of effort: making practice purposeful.” You’ll have to read the book to see specifically what kinds of practice and study they approve or disapprove of, but this chapter-end list for parents and coaches summarizes the topics and advice covered (I’ve abbreviated the descriptions of each topic and the list itself):

- “1. **The passion is the point.** Passion for the game *and* its translation into hours of hard work are the single biggest dividing factors between GMs and the rest of the chess world ...
2. **The best chess work your child will ever do is the work they are driven to do by themselves ...** In this respect, the work of a coach should mainly be to open the child’s eyes to what is possible for them to study, provide them with examples and stimulation, and set them running. [...]
4. **Write (lots of) things down.** This starts with the moves of every game your child plays ... The key thing here is not to accept the feeble complaint, ‘But it’s a rapid game!’
5. **Study more about less, not less about more.** The first reason for this dictum is that it’s impossible to cover *everything* in your child’s chess study and preparation ... so don’t spread her time too thinly and end up with her not knowing enough about an idea, a line or a technique to use it successfully ...

6. **Our call for great effort applies just as much to time spent actually playing the game as it does to carrying out your target number of practice hours ...** The difference between the quality of performance from the same player on consecutive days can easily vary by the equivalent of several hundred rating points depending upon their mood, concentration levels, preparation and — most of all — how hard they try.

7. **Playing (online) blitz chess is fine -but still analyse [sic] your games ...**

8. **Collect model games and learn them by heart.**

9. **Do endgame drills so you can win some standard positions on autopilot.”** (175-177)

Numerous such lists are located throughout the work, with the details contained in the chapter. Although the growth mindset versus fixed mindset perspective is a useful theme, the true value of the book resides in how the authors identify specific problem areas in chess contexts, ones that we will all readily recognize as relevant to our own progress or lack thereof.

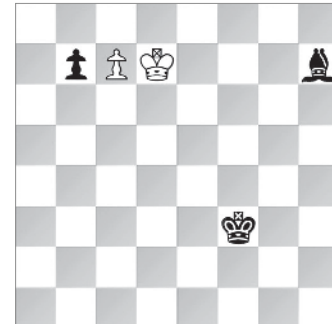
I also found some opinions that corresponded with my experience as a chess teacher. At a couple of points, Wells expresses skepticism about the value of the tactical exercises (usually online) that so many students spend untold hours upon. Given the hint that there’s a tactic available, they may get very skillful at solving problems rapidly, but “find it hard to reproduce [that skill] when the occasion arises in practical play.” (128) This hits home with me. For many years I have been frustrated by some students’ inability to see tactics in their games, even though they spend untold hours building up impressive ratings on popular tactics sites. Such students learn strategy easily, but don’t seem to improve tactically, or perhaps only marginally so and at a very slow pace.

A very popular subject in educational circles concerns the potentially negative role of praise. However, I’ve never seen it applied to chess. The authors seem to join in the popular critique, saying, “The consistent use of praise or any other reward strategy violates one of the most well-established tenets of behavioural psychology, namely that intermittent or unpredictable reinforcement generates far greater persistence at a task than consistent reinforcement, which leads to decreased effort in the absence of the reinforcement.” (44) But they are more nuanced, and cite Carol Dweck, who advises against “fixed, identity-based praise” in favor of “growth-enhancing, effort-based praise.” (ibid.) That strikes me as a more realistic approach; some children react so positively to praise that it would be a shame to draw some arbitrary line against it.

Unlike most improvement books, *Chess Improvement* doesn’t supply exercises or study plans. There are numerous illustrative games and game fragments, but they are meant to illustrate the commentary in the book and make it less abstract. While talking about beauty in chess and its motivational role, for example, Wells discusses studies, pointing out this Reti-esque gem. (Check out the solution at the end of the column.)

JOLTING OUR EXPECTATIONS

Sarychev & Sarychev, 1928



WHITE TO PLAY AND DRAW

Chess Improvement may not be a consistently easy read for everyone. Wells, in particular, is fond of stressing how some practices associated with a fixed mindset might be positive under the right circumstances, and he tends to soften hard claims with an appropriate skepticism and an “on the other hand” objectivity. This definitely strengthens the book, in my opinion, but might prove a little frustrating for those looking for a strong message and simple path forward. I would recommend taking a chapter at a time, appreciating the subtleties, and pausing to let the ideas sink in. *Chess Improvement* has impressively many nuggets of wisdom and good practical advice for parents, coaches, and players of any strength. Congratulations to Hymer and Wells for tackling such a challenging and fruitful area of research. ♠

Hymer, Barry and Wells, Peter. *Chess Improvement: It's all in the mindset*. Crowne House Publishing, 2020. ISBN paperback: 9781785835025, 352 pages. \$22.95.

Solution:

1. Kc8!

Other tries lose: if 1. Ke6? Ke4!, while 1. c8=Q? fails to 1. ... Bf5+.

1. ... b5 2. Kd7! b4

No better is 2. ... Bf5+ 3. Kd6! b4 4. Ke5 Kg4 5. Kd4!.

3. Kd6

Not 3. Ke6? Ke4 4. c8=Q Bf5+.

3. ... Bf5 4. Ke5 Kg4 5. Kd4, Draw.



MAKE YOUR MOVE!

APRIL 2021 | FM CARSTEN HANSEN

This month's puzzles are from an interesting mix of top online events, including the Opera Euro Rapid. The puzzles start from easy and gradually move toward being difficult. Try first to solve the puzzle before reading the text at the bottom of the page. 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 you will only cheat yourself out of improving your game. Solutions can be found on page 55.

TACTIC I.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC II.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC III.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC IV.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC V.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC VI.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC VII.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC VIII.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC IX.



WHITE TO MOVE

POSITION 1: Straight for the throat

POSITION 2: Making room

POSITION 3: Loose pieces

POSITION 4: Overburdened defender

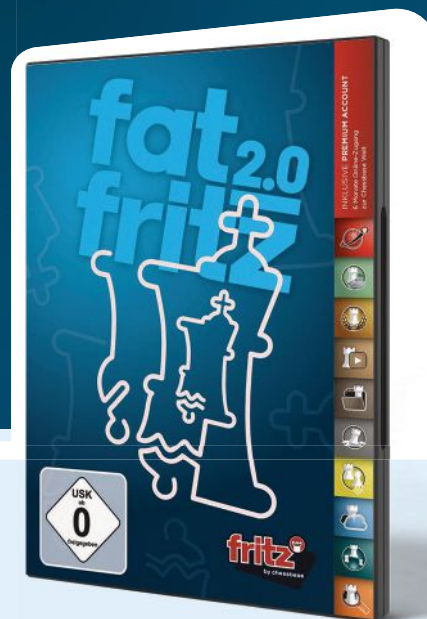
POSITION 5: Quick assault

POSITION 6: Finding an open road to the goal

POSITION 7: A way through to dominance

POSITION 8: Good coordination vs poor coordination

POSITION 9: Preparing the can opener



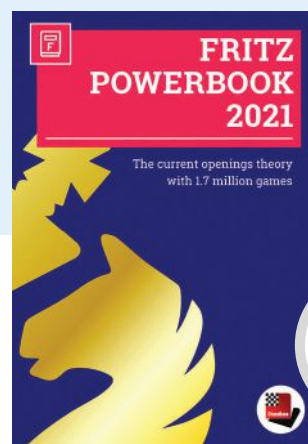
Fat Fritz 2.0 is the successor to the revolutionary Fat Fritz, which was based on the famous AlphaZero algorithms. Using a new Japanese AI technology that achieves optimal performance on regular computer processors (CPUs – no expensive graphic card required) it combines the best of both worlds: a massive new neural network, trained by Albert Silver with the original Fat Fritz, while learning from the surgical precision of Stockfish's legendary search. This new version takes chess analysis to the next level and is a must for players of all skill levels, whether beginner or professional, who won't accept any compromises. Its understanding is unparalleled, as it learned by literally studying billions of chess positions.

Fat Fritz 2 comes with the latest version of the most advanced chess playing interface in the world, which provides coach functions, automatic game analysis, a database with 1 million games as well as a six-month subscription to ChessBase Premium Account.

- Fat Fritz 2* engine with a massive new neural network
- 64-bit program interface
- Includes current Fritz 17 program interface
- ChessBase Premium Account (6 months) with access to training videos, Playchess, tactics training, and much much more!
- Database with 1 million games, etc.

\$ 109.⁰⁰

INCLUDE A FREE COPY



**A
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Value**

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Minimum: PC Core i3 oder i5 / AMD FX or Ryzen 3, 2 GB RAM, Windows 7/8/8.1 64Bit, DirectX9, , graphics card with 256 MB RAM, DVD-ROM drive, Windows Media Player 11 and Internet access.

Recommended: PC Core i7, i9 or AMD FX, Ryzen 7/9 and Windows 10 64-Bit, 4 GB RAM, Windows 10, DirectX10, graphics card with 512 MB RAM or more, Windows Media Player 11, DVD ROM drive and Internet access.

System requirements for ChessBase Account: Internet access and up-to-date browser, e.g. Chrome, Safari. Runs on Windows, OS X, iOS, Android and Linux.

COMPATIBLE WITH



Free Ground Shipping On All Books, Software and DVDs at US Chess Sales
\$25.00 Minimum - Excludes Clearance, Shopworn and Items Otherwise Marked

Kramnik at the Top

The 14th World Champion shows his attacking chops.

By **BRUCE PANDOLFINI**

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PLAYERS of the last 25 years, and possibly one of the least appreciated, is Vladimir Kramnik. The former Classical World Chess Champion (2000-2006), and undisputed World Chess Champion (2006-2007), has played a major role in influencing opening theory. Reaching the top of the pantheon, Kramnik made significant contributions in the Ruy Lopez, the Kings Indian Defense, and other critical systems. While he is renowned for his sensible, persistent fighting qualities, he's also capable of more adventurous play, as in this month's contest against Darmen Sadvakasov (Black) at Astana in 2001. In tune with today's worldwide chess boom, the contest began as a Queen's Gambit Accepted.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (D27)

GM Vladimir Kramnik
GM Darmen Sadvakasov
Astana, 2001

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4



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.**

3. **Nf3** **Par Score 5**

This stops the counter-sacrifice 3. ... e5. Accept *full credit* for either 3. e3 or 3. e4.

3. **...** **Nf6**

Black develops his king-knight in turn.

4. **e3** **Par Score 5**

The standard move. White immediately plays to regain his pawn.

4. **...** **e6**

Black blunts the c4-bishop's diagonal, while clearing the way for the f8-bishop.

5. **Bxc4** **Par Score 5**

Naturally, White takes his pawn back, with development.

5. **...** **c5**

Sadvakasov looks to liquidate some of the center, hoping to get counterplay.

6. **O-O** **Par Score 5**

White gets ready for business. Accept *full credit* for 6. Nc3.

6. **...** **a6**

With this advance, Black now has the option of following with ... b7-b5.

7. **a4** **Par Score 5**

Kramnik opts to stop ... b7-b5.

7. **...** **Nc6**

Developing with some pressure against the White center.

8. **Qe2** **Par Score 5**

This development clears the d1-square for a rook, while supporting a future advance of the e-pawn. Accept *full credit* for 8. dxc5, though it doesn't offer much.

8. **...** **Qc7**

Accordingly, Black removes his queen from the d-file.

9. **Rd1** **Par Score 5**

Kramnik indeed repositions his king-rook to the d-file.

9. **...** **Bd6**

The exchange 9. ... cxd4 was reasonable, but Black decides to expedite castling.

10. **dxc5** **Par Score 5**

This opens the d-file and it makes Black's dark-square bishop move again.

10. **...** **Bxc5**

White's advantage is very slight. Black is okay.

11. **b3** **Par Score 5**

The queen-bishop is headed for b2. Accept *full credit* for either 11. Nc3 or 11. Nbd2.

11. **...** **O-O**

By castling, Black completes his kingside development and hopes to secure his king.

12. **Bb2** **Par Score 5**

Kramnik stays with with his developing

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 55.

April Exercise: Your play doesn't seem to be going anywhere. Maybe you've been playing too much, or too hard, and it all seems so stale. It's time to escape. As Botvinnik recommended, try going on a rejuvenating journey, a relaxing train ride along the banks of a beautiful river. Hills and valleys envelop you. Vistas open and close before you. Ideas emerge and fade. Emotions, rise, fall, come, and go. A life story unfolds along the way. Eventually, it just ends. You're not sure what you've seen, felt, or thought. It doesn't matter. There's so much energy, you can't wait to get back to playing chess.

PROBLEM I.
Mating net



PROBLEM II.
Mating net



PROBLEM III.
Mating net



PROBLEM IV.
Mating net



PROBLEM V.
Mating net



PROBLEM VI.
Mating net



plans, with the option of capturing on f6.

12. ... e5

This clears the c8-bishop's line, while avoiding doubled f-pawns.

13. Nc3 Par Score 5

White connects his rooks and takes aim at the d5-square.

13. ... e4

Black starts some aggression. He has in mind creating pressure against h2.

14. Ng5 Par Score 5

The retreat 14. Nd2 was certainly playable (4 points part credit), but the text gives White greater attacking chances.

14. ... Bd6

As expected, Black takes aim at h2.

15. Nd5 Par Score 5

Kramnik opens the b2-bishop's diagonal. Accept full credit for 15. h3.

15. ... Nxd5

When under attack, it's normal to trade off some of the attackers. But Black could have taken on h2 with check first.

16. Rxd5 Par Score 5

Once again, Kramnik chooses the more active move. Accept full credit for 16. Bxd5.

16. ... Bxh2+

17. Kh1 Par Score 4
Accept full credit for 17. Kf1.

17. ... Be5
Black gets his bishop out of potential danger, while offering a trade.

18. Qh5 Par Score 6
The threat is mate at h7.

18. ... Bf5
This develops a piece, but Black misses his best defense, 18. ... h6.

19. Nxf7 Par Score 7
Kramnik busts open the position. Some nice tactics ensue.

19. ... Rxf7
Add 1 bonus point if you had analyzed 19. ... Bxb2 20. Rxf5 Bxa1 21. Ne5+, seeing that 21. ... Kh8 is met by 22. Ng6 mate.

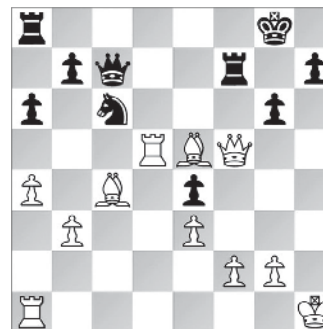
20. Qxf5 Par Score 7
Add 1 bonus point if you planned to answer 20. ... Rxf5 by 21. Rd8 mate.

20. ... g6
Black is lost and could resign.

21. Bxe5 Par Score 6
White is winning easily. Add 1 bonus point for seeing 21. ... Rxf5 22. Rd8 mate. On 21. ... gxf5 22. Bxc7 Rxc7, White can win either of Black's rooks (1 bonus point).

21. ... Black resigns (1-0)

From a position of relative equality, Kramnik exploded to brilliant victory. ♠



**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

TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Board authorizes a temporary change in the US Chess Grand Prix (GP) rules for the period March 4, 2020 through April 30, 2021 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 "XXXX in Guaranteed prizes" (or similar words) for their GP events shall be allowed to re-state their prize funds in their publicity as "XXXX 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 XXXX 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.

NATIONAL EVENTS & BIDS NOW ON USCHESS.ORG Effective with the November 2020 Chess Life, we have removed the National Events and Bids page that has traditionally been part of our TLA section. This information continues to be available here: <https://new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar>

Online

NATIONAL SCHOLASTIC CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

2021 US Junior Chess Congress Online

SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2021 - SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

Organized by Chess Weekend and Mechanics' Institute Chess Club. Platform: Chess.com Sections & Rounds: 6 Sections based on Age on 9/1/20. Higher of 2021 April OTB or ONL reg suppl rating used. 1-day Sections: Age 6&under, Age 8&under: Sat., April 10, 5SS G/15+5: 11a, 1p, 3p, 5p, 7p ET. Age 10&under: Sat., April 10, 5SS G/25+5: 11a, 1p, 3p, 5p, 7p ET. Age 12&under, Age 14&under: Sun., April 11, 5SS G/25+5: 11a, 1p, 3p, 5p, 7p ET. 2-day Championship Section: Age 16/18&under: Sat. AND Sun., April 10-11, 6SS G/60+5: 12p, 3p, 6p ET both days. Bye: Max 2 half-point byes, last 2 rounds irrevocable & must request before Round 1. Individual Prizes: Commemorative plaques or medals to Top 10 players overall, Top 3 players in under-sections (see website for rating cutoffs). Team Competition: Clubs and school teams may compete for team prizes within each section: Min 3 players, Top 3 scores count towards team score. Awards to Top 5 teams (Top 3 in Champ.) Fair Play: Monitoring through webcam is mandatory for everyone! 1-day sections: 1 webcam, 2-day section: 2 cameras. QC Check-in sessions will be provided. Violations may be reported to the US Chess Ethics Committee. Entry Fees: 1-day sections \$40 by 3/15, \$50 3/30, \$60 by 4/9. 2-day Section: \$50 by 3/15, \$60 by 3/30, \$70 by 4/9. Registration closes at 6PM ET on 4/9. USCF membership req. Enter Online: <https://www.kingregistration.com/event/USJCC2021> Side events: Thurs. Arena, Fri. Blitz, Sat. Roundtable Discussion, Sun. ChessKid.com rapid tournament. Full event details: military.org/juniorchesscongress. Questions: 2021juniorcongress@gmail.com.

North American Under 13 Championship

SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2021 - SUNDAY, APRIL 18, 2021

8SS, G/30+10, at Internet Chess Club. Open to residents of US, Canada, Mexico, Bahamas or Bermuda, born after 4/17/08. Must be on Zoom using real name to be eligible for prizes (see www.ccazoom.com). In 4 sections. Open Section: open to all. Plaque to top 5; top 2 each Under 1800, Under 1600. Free entry to all CCA tournaments 5/15/21-10/15/21 to 1st, 5/15/21-8/15/21 2nd-3rd, 5/15/21-7/15/21 4th-5th. Under 1600 Section: Plaque to top 5, top 2 each Under 1400, Under 1200. Free entry to all CCA tournaments 5/15/21-8/15/21 to 1st, 5/15/21-7/15/21 to 2nd & 3rd, 5/15/21-6/15/21 4th & 5th. Under 1200 Section: Plaque to top 5; top 2 each Under 1000,

Under 800, Unrated. Free entry prizes: same as Under 1600 Section. Under 800 Section: Plaque to top 5, top 2 each Under 600, Under 400, Unrated. Free entry prizes: same as Under 1600 Section. Entry fee at chessaction.com: \$57 by 4/15, \$80 by 12 noon EDT 4/17, no entry after 10 am EDT 4/17. New players (1st CCA event on ICC) register by 4/15 or risk not being paired for round 1. Log in to playcca.com 30 minutes before play begins; rounds begin each day at: EDT 11 am, 1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm. Half point byes available all rounds, limit 2 byes, must be claimed with registration & cannot be changed. Online Regular rated (will not affect OTB ratings). Online Regular ratings used for pairings & prizes. USCF membership required; may join with entry. \$15 service charge for refunds. WARNING: YOU MUST BE LOGGED IN WHEN PAIRINGS ARE ISSUED, OR YOU WILL NOT BE PAIRED.

7th annual Eastern Class Blitz

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2021

11-SS, G/3+2, at Internet Chess Club. \$600 guaranteed prizes. Must be on Zoom (use real name) to be eligible for prizes (side/rear camera angle); see ccazoom.com. One section, open to all. Prizes \$200-100-60, top U2100 \$90, U1800/Unr \$80, U1500 \$70. Entry fee at chessaction.com: \$27 by 2/18, \$40 by 6 pm CST 2/19, both \$10 less if playing in Eastern Class Blitz 4/24-25, no entry after 6 pm EDT 4/23. New players (first CCA event on ICC) enter by 4/22 or risk not being paired for round 1. GMs \$25 from prize. Log into playcca.com 30 minutes before game. Round 1 begins 8 pm EDT. Other rounds ASAP; 15 minute break after round 6. Should finish by 10 pm EDT. Half point byes: Available all rounds, limit 2 byes, must be claimed with registration, cannot be changed. Online Blitz rated (will not affect OTB ratings). Online Regular ratings used for pairings & prizes (OTB Regular used if no Online Regular). \$15 service charge for refunds. WARNING: YOU MUST BE LOGGED IN WHEN PAIRINGS ARE ISSUED, OR YOU WILL NOT BE PAIRED.

HERITAGE EVENT

29th annual Eastern Class Championships

SATURDAY, MAY 1, 2021 - SUNDAY, MAY 2, 2021

6-SS, G/75+10, at Internet Chess Club. \$6000 guaranteed prizes. Must be on Zoom (use real name) to be eligible for prizes (side/rear camera angle); see ccazoom.com. In 5 sections. Master/Expert (2000/up): \$600-300-200-100, top Under 2200 \$350-150. Class A (1700-1999): \$500-300-150-100. Class B (1500-1799/Unr): \$500-300-150-100. Class C (1300-1599/Unr): \$500-300-150-100. Class D/E (Under 1400/Unr): \$400-200-120-70, top Under 1200 \$240-120. Unrated prize limits: Class D/E \$100, Class C \$200, Class B \$300. Entry fee at chessaction.com: \$90 by 4/22, \$110 by 11:30 am EDT 4/24, entry after 10 am EDT 4/24 must take half point bye in rd 1. New players (first CCA event on ICC) enter by 4/22 or risk not being paired for round 1. GMs \$90 from prize.

Log into playcca.com 30 minutes before game, rounds begin EDT 11 am, 2:30 pm & 6 pm each day. Regional EF discount: \$20 less to residents of Eastern Time Zone. Half point byes: available all rounds, limit 2 byes, must be claimed with registration, cannot be changed. Online Regular rated (will not affect OTB ratings). Online Regular ratings used for pairings & prizes (OTB Regular used if no Online Regular). \$15 service charge for refunds. WARNING: YOU MUST BE LOGGED IN WHEN PAIRINGS ARE ISSUED, OR YOU WILL NOT BE PAIRED.

HERITAGE EVENT

28th annual New York State Open

SATURDAY, MAY 15, 2021

5-SS, G/45+10, at Internet Chess Club. \$4000 guaranteed prizes. Must be on Zoom (use real name) to be eligible for prizes (side/rear camera angle); see ccazoom.com. In 4 sections. Major Section: Open to 1900/over. \$500-300-200-100, top U2200 \$240-120. Under 2000/Unr Section: \$350-200-120-80, U1800 (no Unr) \$180-90. Under 1700/Unr Section: \$300-180-120-60, top U1500 (no Unr) \$140-70, unrated limit \$150. Under 1400/Unr Section: \$200-150-100-50, U1200 (no Unr) \$100-50; unrated limit \$80. Entry fee \$68 at chessaction.com by 5/13: \$85 by 12:30 pm EDT 5/15, must take round 1 bye after 10 am EDT 5/15. New players (first CCA event on ICC) enter by 5/13 or risk not being paired for round 1. EF discounts: \$15 less to New York State residents, \$7 less to NYSCA members (may join with entry for \$12). GMs \$50 from prize. Log into playcca.com 30 minutes before game. Rounds begin EDT 11 am, 1:30 pm, 4 pm, 6:30 pm, 9 pm. Half point byes: Available all rounds, limit 2 byes, must be claimed with registration & cannot be changed. USCF membership required; may join with registration. Online Regular rated (will not affect OTB ratings). Online Regular ratings used for pairings & prizes (OTB Regular used if no Online Regular). \$15 service charge for refunds. WARNING: YOU MUST BE LOGGED IN WHEN PAIRINGS ARE ISSUED, OR YOU WILL NOT BE PAIRED.

CCA May Open

SUNDAY, MAY 16, 2021

5-SS, G/40+10, at Internet Chess Club. \$2000 guaranteed prizes. Must be on Zoom (use real name) to be eligible for prizes (side/rear camera angle); see ccazoom.com. In 3 sections. Open Section: Open to all, \$400-200-100, top U2200 \$140, U2000 \$120. Under 1900/Unr Section: \$250-130-70, top U1700 (no Unr) \$120. Under 1500/Unr Section: \$200-100-50, U1300 (no Unr) \$120; unrated limit \$80. Entry fee at chessaction.com: \$48 by 5/14, \$65 by 11:30 am EDT 5/16, entry after 10 am EDT 5/16 must take half point bye in rd 1. New players (first CCA event on ICC) enter by 5/14 or risk not being paired for rd 1. GMs \$40 from prize. Log into playcca.com 30 minutes before game, rounds begin EDT 11 am, 1:15 pm, 3:30 pm, 5:45 pm, 8 pm. Half point byes: Available all rounds, limit 2 byes, must be claimed with registration & cannot be changed. Online Regular rated (will not affect

OTB ratings). Online Regular ratings used for pairings & prizes (OTB Regular used if no Online Regular). \$15 service charge for refunds. WARNING: YOU MUST BE LOGGED IN WHEN PAIRINGS ARE ISSUED, OR YOU WILL NOT BE PAIRED.

Regionals

NEW YORK

APRIL 17, 2021 - APRIL 18, 2021

North American Under 13 Championship

See Online Events.

MAY 16, 2021

CCA May Open

See Online Events.

MARYLAND

MARYLAND CHESS TOURNAMENTS (NORTH PENN CHESS CLUB)

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

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 1, 2021 - MAY 2, 2021

29th annual Eastern Class Championships

See Online Events.

PENNSYLVANIA

North Penn Chess Club

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

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8 rounds, G/30+10

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Solutions

Page 11 / CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM I. 30. Qxe7+ is good but 30. Qxf6+! mates after 30. ... Kxf6 31. Bc3. Or 30. ... Kh7 31. Kg2! and then Re1-h1 delivers mate. **PROBLEM II.** 24. ... Bc2! threatens to queen but also to mate with 25. ... Rxa3+! 26. Kxa3 Ra8+. **PROBLEM III.** 30. ... Nxf4! sets up a back-rank mate, 31. gxf4 Qxf4! 32. exf4? Re1+. **PROBLEM IV.** White resigned after 31. ... Rh8! in view of 32. g4 Bxa2+ 33. Rxa2 Nc3+. **PROBLEM V.** After 28. ... Bc3+! 29. Rxc3 Nf3+ 30. Ke2 Rd2+ 31. Kf1 Rd1+ White will be mated with either 32. Ke2 Re1 mate or 32. Kg2 Rg1+ 33. Kh3 Bf5+ 34. g4 Bxg4 mate. **PROBLEM VI.** White found 30. g6! hxg6 31. Rxd8! Rxd8 32. Ng5 Qf8 33. Qe4. If Black varies with 32. ... Qf6 White has 33. Qg3 and Qg3-h4+ next move.

Page 48 / MAKE YOUR MOVE!

TACTIC I. 28. ... Qxf2+! and **White resigned.** He gets mated after 28. ... Qxf2+ 29. Rxf2 Rd1+ 30. Rf1 Rdxfl mate. Leenhouts-Gumularz, Titled Tuesday 2021. **TACTIC II.** 23. Nd1! The World Champion could have resigned at this point, but he carries on for a few more moves. 23. ... Re8 If 23. ... Qxc4 then 24. Qxf8+ Kxf8 25. Rd8+ Ne8 26. Rdxex8 mate ends the fun. A nice parallel to the first puzzle. 24. Rxe8+ Nxe8 25. Nxc3 and **Black resigned** as he will end up with a piece less. Dubov-Carlsen, Opera Euro Rapid KO 2021. **TACTIC III.** 27. Nc4! Threatening a nasty family check on b6. 27. ... Ka7 28. Nb6! Anyway! In the game, White went in a different direction: 28. Ne5 Re7 29. Qf3?? (a mouse slip) (29. Kh2 Rhe8 would have kept the chances about even) 29. ... gxf3 and White, of course, resigned in Spyropoulos-Eljanov, Titled Tuesday 2021. 28. ... Kxb6 29. Qf6+ The point behind the previous move. 29. ... Ka7 30. Qxh8 and White has won the Exchange and should win. **TACTIC IV.** 15. ... Nfxe4! A classical and typical theme. The queen on d2 is overburdened with defensive tasks. 16. fxe4 Bxd4 17. Qxd4 Ne6 18. Qxd6 Qxg5 Black has not won material but has a significant positional advantage thanks to the weak dark squares in White's position as well as the isolated pawn on e4. The rest of the game went as follows. 19. Bf3 a3 A further attack on the dark squares. 20. b4 Rd8 21. Qg3 Qxg3 22. hxg3 f6 23. c5 Kf7 24. Be2 Ke7 25. Bc4 Rd4! 26. Nd5+? A desperate attempt to create counterplay, but this quickly fails. 26. ... cxd5 27. exd5 Rxd1+ 28. Rxd1 Nf8 29. d6+ Kd8 30. b5 Be6 and **White resigned** in Ehvest-Kulaots, Eesti Masters 2021. **TACTIC V.** 16. Nf5! White attacks Black's sole unguarded pawn. 16. ... 0-0 Black can defend more stubbornly with 16. ... Rg8 but White has an overwhelming advantage because all of Black's pieces are passive spectators to White's assault. 17. Rad1 Qb5 18. Qe1 Bxf2+ (an attempt to find relief by exchanging some pieces) 19. Rxf2 Qxf5 20. Rd4 Qc5 21. Bd6 Qb6 22. Ba3 Rc7 23. Qe5 Kd8 24. Rxf6 gxf6 25. Qxf6+ Kc8 26. Qxf7 with a decisive advantage for White. 17. Nxb7 Kxb7? Or 17. ... Bb5 18. c4 Bc6 19. Nh5 and White is winning. 18. Be5 Through this pin White will, at minimum, win the piece back. 18. ... Be7 19. Qg4+

The game continued 19. Rfd1 Rfd8 20. Qg4+ (20. Qh5! wins) 20. ... Kf8 21. Qh4 Ng8 22. Qxh7 f6?? (22. ... Bf6 would have saved Black, e.g., 23. Bd6+ Be7 24. Be5 Bf6 with a repetition of moves) 23. Rd4 Be8 24. Rg4 Bf7 25. Bf4 Qc6 26. Rg7 and **Black resigned** in G. Shahade-Kostenko, Titled Tuesday 2021. 19. ... Kh8 20. Qh4 and White is winning. **TACTIC VI.** 25. ... Re4! Black prepares to switch the rook to h4. 26. Kh2 If 26. Qd1 (to answer 26. ... Rh4 with 27. Qxf3), then 26. ... Rxe3! 27. Qd2 f4 (crashing through White's defensive lines) 28. g4 Qh4 29. fxe3 fxe3 30. Qh2 f2+ 31. Kg2 e2 and Black is winning. 26. ... Rh4 27. Rh1 Rxh3+! The breakthrough. The rook cannot be captured. 28. Kg1 Rxh1+ and with mate in a few moves looming, **White resigned.** Gasanov-Andreikin, Titled Tuesday 2021. **TACTIC VII.** 24. Bc6!! A strong intermediary move. In the game, White did not spot the opportunity available to him and instead continued: 24. Nxd4 Rxc2 25. Rxc2 Rc8 26. Rxc8 Bxc8 with about equal chances in Vidit-Carlsen, Opera Euro Rapid 2021. 24. ... Rab8 Or 24. ... Bxc6 25. Rxc6+ Rxc6 26. Rxc6+ Ke7 27. Nxd4 and Black's position is falling apart. 25. Bxb7 Rxc2 26. Rxc2 Rxb7 27. Rc6+ Kf7 28. Nxd4 White has won back the pawn and has a decisive positional advantage. **TACTIC VIII.** 55. ... Nc6! Black exploits White's loose pieces. 56. Bd2 Or 56. Bxd5 Nxa5 57. Bb3 (also 57. Bc6 Rxd1 58. Bxe8 Rd2 wins for Black) 57. ... Rxd1 58. Bxd1 Rd8 59. Ba4 Rd2 60. Rxe6 Rxf2 and Black has a won endgame. Also 56. Be1 loses after 56. ... Ndb4+ and the rook on d1 falls. 56. ... Nb6! Preparing to leap to c4. 57. Bxc6 bxc6 58. Kb1 Red8 59. Kc1 Rd6 The pin on the d-file, combined with the extra pawn guarantees Black a certain victory. Nakamura converts the advantage flawlessly. 60. b3 R8d7 61. a4 Kb7 62. Kc2 c5 63. Rhh1 Kc6 64. Rhe1 Nd5 65. Re2 Or 65. Ba5 Nb4+ 66. Bxb4 Rxd1 67. Rxd1 Rxd1 68. Kxd1 cxb4 with a won pawn ending for Black. 65. ... Nb4+ 66. Kc1 e5 67. Rh1 Nd3+ 68. Kc2 f4 69. gxf4 exf4 70. Bc3 Nb4+ 71. Bxb4 cxb4 72. Rg1 f3 73. Re4 Rd2+ 74. Kc1 R7d4 75. Rxd4 Rxd4 76. Rxd4 Rxf2 77. Rxb4 Ra2 78. Rf4 f2 White loses because of his king's unfortunate position on the back rank. 79. Kd1 a5 80. Rf5 Kd6 81. Rf3 Kd5 82. Rf4 Ke5 83. Rf8 Kd4 84. Rf3 Ke4 85. Rf8 Ke3 86. Re8+ Kd3 and **White (finally) resigned** in Bluebaum-Nakamura, Opera Euro Rapid 2021. **TACTIC IX.** 25. Bc4! In the game, both sides struggled to find the right moves: 25. g4?? hxg4? (25. ... Rh8! gives Black a large advantage) 26. Qf6+ Qxf6 27. gxf6+ Kh6?? (now Black is losing; after 27. ... Kf8, the chances would have been even) 28. Rh1+?? (White misses his chance; with 28. Rd4!, he would have been winning, e.g., 28. ... g5 29. Rxd4! and Black's king is hopelessly stuck on the frying pan.) 28. ... Kg5 29. f4+ Kf5 and Black has a clear advantage in the endgame in Dominguez Perez-Carlsen, Opera Euro Rapid 2021. 25. ... Rh8 Getting the rook out of the pin. The bishop cannot be captured: 25. ... dxc4 26. Qf6+ Qxf6 27. gxf6+ and White is winning. 26. Bb5! Kg8 27. Rh1 and with the bishop safe from harm, White will follow up with Nd4 and g2-g4, breaking through on the

kingside while Black does not have adequate counterplay against White's king.

Page 51 / ABCs OF CHESS

PROBLEM I. Mating Net: Black has mate in one: 1. ... Rd1 mate. **PROBLEM II. Mating Net:** Black mates by 1. ... Rd1 mate. **PROBLEM III. Mating net:** Black mates by 1. ... Qxg2+ 2. Bxg2 Rxg2+ 3. Kh1 Rg1+ 4. Kxg1 Rg8 mate. **PROBLEM IV. Mating net:** It is mate in two: 1. ... Nc3+ 2. bxc3 Qb7 mate. **PROBLEM V. Mating net:** Black mates in two: 1. ... Qxh2+ 2. Nxb2 Bxg2 mate. **PROBLEM VI. Mating net:** Black mates in two: 1. ... Qxf2+ 2. Rxf2 (or 2. Kh1 Qxf1 mate) 2. ... Rb1 mate.

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MY BEST MOVE

Peter Dyson

Fearless

After learning chess from my dad as a boy, I have been a rated expert in more than half the 50+ years that I've played chess. The main exception was the late 1990s and early 2000s, when I broke through to earn a master rating. The occasion for My Best Move was deciding to take my wife on vacation to Hawaii in 1998 to coincide with the 99th U.S. Open. Over the first eight rounds I faced five masters, scoring three wins and a draw to go with the three points against lower rated players. My eighth-round win against IM Kong Liang Deng was my first against an international master. That set the stage for my round nine game against GM Giorgi Kacheishvili. A win would catapult me to third place behind GMs Judit Polgar and Boris Gulko, while a "mere" draw would bring me to a tie for sixth place.

A CROWD PLEASER

Peter Dyson (2135)

GM Giorgi Kacheishvili (2565)

U.S. Open, Hawaii (9), 1998



19. h4 h5

Happiness! I already worked out my next five moves, including MY BEST MOVE.

20. Nh6+ Kg7 21. Nxf7! Kxf7 22. Bxg6+!

A small crowd from the top boards gathered to see what was going on. After the game, GM Gufeld asked me, "How many ways were there to win!?"

22. ... Kxg6 23. Rxe6+ Kf7 24. Qh6

This was as far as I had calculated. With my major pieces descending on the naked black king, I thought I must have a perpetual if not a mate!

24. ... Nf8 25. Qf6+?!



... my fearless best move, 21. Nxf7, is memorialized on my license plate.

A clearer path is found with 25. Rf6+! Kg8 26. Qg5+ Kh8 27. Qxh5+ Kg7 28. Qg5+ Kh8 29. Re1 Re8 (29. ... Nh7? 30. Qh5 Rf8 31. Rxc6! Qxc6? 32. Re7 leads to mate) 30. Qh5+ Kg7 31. Rxe8 Rxe8 32. Qxe8 Kxf6 33. Qxf8+ with four pawns for the piece.

25. ... Kg8 26. Re3 Nxd4?!

After the game, Kacheishvili said it was "the only move."

27. Qxd4 Qd6 28. Rce1 Rc4 29. Qxa7?

In time pressure I played this too quickly. Better was 29. Rg3+! Ng6 30. Qd1 Rxh4 31. Rxg6+! Qxg6 32. Qxd5+ Kf8 and now 33. Qe5!! which is almost impossible to spot three moves earlier. White will win one of Black's rooks.

29. ... Ra4 30. Qe7 Qxe7 31. Rxe7 Rxa2 32. R1e5 Ng6 33. Rg5 Rb6 34. Rd7 Rxb2 35. Rdx5

White needs only eliminate the pawns to draw.

35. ... Kf7 36. g3

Of course 36. Rxh5! is completely equal.

36. ... Ne7 37. Rc5 Rf6 38. Rxb5 Rbxf2

Here Black is threatening mate. But the simple 39. Rxh5 creates an escape square on g4, and eliminates the last black pawn. After the game, Kacheishvili agreed this would be an easy draw.

39. Rb1?? R2f3 40. Rc1? R6f5

Kacheishvili made the time control with two seconds to spare. He won on move 72.

Even though I lost this game, it is among my most memorable, both for the tournament achievement — I finished tied for 12th — and the game itself. My fearless best move, 21. Nxf7, is memorialized on my license plate. Playing chess on an island paradise and gaining a master rating against strong opposition was a real-life fairy tale. My wish is for all chess players is to have a similar experience. ♠

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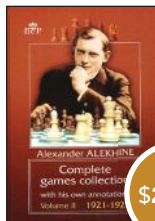
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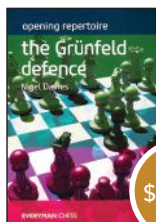
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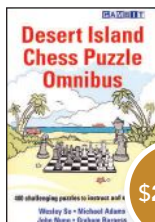
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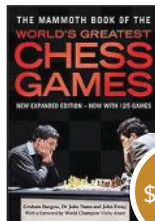
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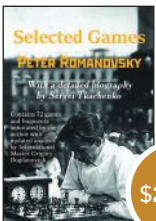
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