

AMATEUR TEAM EAST ■ GUO ON THE GM HUNT ■ A NIMZO TABIYA

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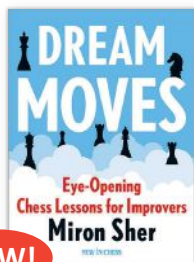


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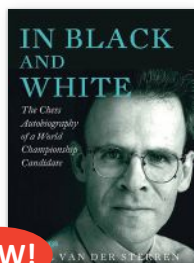
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NEW!

Eye-Opening Lessons for Improvers *Miron Sher*

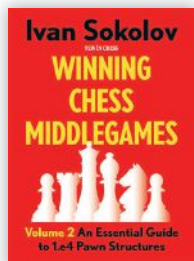
Legendary chess coach Miron Sher, who trained GMs Robert Hess and Fabiano Caruana, collected hundreds of instructive positions for his students. This book focuses on five topics that Sher considered important for chess improvement, including Dream Moves. If you can dream about the final, decisive move that leads to a winning position, you will find your way there.



NEW!

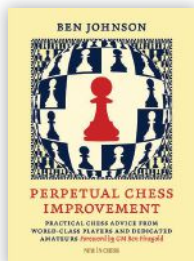
'The finest chess book I've ever read' *Matthew Sadler in New In Chess*

In this brutally honest autobiography, Dutch GM Paul van der Sterren describes his rise to the chess elite and his struggle to get better, with all the uncertainties and difficulties on his path. From his very first moves to his match against Gata Kamsky, everything is described in great detail and with the greatest frankness. Be warned: 768 pages!



Winning Middlegames with 1.e4 *Ivan Sokolov*

In his 2010 bestseller *Winning Chess Middlegames*, GM Ivan Sokolov focused on 1.d4 openings. Now, with Volume 2, 1.e4 players get their turn. A dozen topical structures are covered (in the Ruy Lopez, the Italian, the Petroff, the Rauzer Sicilian, the Maroczy Bind, the Hedgehog, the Sveshnikov, the French Winawer and more). Deeply analyzed top-level games illustrate the motifs in all these structures.



The best practical advice *Ben Johnson*

Ben Johnson hosts the *Perpetual Chess Podcast*, in which he is talking chess with many of the world's top players, trainers and passionate improvers. In this book, Ben looks for common ground and shared principles in all chess advice on the podcast. You will familiarize yourself with the collected wisdom of guests such as Anand, Nakamura, Ramesh, Hendriks, Aagaard, Christopher Chabris and Neal Bruce.



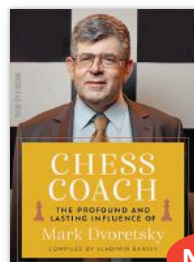
Magnus Carlsen & David Howell Explain the Grind

Magnus Carlsen and David Howell show how to win a seemingly equal chess position. Their first book tells you how to keep a game alive, keep posing problems, recognize the first small mistakes, and grind your opponent down until he cracks.

The book is converted from a popular Chessable course. The lively conversations of the two friends translate very well into a highly instructive chess manual.

The profound influence of Mark Dvoretsky *Vladimir Barsky*

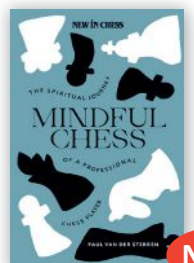
When Mark Dvoretsky started coaching, he became a kind of doctor, quickly identifying what his students needed help with. He made them better chess players, but also better people. In this book, students such as Yusupov, Kasparov, Anand, Topalov and Carlsen, to name but a few, pay tribute to the most inspiring chess coach of his generation.



NEW!

Mindful Chess *Paul van der Sterren*

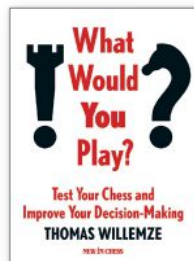
Van der Sterren was a professional chess player for more than twenty years. He met with both victory and defeat, joy and suffering. When, later in life, he discovered vipassana meditation, he approached meditation with the same devotion as his chess. In only 128 pages, the reader follows his two journeys, asking questions such as: What is chess? What is meditation? Who am I?



NEW!

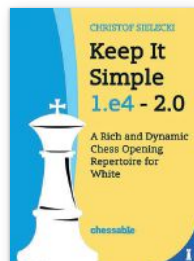
Improve Your Decision-Making *Thomas Willemze*

The best chess training closely resembles the activity you're training for. This book provides a chess player with an essential component – decision-making in the crucial positions of a real chess game, played by club players rather than grandmasters. You have to answer the same questions that you face when you stare at the chessboard and have to find a move.



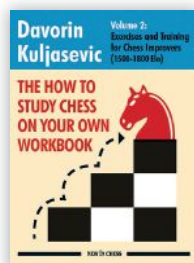
A Rich and Dynamic Opening Repertoire for White *Christof Sielecki*

Coach Christof Sielecki has thoroughly revised and updated his 2018 chess opening manual, one of New In Chess' all-time bestselling opening books. This new 632-page hardcover edition contains everything you need to know to play 1.e4 with confidence. The repertoire is suited for players of all levels and the variations are easy to remember and require little or no maintenance.



Exercises and Training for Improvers, Volume 2 *Davorin Kuljasevic*

This second workbook in Davorin Kuljasevic's *How to Study Chess on Your Own* series is optimized for chess players with an Elo rating between 1500 and 1800 but is helpful for anyone between 1200 and 2000. The astounding success of his series made clear that thousands of chess players want to improve their game and like to work on their training at least partially by themselves.



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Learning the Nimzo

Key games and concrete analysis are essential to learning openings. Part one of a multi-issue series.

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It's nostalgia mixed with the here and now for our author at the 2024 National High School (K-12) Championship.

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Achieving My Aim

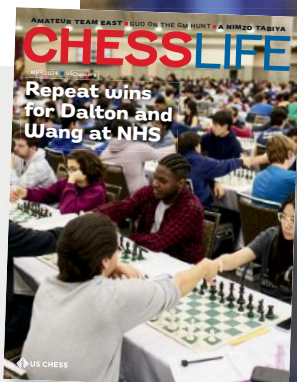
Reflections on earning the GM title, and what I learned along the way.

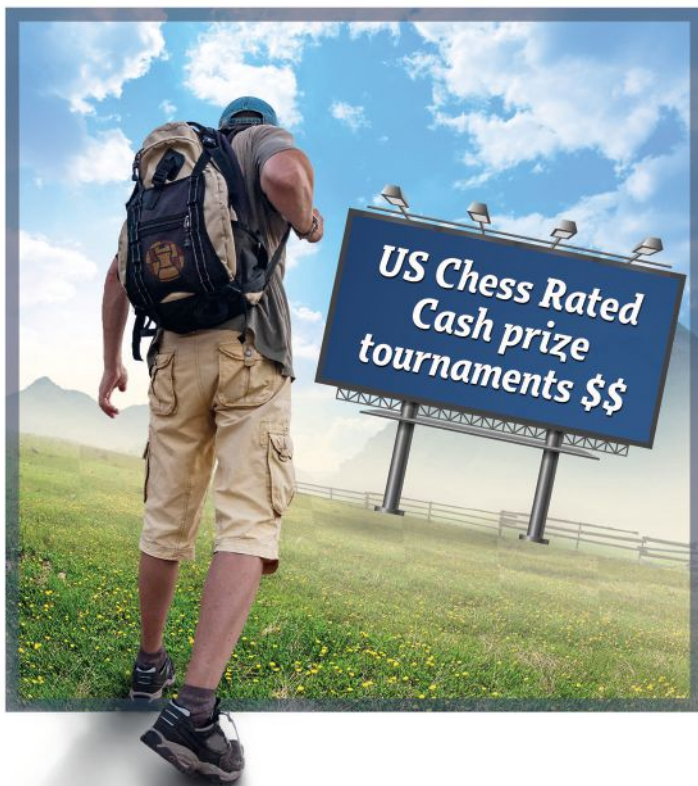
BY GM ARTHUR GUO

ON THE COVER

The 2024 National High School (K-12) Championship was another record-breaking event for American chess. Some 1,825 players came together at the Baltimore Convention Center to push pawns, make friends, and create memories that will last a lifetime.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CAROLINE KING





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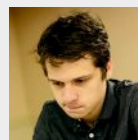
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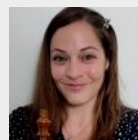
ty and the 22nd ranked American junior as of the April 2024 US Chess rating list.



FM ALISA MELEKHINA

(Amateur Team East) is a litigation partner in the New York office of Kirkland

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WFM LAURA SMITH

(Amateur Team East) is a national master and and highly-regarded chess instructor. Her first

Chessable course, "Forcing Moves for Beginners," was released in 2023, and her newest (with Dan Heisman) course, "Can I Take It?," was just published. Follow her on Twitter at @lauraloveschess.



GM ARTHUR GUO

(Perspective) became a grandmaster in July 2023, the culmination of many years of hard work. He

has won nine national titles during his scholastic career, along with three international golds, and he is currently the seventh-ranked American junior as of the April 2024 list. He is currently wrapping up his high school days at The Westminster Schools in Atlanta, GA.

CAVEMAN CHESS



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GM Gurevich

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and support for my chess."*



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COUNTERPLAY



Yo Lev!

Regarding the call in the March 2024 issue for input on the wisdom of long thinks, I think class players might have a difficult time comfortably spending "30 (or more!) minutes" on a move.

The time controls at the weekly local clubs in my area are G/90 and 45/90 with five-second delays. (I help run one of those clubs and a significantly slower control just isn't possible due to "real-life" constraints.) Further, the main time control at the upcoming World Open is 40/90 with a 30-second delay. At those controls, one has to ensure the 30-minute think either leads to mate or a game that's really easy to play.

As always, it is wise to remember what the great American philosopher Rocky Balboa said when asked how he beat Apollo Creed: "Time beat him. Time, you know, takes everybody out. It's undefeated."

Jay Kleinman
Via email

Wolfpack

I was delighted to learn from the March 2024 issue that the North Dakota Chess Association (NDCA) was the Small State winner of the 2022 Membership

Appreciation Program and to read Kamryn Hellman's fine article on the group.

I was a chess nut in high school but, in 1965, discovered a new addiction (geometry) and felt obliged to quit the old one (chess) "cold turkey." In 2016, I retired from the Department of Mathematics at North Dakota State University in Fargo. As my retirement approached, my main thought was "I can play chess again!" And that is how I became acquainted with Fargo chess players, the NDCA, and Todd Wolf of Bismarck.

ND chess has benefited from years of quiet support from many enthusiasts, but there is one individual who deserves special mention for literally DECADES of persistent effort: Todd Wolf.

Year after year, Todd has organized and served as TD for the annual state and state scholastic championships, run monthly tournaments at the Bismarck Chess Club, and given presentations at schools around the state. His perpetual kindly encouragement has been an inspiration for countless players.

Kamryn described how "The Queen's Gambit" interested her in chess and how she soon became obsessed. She played entirely online at first. Then, in early 2022, she saw players in a Bismarck mall. She wanted to try some over-the-board play but felt like a complete outsider. One guy motioned to the empty seat in front of him: "Want to play?" That guy was Todd Wolf. That story is a perfect picture of Todd's friendly, welcoming enthusiasm.

Kamryn is now an active chess streamer, converting her learning experiences into videos. And Todd, well, the state scholastic and state championships are coming up soon!

Davis Cope
Via email

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

Chess in the Mess

Hampton Roads hosts tournament on the Battleship Wisconsin.

BY **CHRISTINA SCHWEISS**

C

OMMISSIONED IN 1944, THE highly decorated Battleship Wisconsin saw wartime service in World War II, the Korean

War, and the Gulf War before retiring in the city of Norfolk, Virginia. The ship is berthed in the Elizabeth River in the Waterside District, just blocks from where the 2017 U.S. Open Championship was held, and where the 2024 edition will take place this summer. It is adjacent to and connected with Nauticus, a maritime discovery center that offers experiential learning for all ages.

I first laid eyes on the crew mess of the Wisconsin while hosting family and friends visiting the area before the pandemic. As a chess tournament organizer and Executive Director of Hampton Roads Chess Association (HRCA), a 501(c)(3), my eyes are always open for possible venues. While others were snapping pictures of the famous guns and other interesting areas of the ship, I was photographing and cataloguing the number and size of the tables and chairs

in the mess, noting what a perfect location it would be for a chess tournament.

And the hull number was not lost on me. The BB-64. I set my mind on hosting a tournament on the ship — it had to be done!

I reached out to a contact at Nauticus to inquire about the possibilities. Knowing it would be administratively and logistically challenging, with everyone still creeping back to normal operations after COVID-19, we were unable to make it happen that year.

Still, I refused to give up. Through our partnership with Norfolk Festivals, I reengaged and received another contact for the ship in late 2023. Luckily for us, they had recently hired Nate Sandel as their first-ever Director of Education and Community Engagement. When I explained to Nate what I wanted to do, rather than cite the likely challenges, he immediately said yes! We set April 6, 2024, for the big event.

Nauticus Associate Director of Marketing Catherine Taterway shared:

“As Nauticus began planning for a month long celebration in honor of the Battleship Wisconsin’s 80th commissioning anniversary,

they knew they wanted to partner with meaningful organizations to celebrate this milestone event.

“When Hampton Roads Chess Association (HRCA) reached out with an idea to host a chess tournament aboard the ship in April, it only made sense to partner together.

“In March, Nauticus was proud to offer two Chess Workshops in the ship’s galley taught by a coach from HRCA. In exchange, in early April, the Hampton Roads Chess Association hosted their ‘Battle on the BB-64’ on Battleship Wisconsin free of charge! Nauticus is thankful to the Hampton Roads Chess Association for their cooperation and assistance with this partnership.”

The event took far more coordination than your average one-day scholastic chess tournament. I worked out all the details with Nate, who on his end was coordinating both with the Nauticus Foundation, a 501(c)(3) that supports Nauticus and the Battleship, and the City of Norfolk, which owns the



PHOTOS: COURTESY JHALAK PATTNAIK



building, grounds, and ship. Group admissions had to be handled in advance for all the players, accompanying parents, siblings, other relatives and friends. The flow of foot traffic down to the crew mess had to be mapped out. Every detail was addressed in advance to ensure a great experience for the kids and families.

A team of HRCA volunteers handled wristband distribution on the day of the event, getting over 275 guests and players into the building in a very short amount of time and guiding them to the playing area, which required them to take an elevator and a footbridge, transit around lifeboats toward the fantail of the ship, and descend a very steep ladder down to the crew mess! This same route had to be navigated by our setup crew. Thinking ahead, we purchased some stackable tough totes with sturdy handles so we could repack our equipment and make it down that ladder and back up at the end of the event!

Our volunteer team also handled the normal tournament duties of scorekeeping and directing. Navy veteran Joe Rysavy performed Chief TD duties like a champ, overcoming an extremely loud setting with the constant hum of ventilation, and a challenging layout that included doorways and drink machines dividing the rooms. Handling the floor with him were three of our teenage Club TDs, who were invaluable members of the team.

Because the venue was still open to the public, public tours / tourists could wander through playing area during our event. Our TDs were further challenged by the proximity of parents who didn't want their very young children trying to navigate back to a skittles room alone. All of these factors, along with a tight time schedule (the ship didn't open until 10 a.m. — and we allowed an hour to get all those people into the venue — and closed at 5 p.m. sharp, when

we had to have everyone and everything off!) led us to choose a Quick-rated only time control of G/25,d3 so the kids could focus on having FUN.

While there were areas for parents and players to sit in a skittles room, most behaved as expected and spent their time touring the ship and Nauticus between the announced round start times.

In total, 113 kids played in the tournament, ranging in age from six to 17. As with all our tournaments, we offered sections for all ages and abilities, from beginners to experienced players. Our "Rookie" sec-



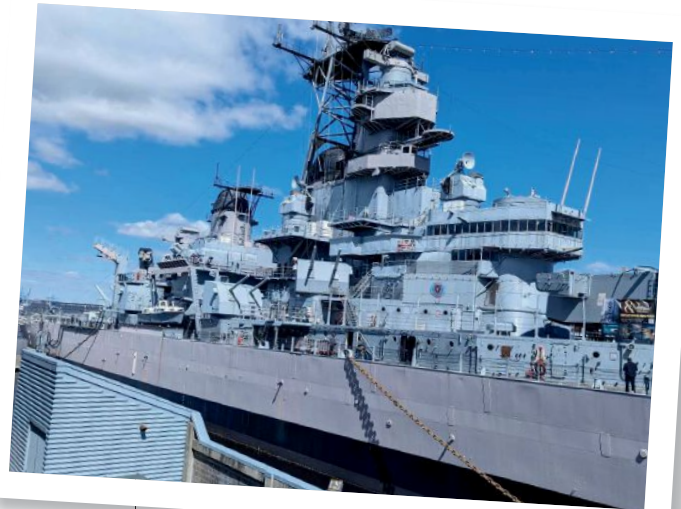
tions are non-rated, but are run with US Chess rules and procedures and offer a way for new players to try out tournaments before deciding to become US Chess members and rated players — and many do! The three non-rated Rookie sections included Junior (PreK-3rd), Intermediate (4th-5th), and Senior (Middle and High School), and our rated sections were split into Novice (U600) and Open. Individual winners, almost all with perfect scores, were Ved Vihaan Sai Mamilla (Junior Rookie), Adam Amitay and Wyatt Simmons (Intermediate Rookie), Channing Parris (Senior Rookie), Adithi Deepu (Novice), and Hans Acedo and



Stephen Zhou (Open). Old Donation School from Virginia Beach swept the team awards with 1st place in every category.

After the awards ceremony in the beautiful Nauticus Theater, with one of the ship's Navy veteran docents presenting ribbons, trophies, and medals, we quickly herded the kids back across the footbridge onto the ship for a group photo by the iconic big guns. On the way to their cars, we requested that they stop again for a final group photo under the hull number... 64. It had to be done. Overall, the tournament ran as close to perfect as possible, thanks to the Nauticus Foundation, City of Norfolk, HRCA staff and volunteers, parents, and players.

HRCA welcomes you to Norfolk (where your travels across Hampton Roads will carry you on Interstates 64 and 264, or maybe 664, or 464 to the event site) for the 2024 U.S. Open and hopes you will find the time while in town to stop by and visit the BB-64!!!!



2024 Chess Journalist of America Awards

BY JOSHUA ANDERSON

2024 AWARDS TOP THREE CATEGORIES

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Best Story of the Year
Best Column

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Best State Championship Report
Best State Tournament Coverage
Best Scholastic Coverage in State (may be multiple articles)
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Best Personal Narrative
Best Photograph
Best State Magazine Photo
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THE CHESS JOURNALISTS of America (CJA) calls for nominations for the annual Chess Journalists of America

awards. The CJA Awards recognize the best in all facets of chess journalism, both print and online. The best chess articles, columns, photojournalism, layout, and online writing are honored within their respective categories. Recognized annually by their peers, the public, and members of CJA, these prestigious awards showcase American works published in English between June 1, 2023, and May 31, 2024.

CJA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the study and knowledge of chess as a journalistic and scholarly endeavor. Membership is open to everyone at an annual membership fee of \$10. Award winners receive online certificates that can be printed and are acknowledged in CJA's online magazine, *The Chess Journalist*, as well as on the CJA website and social media.

CJA's annual awards are open to anyone. There is an entry fee of \$15 for the first entry, which includes membership or renewal to CJA, and an \$8 fee for each subsequent entry (unless otherwise noted). State organizations may enter three entries in the Cramer Awards for free. Additional award details can be found online at chessjournalism.org.

Interested parties can also contact CJA Chief Judge Joshua Anderson at joshuamiltonanderson@gmail.com. Please use the QR code to go directly to our entry page.



Award winners will be announced first at the annual CJA meeting during the 2024 U.S. Open, followed by a complete listing on the CJA website.

2024 Scholar-Chessplayer Winners Announced

THE US CHESS FEDERATION (US CHESS) AND THE US CHESS TRUST, BOTH INDEPENDENT 501(c)(3) organizations, are pleased to announce seven recipients of the 2024 Scholar-Chessplayer Awards. This includes the winner of the new category introduced in 2022, Scholastic Chess Ambassador, which permits acknowledgement of lower-rated but deserving chess scholars.

The Scholar-Chessplayer Awards recognize and encourage outstanding high school juniors and seniors who promote a positive image of chess, while excelling in academics and leadership. A total of \$9,000 in scholarship money is being awarded this year. Each recipient will receive \$1,500.

All Scholar-Chessplayer Awards are funded through the US Chess Trust (USCT), with a significant contribution from the National Scholastic Chess Foundation (NSCF). The USCT's vision is that one day, every American, from schoolkid to senior citizen, will have the opportunity to learn chess and enjoy its many mental and social benefits.

Thank you also to the US Chess scholastic committee members, who reviewed and evaluated all the applications.

2024 SCHOLAR-CHESSPLAYERS

CM Jack Heller (2166), 12th grade, Chicago, Illinois

IM Ming Lu (2461), 11th grade, San Diego, California

Alexander Rutten (2249), 11th grade, Johns Creek, Georgia

IM Sandeep Sethuraman (2311), 12th grade, Chandler, Arizona

WIM Ellen Wang (2275), 11th grade, The Bronx, New York

SCHOLASTIC CHESS AMBASSADORS

Laurel Aronian (1373), 11th grade, North Salem, New York

To qualify, applicants must be US Chess members who satisfy these requirements:

- Play at least 25 regular-rated US Chess or FIDE games during the current academic year;
- Show outstanding achievement in academics and chess (Scholastic Chess Ambassadors are not required to be highly rated);
- Have completed at least one year of chess-related community service since starting the ninth grade;
- Describe in an essay of 500 words how being selected as a 2024 Scholar-Chessplayer will enable the recipient to further their education, improve their chess, and allow them to continue contributing to the chess community.

Congratulations to all the 2024 Scholar-Chessplayers!

For more information, please visit www.uschess.org, www.uschesstrust.org, and www.nscfchess.org. The US Chess Trust is a separate 501(c)(3) organization operating independently of US Chess.

GRAND PRIX UPDATES

The US Chess Executive Board has made the following changes to the Grand Prix program:

- The Executive Board moves to remove, effective April 30, 2024, the temporary change to US Chess Grand Prix rules implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and to return to previous Grand Prix requirements. Motion Passed 8-0.
- The Executive Board moves to allow tournaments limited to seniors, juniors, women, or college students to be eligible for the US Chess Federation Grand Prix, provided they satisfy the other Grand Prix requirements. Motion Passed 8-0.

For complete information on the Grand Prix program, please see here: new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

ADMs

Advance delegate motions (ADMs) for the delegates' meeting at this year's U.S. Open are due before May 10, 2024. They can be mailed to Rose McMahon, c/o US Chess, P.O. Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177; or emailed to governance@uschess.org.



REMINDER ABOUT SAFESPORT TRAINING

June 1, 2024, is the deadline for all US Chess-certified Tournament Directors (TDs) to complete authorized core training from the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

TDs who have not completed training by June 1, 2024, **will be made inactive** and must complete SafeSport core training before their TD certification will be reactivated. Requests to reactivate must be submitted in writing to tdcert-group@uschess.org and can take up to 10 business days to process, so plan accordingly.

With both the June 1 deadline and the spring scholastic tournament season in full swing, those who have not already completed the SafeSport core training should visit new.uschess.org/safesport-training to download instructions for the core course.

Ranae Bartlett Named Executive Director

RANAE BARTLETT, WHO HAS BEEN SERVING AS THE INTERIM Executive Director since February 10, has been named as the US Chess Executive Director effective March 16, 2024. Previously, Bartlett had been hired as the Director of Operations on September 5, 2023. Prior to working for US Chess, she was an Assistant General Counsel for a Fortune 5 company as well as Executive Director for the non-profit chess organization she founded.

US Chess President Randy Bauer states, “Ranae Bartlett is an accomplished leader in both the chess community and in her hometown. As a volunteer, she has led our Chess in Education Committee, and she has served on her city’s school board and currently on its city council. Professionally, she has been the US Chess Director of Operations and Interim Executive Director, where she is instrumental in the continued implementation of the Safe Play requirements that were put in place by our previous Executive Director, Carol Meyer.”

Kevin Pryor, Vice President of US Chess, adds, “Bartlett was clearly the strongest and best-suited selection among several excellent final candidates. She knows the US Chess community and has distinguished herself while on various committees and as our Interim Executive Director. She is the right person to lead the organization and we look forward to all that she will do in service to chess in our country.”

Bartlett, who is the 18th person to hold the title of Executive Director (not including interim/acting ones), said, “I appreciate the trust and confidence the Executive Board has placed in me. I look



forward to helping US Chess plan for the future while meeting its mission to ‘empower people, enrich lives and enhance communities through chess.’”

Learn more about Ranae on her staff page: new.uschess.org/people/ranae-bartlett

US Chess suspends US Chess rated events in U.S. Virgin Islands

AT THE BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 16-17, THE EXECUTIVE Board passed the following motion 8-0:

“The Executive Board moves to suspend indefinitely the ability of US Chess Tournament Directors and Affiliates to advertise or organize US Chess rated tournaments to be held or hosted in the US Virgin Islands (USVI). This policy shall be reviewed annually or when necessary for continuation, change, or removal.”

US Chess President Randy Bauer offered this context:

“We recognize there are US Chess Federation members who live in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI). However, the USVI is recognized as a separate nation under FIDE. The FIDE-recognized leadership of USVI chess has asked US Chess to respect their sovereignty and not allow anyone to organize or advertise US Chess-rated events to be held on USVI soil. Their restriction does not inhibit the ability of USVI citizens from participating in US Chess-rated events held outside of the USVI as they have frequently done.” ♦

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Out of Focus

Can you concentrate better than a goldfish?

BY GM ANDY SOLTIS

C

ONVENTIONAL WISDOM SAYS: When two players of comparable rating are paired, the one who can concentrate better has a tangible advantage — as real as an extra pawn.

But many of today's players feel deep concentration is overrated. A short attention span works well with them.

The traditional view made heroes out of masters who could spend an hour staring at a position without a blink of distraction. One hero was GM Svetozar Gligoric, as his friend GM Dragolyub Velimirovic recalled:

They were flying to a tournament when “Gliga” began analyzing an opening on his pocket set. Velimirovic, sitting in the next seat, glanced outside the airplane window and suddenly saw flames.

“Look, the wing is burning!” he said.

Gligoric was annoyed at being interrupted. “I almost refuted a Fischer variation,” he said.

The plane lurched forward. Flight attendants ran down the aisle. Passengers screamed.

“What’s with you?” Velimirovic exclaimed to Gligoric. “We’re going to die!”

“Hmmm, after knight to c3 it’s just better,” Gliga said as he continued to study his pocket set.

Somehow the plane landed safely. Only then did Gligoric become excited, as he showed his friend the strong move he discovered.

Velimirovic’s account, published in 64 magazine in 2003, is an extreme example of über-concentration, like the trance-like “big thinks” that GMs used to indulge in during tournament games. But nowadays GMs talk more often about concentration when it fails them.

“I couldn’t concentrate and think about chess,” GM Ding Liren said after he lost the first game of the 2023 world championship match.

“I lost my ability to concentrate,” GM Magnus Carlsen said after his surprise loss to GM Alisher Sulaymurov at the 2003 Qatar Masters Open. (See page 25 of the January *Chess Life* for more. ~ed.)

Carlsen moved quickly in that game. He had 30-plus minutes on his clock when he resigned. But he has been making intuitive “Magnus moves” throughout his career. “I usually know what I am going to do after 10 seconds,” he told *The Guardian* newspaper in 2013. “The rest is just double-checking.” Here is a recent example.

BLITZ MODE

GM Magnus Carlsen

GM Yu Yangyi

World Blitz Ch (17), Samarkand,
12.30.2023



BLACK TO MOVE

In this three-minute game, a draw would have been likely after 24. ... g6. For example, 25. Rad1 d5! and if 26. Bxd5 Nxd5 27. Rxd5 Rxd5 28. Rxd5 Rc8.

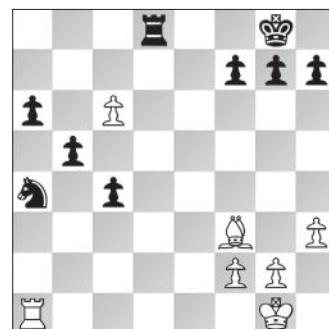
Black chose the immediate 24. ... d5 and threatened to gain the upper hand with 25. ... Rd6.

Carlsen quickly spotted 25. a4!. He double-checked to make sure he would be winning after 25. ... bxa4 26. Bb1! Nc8 27. Bxd5.

Black responded 25. ... Nxa4 but then came

26. c4!, threatening a decisive capture on d5.

Black went into desperation-mode with 26. ... dxc4 27. Rxd8 Rxd8.



There was a chance Carlsen might prepare to push the c-pawn with 28. Bg4.

Then Black can play on with 28. ... f5! 29. Bxf5 Ra8 so that 30. c7 Nb6.

But Carlsen spotted 28. c7! so that 28. ... Rc8 is met with 29. Rd1! and Rd1-d8+.

Black resigned soon after 28. ... Rf8 29. Bb7 c3 30. c8=Q.

Today’s fast time controls have taught players to think like Carlsen — to make the first move that comes to mind. Science says that fits in with how our minds work now.

A widely reported 2015 study concluded that when people focus on a subject they get distracted after an average of eight seconds. That’s a decline from 12 seconds in 2000. *Time* magazine summed up the study in its headline: “You Have a Shorter Attention Span than a Goldfish.”

This sounded alarming — but not to many chess players. They know a time control that gives them at least a 10-second increment is plenty.

The study, by Microsoft Corp., differentiated between “sustained attention” — what Gligoric was doing on the burning aircraft — and “alternating attention,” the shifting of focus from one task to another.

In speed chess, the clock forces you to

QUIZ FOR MAY

WHO IS THE WORLD'S number one authority on openings? Today there is none. But for decades the recognized expert was a Czech GM named Luděk Pachman. Born 100 years ago this month, Pachman's encyclopedic knowledge helped make him one of the world's top 20 players and most popular authors. Our quiz this month features six positions from his games. In each diagram, try to find the fastest winning line of play. This will usually mean the forced win of a decisive amount of material. Solutions are on page 63.



PROBLEM 1
IM Alexander Prameshuber
GM Luděk Pachman



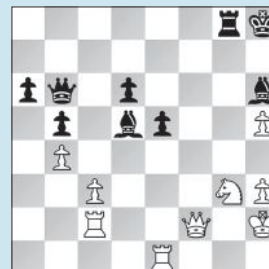
BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 2
Carlos Jauregui
GM Luděk Pachman



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 3
Maximilian Ujtetky
IM Luděk Pachman



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 4
GM Luděk Pachman
IM Oleg Neikirch



WHITE TO MOVE

PROBLEM 5
Friedrich Saemisch
Luděk Pachman



BLACK TO MOVE

PROBLEM 6
GM Luděk Pachman
Jiri Vesely



WHITE TO MOVE

shift focus constantly. Alternating attention rewards you for reacting to each new image — such as recognizing an opportunity like 25. a4! and 26. c4! in the Carlsen game.

Alternating attention seems to help in other forms of mental competition, such as trivia contests. Ken Jennings said his “short, short attention span” may have been an asset in becoming TV’s “Jeopardy” champion.

Carlsen, who often seems bored in a classical game, is the first alternating attention world champion. Ironically, in 2022 he suspected GM Hans Niemann of cheating because the American didn’t seem “fully concentrating in critical positions.” That is, Niemann was making “Magnus moves.”

The different kinds of attention also affects how people study chess. A short attention span is a serious liability if you are trying to unpack the logic of a Tigran Petrosian maneuver. But it can be an asset if you are clicking through a series of online quiz positions. You use alternating attention to quickly digest the changing visual landscape.

The inability to sustain attention triggered one of the great scandals of chess history, the Concentration Crisis of 1977.

It happened in a Candidates finals match, when Boris Spassky and Viktor Korchnoi both suffered a case of brain fog that they blamed on their opponent.

Spassky suspected a parapsychologist, allied with Korchnoi and sitting in the audience, was messing with his mind. Spassky’s solution was to leave the board after making a move and examine the position on the large demonstration board, far from the spectators. This had a great effect — on Korchnoi.

MIND GAMES

GM Viktor Korchnoi
GM Boris Spassky
Candidates finals match (13), Belgrade,
12.28.1977

(see diagram top of next column)

Korchnoi squandered a substantial advantage with his last two moves. Now he hallucinated with 32. Bxf5?? Rxf5 33. Qxf5? Bxf5. There was no Rh1-h8 mate. He resigned.

Korchnoi was famous for his concentration. Opponents with distracting mannerisms



WHITE TO MOVE

at the board rarely bothered him. But when he lost four straight games in this match he charged Spassky’s *absence* was cheating.

He said he would quit the match if Spassky wasn’t forced to sit at the same table as him. Spassky refused and threatened to forfeit. Somehow FIDE got them to finish the match.

Korchnoi advanced to the next world championship match in 1978, where he claimed that champion Anatoly Karpov’s parapsychologist tried to hypnotize him. When Korchnoi lost, he blamed — what else? — his inability to concentrate. ♡

Space

What it is, and how to use it

BY **WGM TATEV ABRAHAMYAN**

T

O HAVE SPACE ADVANTAGE in chess means that you control more of the board, specifically your opponent's half of the

board. This normally happens through pawn advancement, which takes away squares from your opponent's pieces and leaves more squares for yours.

There are several openings where one side — usually Black — gives up the center in the hope to strike back later, including the French, the King's Indian Defense, the Stonewall, etc. If you are like me and play one of these openings stubbornly, you probably have felt the pain of misplaying the structures and scrambling to find moves for pieces that are stepping on each other's toes.

On the other end of things, having a space advantage can be one of the more enjoyable ways of dictating the course of a game. You can have a space advantage through various means, such as controlling the only open file in the endgame, or possessing a bishop in an open position against a knight. There are a few general principles to follow when you have this type of advantage.

AVOID PIECE TRADES

As a general rule, the side with the space advantage would prefer to keep more pieces on the board, while the side with less space would prefer to trade pieces. Having more pieces and no space makes it difficult for the player to find moves, as the pieces are fighting over a limited number of squares and getting in the way of each other.

Of course, this rule is not written in stone, and if exchanging means removing one of your opponent's only defenders, or gaining a material advantage, then you should not shy away from this decision. In order to successfully utilize your space advantage, you should remain patient, not rush your decisions, and minimize counterplay. Here's an example by one of the great strategists in chess history.

DUTCH DEFENSE (A92)

Tigran Petrosian
GM Igor Bondarevsky
Soviet Championship (17), Moscow,
12.11.1950

1. Nf3 e6 2. g3 f5 3. Bg2 Nf6 4. 0-0 Be7 5. d4 0-0 6. c4 c6 7. Qc2 Qe8 8. Nbd2 d5 9. Ne5 Nbd7



10. Nd3!

Keeping the knights on the board makes life difficult for Black, as both black knights want to be on the e4-square. This is what we call “superfluous knights.” The same argument can be made about the white knights, both of which want to be on e5, but stationing them on f3 and d3 for the time being does not come with a downside. One further point: the e5-square is an outpost, whereas e4 is only a temporary home for the black knights due to a possible f2-f3.

10. ... Ne4 11. Nf3!

Avoiding exchanging a pair of knights again.

11. ... Nd6 12. b3 b5 13. c5 Nf7

Here 13. ... Ne4 feels more natural, but White can proceed as he did in the game with 14. a4 bxa4 15. Rxa4 and eventually kick the knight out with f2-f3.

14. a4 bxa4 15. Rxa4 Bf6 16. Bb2 a6

17. Nfe5!?

Known for his prophylactic thinking, Petrosian must have foreseen Black's upcoming ... g7-g5 move and decided to ultimately exchange a pair of pieces on e5.

17. ... Nfxe5 18. dxe5 Be7



19. f4

The exchange on e5 alleviated some of Black's suffering, but his remaining pieces are not exactly moving freely. White also stopped Black's idea of ... g7-g5, leaving his opponent with a limited number of squares for his pieces.

19. ... Rb8

The rash 19. ... g5 20. fxg5 Bxg5 21. Bc1! would saddle Black with major weaknesses after the d3-knight lands on f4.

20. Rfa1 Rb5 21. b4 h5 22. Bc3 h4 23. e3 Nb8 24. Ne1!

The beginning of a typical maneuver: the knight is headed to the d4-square.

24. ... Rb7 25. gxh4 Bxh4 26. Nf3 Bd8 27. h4 Qh5 28. Be1 Bd7 29. Qf2 Kf7 30. Bf1 Rh8 31. Bxa6 Nxa6 32. Rxa6 Be7 33. Ra7 Rbh8 34. Rxb7 Rxb7 35. Nd4 Qh8 36. Qg3 Qb8 37. h5 Ra7 38. Rc1 Qg8 39. Qg6+ Kf8 40. b5 Qf7 41. bxc6 Bc8, and Black resigned.

Now compare the opening in the Petrosian game to a position that emerges from the Semi-Tarrasch after **1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 d5 4. cxd5 Nxd5 5. e4 Nxc3 6. bxc3 c5 7. Nf3 cxd4 8. cxd4 Bb4+ 9. Bd2 Bxd2+ 10. Qxd2 0-0 11. Bc4 Nd7 12. 0-0 b6 13. Rfe1 Bb7**, where White enjoys control of the center.

Even though Black has given up the center, all the pieces have designated squares: the knight and the bishop are happy where they are, the a8-rook will go to c8, the queen has a spot on c7 and the-f8 rook can either live on e8 or d8. Not all space advantages are winning, it seems.

Learning the Nimzo

Key games and concrete analysis are essential to learning openings. Part one of a multi-issue series.

BY IM ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO

W

HAT IS THE CORRECT APPROACH to studying the opening today?

For many players, opening work consists mainly of analyzing and memorizing concrete variations. In some openings, like the 6. Bg5 Najdorf or the Grünfeld, this makes sense, as there are a great number of forcing lines. In others, this strategy is insufficient: the opponent simply has too many reasonable options, and it's impossible to prepare for each and every one. In such cases it's more important to develop a good knowledge of the key tactical and strategic motifs, typical piece placements and maneuvers, and common mistakes.

One of the best ways to gain this knowledge is by studying an opening from the historical point of view, tracing the development of a variation to see how now-standard ideas were invented, popularized, and refined. In the present article, I will present an example of this kind of work, using as a model the variation of the Nimzo-Indian Defense arising after the moves **1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 d5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 c5 7. cxd5 exd5**. (Note that other move orders, through 4. a3 or 4. f3, also exist.) The resulting structure is imbalanced and full of ideas, has a rich classical heritage, and yet remains fresh and under-analyzed. As a result, this variation is ideal for the type of work that I propose.

A few preliminary notes: I have tried to write something more than a mere opening survey, and I hope that my analysis will be of interest even to players who have little affection for the Nimzo-Indian. Wherever possible, I have tried to emphasize understanding rather than memorization, and have attempted to present concrete variations as a natural consequence of the

underlying positional themes. Nevertheless, I will refrain from summarizing my observations in a list of rules or guidelines — the more generalized a statement is, the less accurate it becomes.

I will begin with the game that popularized the entire line: Botvinnik's famous win against Capablanca in the AVRO tournament of 1938. While this game has been annotated in many different places, I have reached somewhat different conclusions following analysis with modern engines.

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, BOTVINNIK SYSTEM (E49)

Mikhail Botvinnik

José Raúl Capablanca

AVRO (11), Netherlands, 11.22.1938

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 d5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 c5 7. cxd5 exd5



The structure under discussion. Botvinnik loved to play these kinds of positions: they afforded him the type of schematic play that he really enjoyed. It would be incorrect to say that Botvinnik was the inventor of this variation — Lilienthal had already won several games in the period 1934-1935

— but he deserves much of the credit for popularizing this line.

8. Bd3 0-0 9. Ne2!

The beginning of a plan which soon became classic. White keeps the f3-square clear so that he can expand in the center with f2-f3 and e3-e4 at a later stage. The knight on e2 is well-placed to support this by a later jump to g3, although it sometimes goes to f4 as well.

9. ... b6

Positionally speaking, this is the soundest approach: Black intends to trade off White's effective light-squared bishop by playing ... Bc8-a6. However, this comes at the cost of some time, which is why Black players have investigated alternatives such as 9. ... Bg4 (Fischer's choice) and 9. ... Nc6. In this article, I will only analyze the plan involving the trade of light-squared bishops.

It should be noted that **9. ... Re8 10. 0-0 b6 11. f3 Ba6** is similar. Nearly twenty years later, a young Spassky introduced a deviation from Botvinnik's plan, choosing to keep light-squared bishops on the board with **12. Bc2!?** (in 2021, Kuzubov played similarly in blitz).

Spassky's game continued as follows: **12. ... Nc6 13. Rf2 Qc7** (I would prefer the prophylactic **13. ... h5!**) **14. g4!?** (Spassky – Stoliar, Soviet Ch, 1957; after **14. Ng3 Rad8** it's very difficult to prepare e3-e4, in view of Black's sound coordination), and now the best way to diffuse White's kingside play is by eliminating the dangerous e2-knight, while maintaining the central tension: **14. ... Bxe2 15. Rxe2 g6!?** followed by ... Re8-e6 and ... Ra8-e8, with a very solid position. We can conclude that losing a tempo in order to avoid the trade of light-squared bishops is too slow to promise an advantage. In the

actual game, Spassky maneuvered beautifully and won — but in view of his superior class rather than his opening play.

10. 0-0

Later, Botvinnik attempted to improve his play with 10. a4 against C.H.O.D. Alexander. However, few players followed in his footsteps — the notable exception is once again Spassky, against Yukhtman in 1952.

10. ... Ba6 11. Bxa6

Here 11. f3 limits Black's choice of setups and is therefore stronger.

11. ... Nxa6



12. Bb2?!

This move is wrong, but not for the reasons often stated by annotators — see the next note.

Now 12. Qd3 would transpose to the modern main line if Black played 12. ... Nb8, but instead 12. ... Nc7!? leads to very interesting play. Let's examine two continuations.

(a) Here the standard 13. f3 doesn't give White anything. After 13. ... Re8 (Benko once tried 13. ... Qe8, intending ... Qe8-b5, but after 14. a4 Qc6 15. c4! cxd4 16. cxd5 Qxd5 17. e4 Qd7 18. Qxd4 as in Lilienthal – Benko, Moscow-Budapest match 1949. White's position was preferable) 14. Ng3 (14. dxc5 is less good now that the e3-pawn has been weakened, i.e., 14. ... bxc5 15. c4 Ne6 16. Bb2?! dxc4 17. Qxc4 Nd5 18. Qc1? [18. Bc1 was necessary] 18. ... Nxe3! 19. Qxe3 Nd4 20. Bxd4 Rxe3 21. Bxe3 Qe7 as in Olsen – Aagaard, Danish Teams 2019, and Black was already winning) 14. ... Ne6, Black's knight is ideally positioned on e6. Now the naive 15. Bb2 Rc8!? 16. e4? is bad because of 16. ... cxd4 17. cxd4 dxe4 18. fxe4 Nc5!.

(b) I'd like to point out a plan introduced by Reuben Fine: after 13. dxc5! bxc5 14. c4! White gains a structural advantage. Play continued 14. ... dxc4 15. Qxc4 Qd5 16. Qxd5 and Black doesn't find the correct defensive setup, as after 16. ... Ncxd5?! (16. ... Nfxd5! is correct, and after 17. e4 Nb6 18. Be3 Ne6

Black's position is solid enough) White has 17. f3!, which restricts Black's knights. After 17. ... Rfe8 18. e4 Nb6 19. Ra2 Rac8 20. Rc2 h6 21. Be3 Nfd7 22. Rfc1 (better is 22. Ng3!)



POSITION AFTER 22. Rfc1

Black will almost surely lose the c5-pawn, but with the right defense he can still hope to hold. Play continued 22. ... Na4 (with 22. ... f5! Black should seize the chance to trade off another pair of pawns.) 23. Nc3 Nxc3 24. Rxc3 Rb8? (necessary was 24. ... Re6! 25. Bxc5 Nxc5 26. Rxc5 Rxc5 27. Rxc5 Ra6!, and since White's rook is passive, Black can hold with precise play) 25. Bxc5 Nxc5 26. Rxc5 Rb3 27. R1c3 was Fine – Steiner, US Open Final, 1940.

In this version, White keeps an active rook and should win routinely. The rest of the game was filled with errors, but it is outside the scope of this article. I will state only one general guideline (attributable to GM Sam Shankland), which is very relevant to this position: in rook endings with equal pawns on one side and a one-pawn difference on the other, the player with the passive rook often loses a half-point.

12. ... Qd7 13. a4

Supposedly, 12. Bb2 was wrong because 13. Qd3 now allows 13. ... Qa4, with the idea of ... Ra8-c8 and ... c5xd4, invading on the c-file. But after 14. f3 Rac8 15. Rf2! I don't see any obvious way for Black to make use of the c-file, while White threatens Ne2-g3 followed by e3-e4, taking advantage of the Black queen's lack of influence on the center and kingside.

The real problem with 12. Bb2 is that after 13. ... c4 the b2-bishop is out of play. Sometimes White is willing to allow this if he can at least advance e3-e4 later, but here Black is in time to prevent this: 14. Qc2 Nh5! does not waste any time on repositioning the a6-knight — prophylaxis against e3-e4 takes precedence. White's knight is denied its usual g3-square, and after 15. f3 there follows 15. ... f5!. This whole idea is even stronger here than on move 14.

13. ... Rfe8

This move is not bad, but perhaps Black should have searched for ways to exploit White's somewhat slow play.

For instance, 13. ... Rac8 14. Qd3 Qb7!? is very interesting, intending to open the c-file with ... c5xd4 next.

Botvinnik's old suggestion 13. ... cxd4 14. cxd4 Rfc8 is also playable, though the a6-knight remains problematic after 15. Qb3.

14. Qd3 c4!



Conceptually, the most important moment of the game. Black finally commits to a clear plan: advancing his queenside pawn majority. However, Black releases the tension in the center and makes it much easier for White to prepare e3-e4. So, the evaluation of ... c5-c4 depends on whether Black has the resources dissipate White's central dynamism; if he does, his long-term advantage on the queenside can become a major factor.

Assessing this properly is very difficult,



GM Mikhail Botvinnik

and when I revised my annotations to this game for the present article, I experienced a complete shock. The move 14. ... c5-c4 — a move condemned by all annotators — is the computer's top choice! Certainly 80 years of analysis, including that of Kasparov, should not be dismissed lightly, but despite many analytical efforts, I can't help but agree with the computer's assessment: the cause of Capablanca's defeat was not this move itself, but his later, overly slow approach to the position.

15. Qc2 Nb8?!

I believe that this move (or, more precisely, the plan associated with it) is the source of Black's trouble. Capablanca wants to play ... Nc6-a5-b3 and capture the a4-pawn, but this plan significantly underestimates the dynamic potential inherent in White's setup. A more difficult question is what plan should he have chosen instead.

(a) 15. ... Nh5 is reasonable; analogously to the variation after 13. Qd3, Black prevents Ne2-g3 and prepares ... f7-f5. However, this is less strong here — after playing ... f7-f5 later, Black will really want to have a rook on f8! With 16. Bc1 White has to continue preparing f2-f3 and e3-e4. Otherwise, there is no point to his position. Play continues 16. ... f5 17. f3 and White now hints at playing h2-h3 and g2-g4, using the f5-pawn as a hook.

I tried several moves for Black in this position. Maybe the most logical continuation is 17. ... Nc7 18. h3 Nf6 (18. ... g6!? 19. g4 Ng7 20. Ng3 Rf8 is also possible, but Black has had to lose time with his rook.) 19. Kh2 a6!? 20. g4 fxg4 21. hxg4 b5 22. Ng3 h6! with an unclear position.

(b) Also possible is 15. ... h5!?. As we will see later, this prophylactic move is often very important in this line.

(c) Finally, the direct 15. ... Nc7 may be the most convincing, as after 16. Bc1 a5 17. f3 b5 Black's effortless play on the queenside is much faster than White's nascent kingside attack.

16. Rae1 Nc6 17. Ng3



17. ... Na5?

This is the real mistake; Black does nothing to oppose White's plan. Perhaps the main takeaway from this game is that if Black allows e3-e4 without creating any counterplay, he will almost always get crushed.

Possibly, it was not too late to start queenside play with 17. ... Reb8 18. f3 b5! and Black seems to be just in time.

It turns out that 17. ... Ne4!?, as suggested by multiple annotators, is not bad either. After 18. Nh1 (I think 18. Nh5!? Qf5 19. Nf4 deserves serious consideration. In this case White is not opposed to the trade of queens!) Black has several reasonable ways to play, but I cannot resist mentioning the following computer line: 18. ... a5!? (Lakdawala's 18. ... f5?! is doubtful because of 19. f3 Nf6 20. Ng3 Ne7 21. Ba3 g6 and now 22. Bc1!, with the clear intention of e3-e4, is unpleasant for Black. Sooner or later the weakness of the dark-squares will become noticeable) 19. f3 Nd6 20. e4 Nb4!! 21. cxb4 axb4 and the machine alleges that Black has full compensation for the piece! Of course, no human would play like this, but it does prove one point: Black must seek counterplay immediately.

18. f3!

Resolute play. Botvinnik correctly judges that the a4-pawn is much less important than the kingside attack.

18. ... Nb3

The knight on b3 is only visually impressive.

19. e4 Qxa4 20. e5 Nd7 21. Qf2 g6 22. f4 f5



Capablanca tries to consolidate the position, but he is not in time to do so. From here on Botvinnik plays with great energy.

23. exf6 e.p. Nxf6 24. f5 Rxe1 25. Rxe1 Re8 26. Re6!

A star move, hitting Black's position where it is weakest. Not 26. fxg6? hxg6!.

26. ... Rxe6

Of course 26. ... Kg7 27. Rxf6! is decisive.

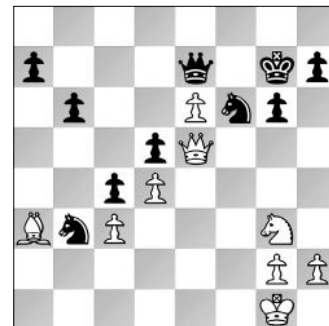
27. fxe6 Kg7 28. Qf4 Qe8 29. Qe5

As Kasparov points out, 29. Qc7+! Kg8 30. Qe5 is stronger.

29. ... Qe7

Black's position is on the verge of collapse. White adds one more element to the mix, and it falls apart completely.

30. Ba3!!



Cruel irony — the dormant bishop becomes the hero of the combination.

30. ... Qxa3 31. Nh5+ gxh5 32. Qg5+ Kf8

33. Qxf6+ Kg8 34. e7

Botvinnik calculated everything perfectly. Black's checks soon run out.

34. ... Qc1+ 35. Kf2 Qc2+ 36. Kg3 Qd3+ 37. Kh4 Qe4+ 38. Kxh5 Qe2+ 39. Kh4 Qe4+ 40. g4 Qe1+ 41. Kh5, Black resigned.

Botvinnik's setup was revolutionary, and it was extraordinarily successful. In the eighty years since, White's basic plan of advancing f2-f3 and then e3-e4 has not changed. Black's choice of counter-scheme is more difficult.

In this game, we saw the first of Black's two major plans: to close the center with ... c5-c4 and advance his queenside pawn majority. However, under the impression of Capablanca's disastrous loss, Black players in the next decade began (for reasons not entirely valid, as we saw) to avoid playing ... c5-c4 at all costs, instead keeping the center fluid and trying to improve their position in other ways.

The initial experiments in this vein were not very fruitful. The 1952 Interzonal in Saltsjobaden was particularly catastrophic for Black: White scored two decisive victories in this variation — one by Averbakh against Golombek, and one by tournament winner Kotov against Unzicker. We will analyze both games:

NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE, BOTVINNIK SYSTEM (E49)

GM Alexander Kotov
IM Wolfgang Unzicker
Interzonal (7), Saltsjobaden, 1952

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e3 d5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 c5 7. cxd5 exd5 8. Bd3 0-0 9. Ne2 b6 10. 0-0 Ba6 11. Bxa6 Nxa6 12. f3

A refinement over Botvinnik's plan.

12. ... Nb8 13. Qd3 Re8 14. Ng3 Nc6



15. Bb2!

Much like the c8-bishop in the French, all of White's hopes rest on the bad b2-bishop — even though it temporarily looks quite clumsy.

A few years ago, I played 15. Ra2 against IM Jack Peters. However, the text move is stronger: though the bishop is far from ideally placed on b2, the speed of development takes precedence. Moreover, after 15. ... Rc8 16. Raf2 (16. Re2 was played in Taimanov – Ragozin, 1948 — a fascinating game that is well worth checking) 16. ... Rc7 (a classical maneuver!) 17. Kh1 Qd7! (this improves on Peters' 17. ... Qc8?!, where White gained an initiative with 18. e4! — the idea is 18. ... cxd4 19. cxd4 Nxd4? 20. Bg5! and the bishop lands on its desired square) White will have to play Bc1-b2 anyway if he ever wants to accomplish e3-e4.

15. ... Rc8?

This is a natural, common, and extremely costly mistake. Black simply cannot get away with abstract play in this variation. As this move does nothing constructive to oppose White's plan, it has to be condemned: pieces can never be developed simply for development's sake; their activation must always be tied to some concrete idea. This is actually one of the ways in which chess has really advanced: we often see moves like this in classic games, but much more rarely in the games of today's top players.

16. Rae1



Strictly speaking, an inaccuracy as well — given the chance to play e3-e4, White shouldn't ask for a second invitation! All the same, Black's position is worse here as well.

After 16. e4! White doesn't fear 16. ... dxe4 17. fxe4 Ne5, since after 18. Qe2 cxd4 19. cxd4 Nc4 20. Rae1 Nxb2 21. Qxb2 (Anton Guijarro – Abdusattorov, Aeroflot Open 2019) he has strong pressure.

16. ... h6?

A passive move that, in the end, only harms Black's position.

Let's take a look at a number of other tries for Black.

(a) Golombek tried 16. ... cxd4 17. cxd4 Qd7, but was swiftly overrun: 18. e4! dxe4 19. fxe4 Ne5 20. Qd1 (20. Qe2!? Nc4 21. Rxf6! gxf6 22. Nh5 Qd6 23. Qg4+ Kf8 is also strong, although White has no clear win yet.) 20. ... Nc4 21. Bc1.



POSITION AFTER 21. Bc1

Having done its duty on b2, the bishop returns to its normal diagonal. Play continues 21. ... Qc6 22. e5 Nd5 23. Qf3 f6? (A fatal mistake; 23. ... Rc7! was best. The difference is that after 24. Nh5?! b5 25. Qg3 Black defends with 25. ... Qg6!) 24. Nh5! Rf8 25. Qg3 Qc7 26. Bh6 and White keeps his eyes on the prize. The entire attack is focused on the g7-square: 26. ... Rf7 27. Qf3 Rd8 28. Nxe7 Rxe7 29. exf6 Rgd7 30. f7+ (Averbakh – Golombek, Saltsjobaden Iz 1952) and Black resigned in view of 30. ... Rxf7 31. Qxd5!!.

(b) White is also not concerned by 16. ...

Na5 17. e4 Nc4 18. Bc1; once again, he does not mind retreating the bishop. After 18. ... cxd4 19. cxd4 dxe4 (19. ... b5 20. e5 Nd7 21. f4 Qb6 22. Kh1 f6 23. Qf3 Qc6 24. Qg4 is also bad for Black, as in Shlyakhtenko – Yudasin, San Jose 2022) 20. fxe4 Ne5



POSITION AFTER 20. ... Ne5

the next move is worth remembering: 21. Qd2!. An accurate defense — White doesn't fall for any tricks! (Note that 21. Qd1? Rxc1! 22. Qxc1 Nd3 allows Black to simplify the position.) After 21. ... Ng6 Black has spent four moves improving the position of this knight. In the meantime, White was able to consolidate his position in the center, and stands much better, and with 22. e5 White simply mobilizes his army. It's very difficult for Black to defend in such a situation: all of White's moves are so easy that it's hard to create challenges for the first player. After 22. ... Nd5 23. Nf5 Re6 24. Qf2 Qd7 25. h4!



GM Alexander Kotov

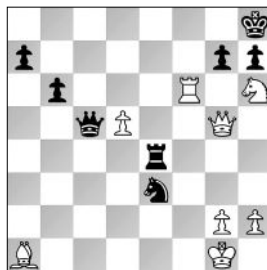


POSITION AFTER 25. h4

This chases away an important defender. We continue **25. ... f6** (as in Averbakh – Golombek, this move doesn’t help Black) **26. Qg3 fxe5 27. dxe5** (here Nf5–d4 is threatened) **27. ... Nde7**. This prepares a desperate sacrifice, which does not succeed in complicating the game: **28. Nd6 Rxc1 29. Rxc1 Nxe5** and here White could simply retreat the knight with a winning position, but it’s even stronger to continue playing for the attack with **30. Qf2** (30. Qb3! is even better. The point is very beautiful: 30. ... Qxd6 31. Rcd1 Qc5+ 32. Kh1 Qc8 33. Qxe6+!) **30. ... h6 31. Qf8+ Kh7 32. Nf5 Nxf5 33. Qxf5+ g6 34. Qf8**. White has provoked even more weaknesses in Black’s position. The rest is easy: **34. ... Re8 35. Qf4 h5 36. Rc3! Re7 37. Re3** and Black resigned in Furman – Lilienthal, Moscow 1949.

(c) A more recent game at the GM-level saw **16. ... Rc7 17. e4! dxe4 18. fxe4 Ne5 19. Qe2 cxd4 20. cxd4 Nc4 21. Ba1 Qe7** and now White correctly decided that checkmating Black’s king was more important than the a3-pawn: **22. Qf2 Qxa3 23. Qf4 Rce7 24. Nf5! Rxe4 25. Rxe4 Rxe4 26. Qg5 Qf8**

27. d5! (activating the bishop; once again, it is this piece that decides the game!) **27. ... Ne3 28. Nh6+ Kh8 29. Rxf6 Qc5 30. Nxf7+ Kg8 31. Nh6+ Kh8**



POSITION AFTER 31. ... Kh8

And now White concluded the game with a beautiful — and necessary — combination: **32. Rf8+!! Qxf8 33. Bxg7+! Qxg7 34. Qd8+** and Black resigned in Gustafsson – Grigorian, Bundesliga 2022-2023.

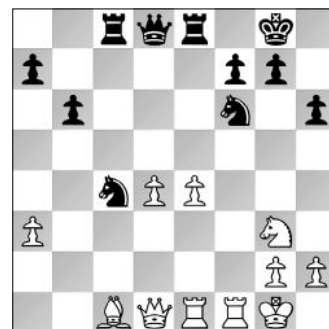
(d) Kotov analyzed **16. ... c4**, where **17. Qb1!** looks strongest, since after **17. ... b5 18. e4 g6 19. Bc1!** (once again this maneuver!) the b5-pawn is hanging.

(e) Ultimately the best defense relies on specific tactics: **16. ... Nd7 17. e4! dxe4 18. fxe4 Nde5 19. Qd1 Nc4 20. Ba1 Rf8** and White is only slightly better, since advancing either central pawn creates outposts for Black’s knights. The plan ... Nc6–e7 and ... Rc8–c6 will help Black support his kingside.

17. e4!

Now there is no reason to avoid this break.

17. ... cxd4 18. cxd4 dxe4 19. fxe4 Ne5 20. Qd1 Nc4 21. Bc1



Kotov summarizes Black’s difficulties: “What have Black’s efforts led to? He has no points in the center, the White pawns on d4 and e4 are on the point of rushing forward, crushing everything in their way. Black has to take urgent measures to meet the powerful onslaught by all the White pieces. However, by now no amount of ingenuity can save Black’s hopeless position.”

21. ... Nh7 22. e5

White’s pieces are temporarily on the back rank, but from now on, they advance on every single move. In these kinds of dynamic positions, Kotov was unparalleled.

22. ... Re6 23. Re4

White should probably start with 23. Nf5!.

23. ... Nf8?

Necessary was 23. ... Qd5! 24. Rg4 Rg6!. Taking on g6 would solve all of Black’s problems.

24. Nf5 Kh8 25. Qh5! Rc7 26. Rh4 Nh7 27. Nxe7!

The natural culmination of White’s previous play.

27. ... Kxg7 28. Bxh6+ Kg8 29. Rg4+ Rg6 30. e6!, Black resigned.

Based on these (and other) games, it’s reasonable to conclude that Black’s position after 14. Bb2 is simply worse. Indeed, over the next several decades, the variation lost popularity and slid into obscurity.

What I find amazing — and what is lost nowadays, when an engine solution to any problem is always just two clicks away — is the amount of time and effort that was required for theoreticians to find an adequate solution. It was not until the 21st century that a serious equalizing attempt was discovered, but as we’ll see next month, it exists! ♠



Left: The 1954 Soviet Olympiad team in Amsterdam. Kotov is seen far left, while Botvinnik is second from the right.

MAKE YOUR MOVE

BY **FM CARSTEN HANSEN**

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLES ARE TAKEN FROM YEAR'S REYKJAVIK Open that took place in March 2024.

The puzzles start from easy and gradually move toward being difficult. It is worth noting that "easy" is a relative term. If you are new to the game, the easy ones can also represent a challenge.

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. You will only cheat yourself out of improving your game. Solutions are on page 63. ♠

TACTIC 1.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 2.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 3.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 4.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 5.



WHITE TO MOVE

TACTIC 6.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 7.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 8.



BLACK TO MOVE

TACTIC 9.



BLACK TO MOVE

Position 1: TOO MANY JOBS

Position 2: THE RIGHT DISTRACTION

Position 3: HITTING FROM ALL ANGLES

Position 4: NOT ENOUGH DEFENDERS

Position 5: OVERBURDENED DEFENDER

Position 6: COMPLEX SQUARES

Position 7: DEEP WEAKNESSES

Position 8: BRUTAL FORCE

Position 9: BE CREATIVE



Repeat Champions and Returning Players

Why the Amateur Team East keeps us coming back

BY FM ALISA MELEKHINA AND WFM LAURA SMITH

THE 2024 U.S. AMATEUR Team East (USATE) is one of the most anticipated events on the east coast chess calendar. Half reunion, half tournament, and 100% an experience like no other, USATE attracts players of every age and strength to the Hilton in Parsippany, New Jersey over President's Day weekend for three days of slow chess and general mayhem.

The main rule for the composition of USATE is that the average rating for the four players on a team must fall below 2200 US Chess. (Alternates are allowed, but only the

first four players figure into the average rating.) The 2024 edition boasted 330 teams and over 1,400 registered players. Indeed, hotel room blocks always sell out fast as some teams plan their trips months in advance.

Only one team finished with a perfect 6/6 score this year. True to their name, "Another Bacon, Egg, and Cheese *en Passant* Please" became repeat USATE champions. Major congratulations are in order to the returning team (in board order): IM Gus Huston, Nathaniel Shuman, Ryan Peterson, and Kevin Stern, whose first three boards were part of the winning 2023 team "Bacon, Egg,

and Chess *en Passant*."

We asked the four winners to annotate their favorite games from the event. Their games are as tasty as their namesake sandwiches.

SLAV DEFENSE, EXCHANGE VARIATION (D10)

Kevin Stern (1948)

Jane Stripunsky (1581)

Amateur Team East (4), Parsippany, 02.18.2024

Annotations by Kevin Stern

Left: It was victory for the second straight year for Peterson, Shuman, Huston, and Stern, flanked by parents and guardians.

1. c4 c6 2. Nc3 d5 3. cxd5 cxd5 4. d4 Nf6 5. Bf4 e6 6. e3 Bd6 7. Bxd6 Qxd6 8. Bd3 0-0 9. f4!?

Entering a Stonewall structure makes sense now that my dark-squared bishop is gone.

9. ... Nc6 10. Nf3 a6 11. 0-0 Ng4?



This move is so natural. Black wants to shut out the light-squared bishop with ... f7-f5, but White now has a tactic!

12. Bxh7+!! Kxh7

If 12. ... Kh8 13. Ne5 attacks the knight. After 13. ... Ngxe5 (much worse is 13. ... Nxe3?? 14. Qh5) 14. fxe5 the queen will slide to h5 with a winning position.

13. Ng5+ Kg8 14. Qxg4

Regaining the knight, leaving White a pawn up.

14. ... f6 15. Nf3?

Again, a natural move, but I had much better! After 15. Qh5!! fxe5 16. fxe5 the threat is g5-g6 and Qh5-h7 mate. Black cannot stop it without giving material back.

15. ... Ne7 16. Nh4 e5 17. f5

Locking out Black's pieces out. White also has a winning ending after 17. fxe5 Qxe5 18. Qxg7+ Kxg7 19. dxe5 fxe5.

17. ... e4?

I don't think that resolving the tension in the center while I am attacking is a good idea.

18. Qh5 Rf7 19. Ng6 Nxg6 20. fxe5 Rc7 21. Qh7+ Kf8 22. Qh8+ Ke7 23. Qxg7+ Ke8 24. Qg8+ Kd7 25. Nxd5 Rc2 26. Rxf6, Black resigned.

A clean victory that eventually won the match for our team.

LONDON SYSTEM, JOBAVA VARIATION (D00)

Adegboyega Adebayo (2345)

Nate Shuman (2193)

Amateur Team East (5), Parsippany, 02.19.2024

Annotations by Nate Shuman

1. d4 d5 2. Nc3 Bf5 3. Bf4 c6 4. e3 e6 5. Bd3 Bd6

Purposefully trying to create an imbalanced pawn structure to generate chances. I am also looking to stop White from breaking the position open with e3-e4, and also potentially plunking my knight there.

6. Bxf5 exf5 7. Qf3 g6 8. h3 Qc7

Perhaps stronger is 8. ... h5 to stop the g2-g4 break, despite it looking unnatural.

9. Nge2 Nd7 10. Bxd6 Qxd6 11. g4 fxg4

12. hxg4 0-0-0 13. 0-0-0 Ngf6 14. Nf4

White should have played 14. g5 Nh5 15. e4, trying to open the center while he can.

14. ... Qe7

Now e3-e4 is stopped.

15. g5 Ne4 16. Nxe4 dxe4 17. Qg4 Kb8

18. d5

White is creating chances, but my pieces are more active.

18. ... Ne5 19. Qg3 Ka8!



Moving away from the potential pin from the queen on g3.

20. Ne6! Nd3+!

I was careful to look for in-between moves here. White is better after 20. ... fxe6 21. Qxe5 cxd5 22. Rxd5.

I investigated 20. ... Nc4, but unfortunately it does not work: 21. Nxd8 Qb4 22. Rd4 Qxb2+ 23. Kd1 Qb1+ 24. Ke2 Qxc2+ (or 24. ... Qxh1 25. dxc6 bxc6 26. Nxc6 Qh5+ 27. Kf1 Qh1+ 28. Qg1 with a significant advantage) 25. Kf1 Rxd8 and White should win.

21. cxd3

If 21. Rxd3 exd3 22. Nc7+ Kb8 White has no strong moves for the knight, which necessitates a repetition with 23. Na6+ Ka8 24. Nc7+ Kb8.

21. ... fxe6 22. d6!

An extremely sharp move by my opponent; however, he missed the next move which would have given him a slight advantage.

22. ... Rxd6 23. dxe4

The right way was 23. Qe5! Rhd8 24. dxe4 Rxd1+ 25. Rxd1 Rxd1+ 26. Kxd1 with a minimal endgame advantage for White.

23. ... e5 24. Rxd6 Qxd6 25. Rd1 Qe6

26. Kb1 Rf8 27. Qf3 Qc8 28. Qg3 Qe6

A draw was very good for my team at this point, so I was offering a repetition.

29. Qf3 Qc8 30. Qe2 a6

Creating *luft* for my king, thereby freeing my rook from its post on the back rank.

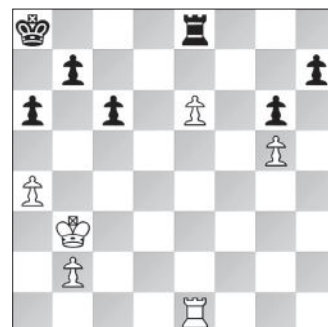
31. Rf1 Qe6 32. f4 exf4 33. exf4 Rd8 34. a3 Rd4 35. Re1 Qd6

Tempting my opponent to push his e-pawn.

36. e5 Qe6 37. Qe3

Also equal is 37. Rd1 Qf5+ 38. Ka1 Rxd1+ 39. Qxd1 Qxf4 40. e6 Qxg5 41. Qd6 Qc1+.

37. ... Qf5+ 38. Ka2 Qxf4 39. Qxf4 Rxf4 40. e6 Rf8 41. a4 Re8 42. Kb3



Here my opponent offered me a draw. At this point in the match, we were up 1½-½, and our fourth board had a very drawish rook endgame. Rather than accept the draw immediately, and because I was up on time, I decided to stall for 30 minutes to see how his match would play out. If he ended up losing, I would try to go for the win. If he drew, I would accept the draw offer and we would win the match 2½-1½. After 30 minutes, my teammate ended up winning his game, giving us the match victory. Now, with nothing to lose, I tried to go for the win...

42. ... Kb8 43. Kb4 Kc7 44. Re3 Kd6

45. Ka5 Kc7

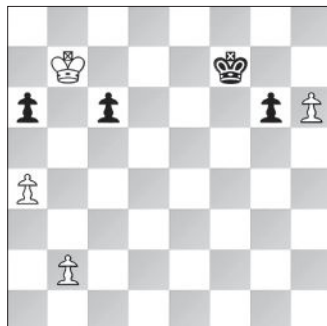
Hoping for anything other than the game continuation, so that I could check him with ... b7-b6+, as Ka5xa6 gets checkmated by ... Rd8-a8.

46. Kb4 Kd6 47. Ka5

Now it's a pawn race.

47. ... Rxe6 48. Rxe6+ Kxe6 49. Kb6 h5

50. gxh6 e.p. Kf7 51. Kxb7



51. ... a5

After 51. ... g5 52. Kxa6 g4 53. Kb7 g3 54. a5 g2 55. a6 g1=Q 56. a7 the c6-pawn stops any checks. So I played the game continuation, which I thought was winning. In fact, I missed White's saving idea, which was to run their king back to the other side of the board!

52. Kxc6!!

I thought that I was "in time" after 52. Kb6 g5 53. Kxa5 g4 54. Kb6 g3 55. a5 g2 56. a6 g1=Q+, but this is a win for Black!

52. ... g5 53. Kd5 Kg6 54. Ke4 Kxh6 55. b4 axb4 56. a5

The white king is the perfect distance between the two pawns. Now I had to find the draw.

56. ... b3 57. Kd3 g4 58. a6 b2!

White also holds after 58. ... g3 59. a7 b2! (59. ... g2? 60. a8=Q g1=Q 61. Qh8+ Kg6 62. Qg8+ wins the queen) 60. Kc2 g2!.

59. Kc2 b1=Q+!

Now the game will end in a draw.

60. Kxb1 g3 61. a7 g2 62. a8=Q g1=Q+, draw.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (D26)

Ryan Peterson (2200)

Murodjon Shadiev (2004)

Amateur Team East (5), Parsippany, 02.19.2024

Annotations by Ryan Peterson

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. e3 a6

5. Bxc4 e6 6. 0-0 b5

Less popular than the solid ... c7-c5, Black seeks to create a more dynamic position with fast development.

7. Bd3 Bb7 8. a4 b4 9. Nbd2 c5 10. Qe2

Nbd7 11. Nc4 Qc7 12. Rd1 Be7 13. e4

A very important pawn push. The goal is to advance the e-pawn one more square, taking space, and gaining control of the d6- and f6-squares.

13. ... cxd4 14. e5

Worse is 14. Nxd4? Nc5.

14. ... Nd5

After 14. ... Bxf3? 15. Qxf3 Nd5 16. Qg3 Black does keep the pawn, but the knight is ready to jump into the d6-square, and White has kingside pressure.

15. Nxd4 Nc5



16. Bc2

Left: The traditional round three matchup between West Point and Annapolis gave this year's bragging rights to the Cadets.

I missed the incredible 16. Nd6+! Bxd6 17. exd6 Qxd6 18. Nf5! Qf8 19. Bb5+! Nd7 (or 19. ... axb5 20. Qxb5+ Kd8 21. Be3) 20. Bf4 with tremendous pressure.

16. ... 0-0-0 17. a5?

This move fixes the pawn structure, but doesn't do much more.

17. ... Kb8 18. Nb3 g5 19. Nxc5 Bxc5 20. Be4!

The only move for White to maintain an advantage. It is necessary to counter the b7-bishop. If Black gets the opportunity to play ... f7-f5, the b7-bishop would terrorize the kingside. For example: 20. Bd2 f5 21. exf6 e.p. Nxf6.

20. ... Nc3?



Attempting to win the bishop pair fails tactically.

21. Rxd8+ Qxd8 22. bxc3 Bxe4 23. Bxg5 Qd3

Worse is 23. ... Qxg5 24. Qxe4, while White also keeps the advantage after 23. ... Bd3 24. Qf3 Qd5 25. Qf6! Rg8 26. Nb6.

24. Qxd3 Bxd3 25. cxb4

A key intermezzo.

25. ... Bxb4 26. Nd6 Bg6 27. Bf6

I wanted to play 27. Nxf7 Rc8 (or 27. ... Bxf7 28. Rb1) but missed the key idea 28. Nd8! Bc3 29. Rd1 Bxe5 30. Nxe6 with an excellent position.

27. ... Rg8 28. h4 Kc7 29. Ra4 Rb8

Any White advantage has evaporated in these last few moves. Black's bishops are very strong, and there are no clear targets in his position.

30. Be7 Kc6 31. Ra1 Kd5 32. Rd1+

Setting up a checkmating trap that, with just seconds on his clock, Black unfortunately falls into.

32. ... Kxe5? 33. g3 Bh5?? 34. f4, mate.



SICILIAN DEFENSE, SOZIN VARIATION (B57)

Roger Zhang (2245)

IM Gus Huston (2450)

Amateur Team East (2), Parsippany,
02.17.2024

Annotations by IM Gus Huston

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 cxd4 4. Nxd4 Nf6
5. Nc3 Nc6 6. Bc4 Qb6

One of a few options in this position. Both 6. ... Bd7 and 6. ... e6 are also very playable, but I decided to pull out a less mainstream line. The idea is to push the knight back to the b3-square, where it occupies the space that the bishop would ideally like to occupy.

7. Nb3 e6 8. Be3

Black does lose a tempo by allowing the queen to be attacked, but in return disrupts the coordination between White's pieces.

8. ... Qc7 9. Be2 a6 10. Qd2

A slight inaccuracy. Usually White should not allow Black to gain space with ... b7-b5, and plays a2-a4 to prevent this. In this case, Black usually elects to play ... b7-b6 and ... Bc8-b7, potentially using the weak b4-square in the future.

10. ... b5 11. a3 Bb7 12. f4 Be7 13. Bf3 Rc8
14. 0-0 0-0



15. Nd4

This move looks natural, but is actually a grave positional mistake. The knight lacks prospects after my next move.

15. ... Na5!

Taking advantage of the weak c4-square. Compare the knights on a5 and d4!

16. Qf2 Nc4 17. Bc1

Allowing the trade of the dark-squared bishop would cripple White's position in the long run.

17. ... Rfd8

Preparing ... d6-d5. Pushing the d-pawn immediately is an option, but there is no need to rush.

18. Kh1 Bf8

White doesn't have a clear plan, so Black can continue to make small improvements until the time is right to break with ... d6-d5.

19. Nde2 d5

The time has come!

20. exd5 exd5

It may look strange to self-inflict an isolated pawn, but it keeps more pieces on the board than after 20. ... Nxd5 21. Nxd5 Bxd5 22. Bxd5 Rxd5. White's position is cramped, so keeping pieces on the board favors Black.

21. b3 Bc5 22. Qg3 Nd6 23. Bb2 d4

24. Bxb7 Qxb7 25. Nd1 Nf5 26. Qd3 Ne3
27. Nxe3 dxe3 28. Qf5



28. ... Qe4

Slightly more precise is 28. ... Ne4, but here Black already has a winning advantage.

29. Qg5 h6 30. Qg3 Qf5

Here 30. ... Be7 is also interesting, as it protects the knight, attacks the c2-pawn, and threatens ... Rd8-d2.

31. Qf3 Ne4 32. Ng3 Nxd3+ 33. Qxd3 g6

34. Qh4 h5 35. Rfe1 Qe4

More forceful is 35. ... Rd2 36. Bc1 Bd4! 37. Rb1 Rxd2!!, but the game continuation works too.

36. Qf6 Bd4 37. Bxd4 Rxd4

(see diagram next page)

After trading off White's most active piece, the b2-bishop, Black has an easy game with the centralized queen, the passed pawn, and active rooks.

38. f5

WFM Megan
Paragua



WFM Laura Smith
(L) and FM Alisa
Melekhina (R)



Harold Scott (L)
and GM Joel
Benjamin (R)





POSITION AFTER 37. ... Rxd4

A desperate attempt at counterplay.

38. ... Rxc2 39. Qg5 e2 40. fxc6 fxc6 41. h3 Rd3

The easiest way to force a queen trade and go into a winning double rook endgame.

42. Kh2 Rd5 43. Qf6 Qe5+ 44. Qxe5 Rxe5 45. Kg3 Rf5

With the King cut off and the rooks doomed to passivity, Black can activate the King easily.

46. Kh4 Kg7 47. g4 g5+ 48. Kxh5

The alternative isn't much better: 48. Kg3 h4+ 49. Kg2 Rf4 and wins.

48. ... Re5, White resigned.

This game sealed our victory, allowing us to move on to round three unblemished.

While our team, "Started from Fritz 5.32, Now We're Here," was in the running for top mixed doubles, we faltered the last two rounds and the honors went to GM Magesh Panchanathan's team, "CKQ Alpha Dogs," also consisting of WIM Michelle Prince, FM Arvind Jayaraman, and Charithra Arvind.

Chess aside, the real competition is over the best team name and best costumes. While our name was more nostalgic to our team, the most popular entries tend to be chess puns or a pop culture reference. Scanning the pre-entry list, a few personal stand-outs were "ChessGPT Charlatan" — simple and nice GenAI callback — and "Team Say It With Ya Chess," a pun on "say it with your chest," which is a trendy way to be proud. They ultimately won best parent/child team.

Among the best-name candidates ultimately selected were "Travis and Taylor What's the Endgame?," which we also appreciated, and Shaun Smith's musically-inspired "Caro-Kann My Wayward Son." In the end, GM Joel Benjamin's "B-E-N-K-O and Benko was his Name O" prevailed.

While it wasn't our personal favorite, we were definitely humming that B-I-N-G-O tune on the car ride back — it does have staying power. The win must also have resonated with GM Benjamin, who was the only perfect 6/6 score for board one. His team ultimately finished in a solid 14th place with 5/6, while also winning the U2100 class prize.

The best costume award went to "King Smarty Gras and his Court," who were costumed for a Mardi Gras celebration, complete with instruments that they played! (And played well, we might add.) This was perhaps a bit of an upset, as the crowd certainly enjoyed seeing "Barbie and her Three Kens" on the stage!

REFLECTIONS

Both of your authors have not played much tournament chess in recent years by design. So what beckoned us to come out of our own semi-retirements and spend a long President's Day holiday weekend playing six classical time control games?

ALISA:

Pulling up at the Hilton Parsippany for the Amateur Team East and stepping out into the crisp New Jersey winter felt like going back in time. Inside, we were greeted by the usual flurry of kids scurrying to find their teams and boards, frantically followed by their parents with packed lunches and extra chess sets. I had a flashback to hunting for unoccupied corners to camp out and eat lunch in between rounds with my dad — then, my guardian; this year, for the first time, my teammate!

From outside the large, familiar tournament hall I could already hear organizer Steve Doyle's

booming voice. The giveaways were already underway: chess prizes for "the first person to the mic" with a \$50 bill, a Pennsylvania library card, or a New York state quarter.

As we were finding our table and figuring out which end was the first board, I saw familiar faces from "back in the day." Locals from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, some whom I would regularly play in state championships, were coming out of chess semi-retirement for this one-of-a-kind chess festival. When my first-round opponent played 1. b3 against me, I smiled to myself. Notwithstanding my last-minute cramming for my Black repertoire the night prior (where I did not go over 1. b3), I remembered that everyone was here for the same purpose. Chess theory was secondary to the camaraderie and nostalgia.

Our team came together almost overnight. My longtime partner, GM-elect Raja Panjwani, was looking for a non-FIDE rated tournament as practice before playing in Europe. Not being familiar with the U.S. phenomenon that is the USATE, he forwarded the tournament link in passing and asked if I had heard of it before.

Had I ever! I informed him that this wasn't just any "amateur" tournament; this is the top team competition in the U.S. (and perhaps the world!). I had a fleeting thought to have my dad, who is now around 1800, join our team. Surprisingly, everyone was on board! Still, we needed to find a third board who would make us competitive.

Fortunately, my old friend (and World Youth teammate) Laura Smith agreed to play, making our average team



Above: FM Alisa Melekikhina with her father, Aleksandr, at this year's tournament. Left: The subjects in the early 'aughts.

rating 2182 and a contender for a top Mixed Doubles team. Given how far all of us had come together, Team “Started from Fritz 5.32, Now We’re Here” was born.

I surprised myself by finishing with 5/6. The last time I played in this event was in 2014, exactly 10 years prior. I was in a different place in my chess and legal careers back then. For this tournament, I came in with a fresh perspective, focusing on the team aspect and putting the individualistic chess tendencies aside. I found new elements of chess to enjoy. It made me appreciate unplugging from the “real world” and diving into this celebration of chess, even if only for a few days.

CARO-KANN DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (B12)

FM Alisa Melekhina (2274)

Essig Rouven (1967)

Amateur Team East (2), Parsippany, 02.17.2024

Annotations by FM Alisa Melekhina

I shook off the pre-tournament jitters after a five-hour first round victory. In round two, I found myself playing against an opponent Raja had recently faced at the National Chess Congress. I knew going in that my opponent was an accomplished physics professor and had recently taken to chess.

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 c5

The more common move is 3. ... Bf5. The idea behind 3. ... c5 is similar to that in Advanced French structures, which tend to transpose: to undermine the e5-pawn and get activity around the c5-square. However, I don’t find these lines particularly challenging for White because at the end of the day, Black is down a tempo (compared to playing the French and playing ... c7-c5 immediately) in an already potentially cramped opening.

4. dxc5 e6 5. Be3 Nd7 6. Bb5

Challenging Black to untangle.

6. ... Ne7 7. Nf3

So far, White’s development has been simple and intuitive.

7. ... Nc6 8. c4

(see diagram top of next column)

I spent more time calculating this move than I would have liked to admit. Here c2-c4 is a typical idea to undermine Black’s center before he can consolidate. Now the onus



is on Black to sift through the numerous captures available.

8. ... Nxc5

I think 8. ... Bxc5 is the best option, going for either an isolated pawn or sacrificing the pawn altogether to regain development and space. Interestingly, the computer analyzes to an unclear / equal position despite White being a clear pawn up.

To wit: 9. cxd5 (or 9. Bxc5 Nxc5 10. cxd5 exd5 11. Nc3 0-0 12. Qxd5 Qb6 13. 0-0 Bg4 with compensation) 9. ... exd5 10. Qxd5 Bxe3 11. fxe3 0-0 12. Bxc6 bxc6 13. Qxc6 Rb8 14. Nbd2 Rxb2 15. Qc3 Rb5 with compensation for the pawn.

9. cxd5 exd5 10. Nc3 a6 11. Be2

While I would prefer to not lose further time, here 11. Bxc6+ bxc6 would merely reinforce Black’s center.

11. ... Be6 12. 0-0 Ne4?!

This is not an obviously bad move, but it is the beginning of the end. The opening has been a success for White, with quick and active development and a clear target on d5. Black cannot afford to lose any more time, and should consolidate as soon as possible with ... Bf8-e7 and ... 0-0.

13. Na4 b5?

While allowing Na4-b6 would be uncomfortable, Black again had the opportunity to consolidate with 13. ... Be7. After 13. ... b5, there are too many weaknesses in Black’s position.

14. Rc1! Rc8

White is winning after 14. ... bxa4 15. Rxc6.

15. Nb6 Rc7 16. a4

(see diagram top of next column)

This is the key to unlocking this position, as the b5-pawn is one of the few elements still holding things together.

16. ... Na7



Here 16. ... bxa4 17. Qxa4 only makes matters worse.

17. Rxc7 Qxc7 18. Nxd5

The pawn falls in an ideal scenario.

18. ... Qb7 19. Nf4 Bc4 20. Bxc4 bxc4 21. e6

Even more precise per the computer was 21. Bxa7 Qxa7 22. Qd5! Nc5 23. e6 fxe6 24. Nxe6 Nxe6 25. Qxe6+ Qe7 26. Qxa6. But I saw no drawback to striking with 21. e6 while the black king was stuck in the center.

21. ... Nf6 22. exf7+ Qxf7



23. Re1

White’s last piece is developed with flair.

23. ... Nc6 24. Bc5+ Be7 25. Ng5, Black resigned.

A possible finish would have been: 25. Ng5 Qf8 26. Bxe7 Nxe7 27. Nfe6 Qg8 28. Qd8 mate. Our team ended up winning the match 3-1, giving us a strong finish to the first day.

LAURA:

I started playing this event for the first time when I was eight years old. The World Youth was blood, sweat, and tears — mostly sweat and tears! —but also a lot of fun with new friends from across the globe. The World Open was about money prizes, and whispered scandals of who cheated. (Back then it was collusion, not computers.) Saturdays at the Marshall were a staple in my chess career, but nothing I’ve found compares to USATE.

The Amateur Team East was my favorite. It was the tournament with costumes, team names, bughouse all-day-everyday, and nonstop chess with friends and family. My dad and I played on the same team at least once.

I stopped playing chess competitively when I went to college in 2006. There was not much of a chess scene in Binghamton, New York, though I did find my way to one through a friend who saw a local posting for a chess club. I played. And I did not win. (No, it doesn't still bother me!)

Flash forward: I met my now-husband, Shaun Smith, and while dating him, I got back into the chess scene. As a mom of four-year-old twins and a six-year-old, I can't remember my chess days in my current life. Instead of tactics puzzles, it's cooking, meals, the dishes, doing laundry, more snacks, and schlepping to taekwondo, ballet, and art... all with the hopes of surviving until Friday. But I remember going to the USATE after my first "retirement" from the chess world, and it always felt like home even after years away from the game.

I realized that I missed chess. I remember Shaun showing me some easy openings that would get me by after a long absence from the board. While I felt the rust in my game, I also remembered the joys of sitting across a board and feeling the trivialities of life dissolve into the world of 64 squares.

To me, USATE also goes hand-in-hand with New York's Chess in the Schools (CIS), which sends students to the tournament annually. Shaun serves as CIS's Director of Programs. He attended USATE both as a player and as the leader of 53 college-bound high school students and 23 CIS alumni. A non-profit that fosters the intellectual and social development of low-income youth in New York City through chess education, CIS graciously covers all expenses for its students to play, with many thanks to donations from its supporters.

CIS has chosen to send students to the USATE because it is a very meaningful competition. Many CIS alumni play along with current students, sharing experiences and first-hand reflections on colleges and building professional careers. This year, CIS alumnus Lamel McBryde was on the second-place team, "International Alliance!"

While I scored a reasonable 3½/6, the real value of my tournament was the trip down memory lane. Playing at USATE feels so refreshing for a chess player. Without the focus on money prizes, it's about the chess and the friendships. Well, the com-

petition is very much there, but it's in a more honor-driven way, with the focus on team and family-bonding. It was wonderful to see the tournament foster old and new friendships, as well as inspire opportunities and connections for CIS students and alumni.



We would both like to thank the tournament staff and organizers, especially Mr. E. Steven Doyle, who has tirelessly directed this tournament for 49 years and attended 50. We will be back, and this time, very soon.

ADDITIONAL GAMES

GIUOCO PIANO, DUBOV VARIATION (C54)

Dan Bock (1932)

Santhosh Ayyappan (2128)

Amateur Team East (6), Parsippany, 02.19.2024

Annotations by Dan Bock

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. c3 Nf6 5. d4 exd4 6. b4

The Dubov Gambit, named after GM Daniil Dubov, who used it to defeat GM Sergey Karjakin in the 2020 Russian Championship. I have found that it's very rare for players to be prepared to face this.

6. ... Bb6 7. e5 d5 8. exf6 dxc4 9. Qe2+ Be6 10. b5 Na5 11. fxg7 Rg8 12. cxd4 Bxd4

Black grabs a pawn, but is going to regret not having a dark-squared bishop.

13. Nxd4 Qxd4 14. Bb2 Qd3



I got this exact position in a tournament game less than two months before this one. In that game, I played 15. Qxd3, and while I did go on to win, I had to fight off some queenside counterplay for Black. Now I get to show off a bit of my homework.

15. Bf6

The engine thinks White is winning. Of course, I have to prove it at the board and without silicon reassurance!

15. ... Qf5 16. Qf3 Qxf3 17. gxf3

With big plans for my rook, I am very happy about the opening of the g-file.

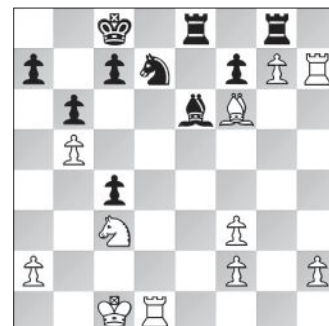
17. ... Kd7 18. Nc3 Rae8 19. 0-0-0 Kc8

Black has gained a certain amount of king safety. But his h7-pawn is weak, his knight is out of the game, and his rooks are tied down by the presence of the white pawn on g7, which is invulnerable for the foreseeable future.

20. Rhg1

I had a lot of good options to choose from here. I could have gone with a plan of maneuvering the knight to f6 or h6. I played 20. Rhg1 because Rg1-g5-h5xh7 looks unstoppable (if ... Be6-f5 then Nc3-d5 threatening Nd5-e7+), and because it could also potentially support a Nc3-e4-f6 plan by protecting the g7-pawn.

20. ... b6 21. Rg5 Nb7 22. Rh5 Nc5 23. Rxh7 Nd7



White has spent the past four moves winning an important pawn and threatening to infiltrate with the rook all the way to the back rank. Black has spent the past four moves getting his knight to d7.

24. Bd4

I spent 20 minutes on this move, because I really didn't want to retreat the bishop from the amazing f6 square, and it felt like the right time for an Exchange sacrifice. But I calculated 24. Rxd7 Kxd7 25. Ne4 Bf5 26. Rh8 Ke6 and decided I'd have to retreat the bishop anyway, so the sacrifice wouldn't get me anything I didn't already have. Of course White is still winning here after 27. Rh6! but the path is much harder.

24. ... Bf5

Now that the f-pawn is unblocked, I expected 24. ... f6 now or on the next few moves.

25. Rh8

Black is in a bind. Neither rook can move!

25. ... Bd3 26. h4

Commencing the final winning plan.

26. ... Nc5 27. Nd5

Threatening Nd5-e7+.

27. ... Kd8 28. h5

I thought that 28. Nf6 was a slip after 28. ... Rxh8, but White can calmly play 29. Bxc5 bxc5 30. Nxe8 Rxe8 31. h5 and the pawns will race home.

28. ... Be2

It's not hard to find the right moves from here on out.

29. h6 Nd3+ 30. Kd2 Bxd1 31. Rxg8 Rxg8 32. h7 Re8 33. g8=Q Rxg8 34. hxg8=Q+ Kd7 35. Kxd1 f5 36. Qf7+, Black resigned.

KONSTANTINOPOLSKY OPENING (C44)

Andrew Ardito (2224)

Todd Bryant (2228)

Amateur Team East (5), Parsippany,
02.19.2024

Annotations by Todd Bryant

1. e4 e5

This was only my second time playing 1. ... e5 over the board! My opponent showed some disappointment, as he had clearly prepared for my usual Sicilian.

2. Nf3 Nc6 3. g3

But he sends anti-preparation back over the net. Now we both are out of book. I had prepared for some sharp Italians.

3. ... Nf6 4. d3 Bc5

The other path to equality begins with 4. ... d5.

5. Bg2 d6 6. 0-0 a5

Gaining space, restricting b2-b4, and creating a refuge for the bishop.

7. c3 Ba7

This retreat wasn't really necessary yet, and now the bishop gets needled by Nb1-a3-b5. With 7. ... 0-0 we transpose back into a number of high-level games.

8. Na3 0-0 9. Nb5 Bb6 10. Qc2 Ne7

A common repositioning in 1. ... e5 structures, sending the knight to the kingside and preparing ... c7-c6. But here, the knight on g6 is restricted by the pawn on g3.

11. Bg5 Ng6 12. d4 Qe7 13. Nd2 Bd7 14. dxe5?! Qxe5

Now Black picks up the two bishops.

15. Bxf6 Qxf6 16. a4



16. ... c6?!

Totally overlooking White's tactics, although fortunately I am still okay.

Better was 16. ... Ne5, improving the knight and preparing to expand on the kingside with something like 17. Rae1 h5.

17. Nc4 Bc5 18. Nbx d6

Oops. I hadn't seen this at all. White is trying to snatch a pawn with a skewer on the d-file. Luckily, I took a think here and was able to find some counterpunches.

18. ... Bxd6 19. Rad1

I thought 19. Qd3 was his best choice was. I intended 19. ... Bc5 (19. ... Bg4! is even better, i.e., 20. Qxd6 Be2 21. Qxf6 gxf6 22. Nb6 Bxf1 23. Bxf1 Rad8 and compensation is an open question) 20. Qxd7 Ne5 21. Nxe5 Qxe5 22. Rad1 with advantage to White.

After 19. Qd1 Be6! 20. Nxd6 Rfd8 the pin is very hard to deal with.

19. ... Bc5 20. Rxd7 Qe6

This was my point — a fork at the end of the line. But White still has a strong resource we both discounted!

21. Qd3?

With the strong 21. Rd4! Bxd4 22. cxd4 White's monster center is good compensation for the Exchange.

21. ... b5

Now this wins a piece, as if the knight moves, ... Ng6-e5 will pick up a rook.

22. axb5 cxb5 23. Rd5 bxc4 24. Qxc4



Time to take stock. We're up a piece, and Stockfish is screaming that Black is crushing. But I think this position is not so easy to win. Why? White has two pawns. Our g6-knight isn't useful yet, and won't be for a long time. White has a clear idea of rolling the f- and e- pawns; this isn't so easy to resist.



Dan Bock



Todd Bryant

And White can also eventually make a passed queenside pawn!

24. ... Be7?!

Already a little off. This allows f2-f4 and gets in the way of my knight. The correct 24. ... Bb6 restrains f2-f4 and allows ... Ng6-e7-c6.



25.

f4 Qb6+ 26. Kh1 Rfc8 27. Qe2 Rab8 28. Rd2 Rd8 29. Rfd1 Rxd2 30. Rxd2 Rd8 31. e5 Rxd2 32. Qxd2

We've traded more material and it's still -3 per Stockfish, but it's certainly not over yet! White is ready to move forward, and it's hard to find even a slow maneuver that meaningfully attacks something in White's position.

32. ... Nf8

The metal friend suggests 32. ... Bf8 33. h4 Ne7 34. Be4 h5 35. Kg2 g6, intending the gradual untangling ... Kg8-g7 and ... Ne7-g8 with a very gradual untangling. I don't find this very obvious at all.

33. Be4 g6 34. Kg2 Qc5

Nearing time control, I start to shuffle.

35. h4 h5 36. Bd5 Kg7 37. Qd3 Qc8?!

The engine thinks this is



Center: Team spirit is always a huge component of the Amateur Team East. Here are some of the competitors for best gimmick.

fine, but to me, this shuffle makes things a little worse. Now White gets an unpleasant battery against the weak pawn. The stronger 37. ... Ne6 resisted this idea.

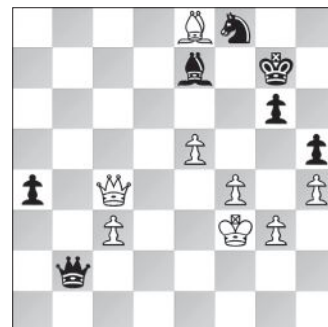
38. Qb5 Qd8 39. Qc4

I was not thrilled to be trading pawns a move before time control.

39. ... Qb6 40. Bxf7 Qxb2+

Time control reached!

41. Kf3 a4 42. Be8



The dust has settled. We're out of time pressure, but a big check is looming on f7 and there is only one way for Black to maintain a winning advantage.

42. ... Qb3?

The only move was 42. ... Qb7+!

43. Kf2! (43. Bc6 Qc8 44. Qxa4 Qh3! was the more difficult point: ... Be7xh4 is threatened, as well as many checks against White's king) 43. ... a3 and the checks gets nowhere: 44. Qf7+ Kh8 45. f5 a2! 46. Qxa2 Bc5+ with a queen skewer incoming.

43. Qc7?

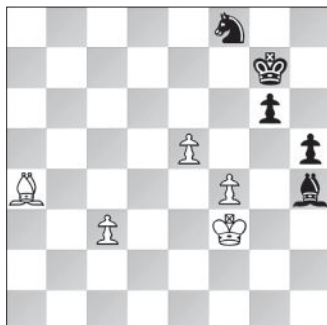
With 43. Qxa4! Qxc3+ 44. Kg2 Qd2+ 45. Kh3 Black will never be able to make progress, despite the extra piece.

43. ... Qd5+ 44. Ke2

Qg2+ 45. Kd1 Qf1+ 46. Kd2 Qf2+ 47. Kd1 Qc5! 48. Qxc5!

I actually thought trading queens was impossible, but White still has ways to resist.

48. ... Bxc5 49. Bxa4 Bf2 50. Ke2 Bxg3 51. Kf3 Bxh4



52. f5!

An excellent practical choice. Black is still winning here, but he will have to hold onto his remaining pawn and restrain White's passers carefully. Nearing time pressure again, I promptly fail to do that.

52. ... gxf5

Here 52. ... Kh6 is favored by the computer, but 53. f6 was very scary to allow. I also felt the position after 52. ... g5 53. f6+ Kh6 was one I could even lose in a scramble.

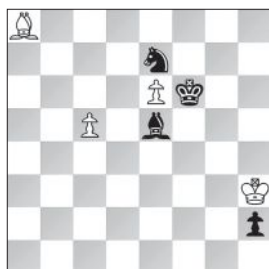
53. Kf4 Be1 54. c4 h4 55. Kxf5 h3 56. Bc6

So far so good!

56. ... Bb4?

Played with a minute on the clock; now, all winning chances are gone.

So how does Black win here? We begin: 56. ... h2 57. e6 Ng6 58. Ba8 Ne7+ 59. Kg4 Bc3 60. Kh3 Be5 61. c5 Kf6



POSITION AFTER 61. ... Kf6

With the bishop supporting the h2-pawn and restraining the c-pawn, we can carefully scoop the white pawns and steer toward bishop and knight versus king: 62. Kg2 Kxe6 63. Kh3 Nf5 64. Bh1 Nd4 65. Bb7 Nb3 66. Bh1 Nxc5 67. Kg2 Nd3 68. Kf1 Kf5 69. Ke2 Nf4+ 70. Kf3 Nh3 71. Bg2 Kg5 72. Bh1 Bf4 73. Bg2 Kh4 74. Bh1 Bg3 75. Bg2 Nf2 76. Ke2 h1=Q 77. Bxh1 Nxh1 and now all Black has to do is convert one of the longest bishop and knight versus king positions possible! It's mate in 31!

57. Kg4 h2 58. Kg3 Kg6 59. Kxh2 Kf5 60. Bd5 Kxe5, draw.

Black can make no progress whatsoever. ♠



2024 AMATEUR TEAM EAST AT A GLANCE

FEBRUARY 17-19, 2024 | PARSIPPANY, NY

WINNERS

1ST. Another Bacon, Egg, and Cheese en Passant Please (IM Gus Huston, Nate Shuman, Ryan Peterson, Kevin Stern). **2ND.** International alliance (IM Joshua Colas, Tyrell Harriott, Lamel McBryde, Kyle Cheung). **3RD.** Your worst nightmare (Ansh Shah, Sameer Mujumdar, Kamran Rawshani, Aleksey Sergeev). **4TH.** Blitzerland (Daniel Girsh, Roman Rychkov, Max Farberov, Alan Stolyarov). **5TH.** Brighton Chess (Tobias Rizzo, Sam Luger, John Luger, Henry Swing).

CLASS PRIZES

U2100: B-E-N-K-O and Benko was his name O. **U2000:** Kenilworth CC. **U1900:** Gambiteers. **U1800:** U.S. Military Academy 1. **U1700:** Chickmates. **U1600:** Keep it in Check (ICA). **U1500:** Chess Mates 2. **U1400:** Rook'n'rollers. **U1300:** KQC Mixed Generation. **U1200:** Deez Knights. **U1000:** Dean Of Chess Kings.

THE TOPS

TOP COLLEGE TEAM: Carnegie Mellon A. **TOP HS TEAM (GRADES 9-12 SAME SCHOOL):** It's Time to Resign. **TOP MIDDLE SCHOOL:** Board Wizards. **TOP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:** Spring Hill. **TOP TWO SCHOLASTIC TEAMS:** People Against the London System, Let Those Boys Rook. **TOP MIXED DOUBLES:** CKQ Alpha Dogs. **TOP SENIORS:** The Price is Right. **TOP MILITARY:** U.S. Naval Academy. **TOP COMPANY TEAM:** Kramnik's Math Advisors (US Chess). **TOP COACHES:** NYCA Coaches A. **TOP FEMALE TEAM:** Queen's Gambit. **TOP FAMILY:** Grandpa Knows Best. **TOP FUTURE:** Wicked Smaht. **TOP MILITARY COLLEGE:** U.S. Military Academy 1. **TOP PARENT/CHILD:** Team Say It With Ya Chess.

STATE WINNERS

CT: We Got Out Of Perpetual Belicheck. **DE:** Mac & Chess Mate Lover. **MA:** Ajab. **NJ:** Your Worst Nightmare. **NY (BENJAMIN AWARD):** Another Bacon, Egg, and Cheese en Passant Please. **PA:** Tata Steal Your Queen. **VA:** People Against the London System.

The Last DANCE

It's nostalgia mixed with the here and now for our author at the 2024 National High School (K-12) Championship.

BY **FM DAVIS ZONG**



FROM A BIRDS-EYE VIEW, THE weekend of April 5-7 seemed to be a peaceful one for Baltimore, Maryland. The city saw three days of clear skies, and the resident baseball team, the Baltimore Orioles, was away at the Pittsburgh Pirates, leaving thousands of seats at Camden Yards completely empty.

Next door at the Baltimore Convention Center, however, the heart of the scholastic chess world was pounding loud and strong. Lighting up the sky with fiery sacrifices and surgical precision alike, the 2024 National High School (K-12) Championship demonstrated the combined power of thousands of adrenaline-filled chess players.

Since its debut in 1969 at the McAlpin Hotel in New York City, playing a scholastic national has become an annual tradition for many young chess players. Starting with 370 players from 21 states in 1969, the inaugural event was won by John Watson, who is now a Hall of Fame inductee in light of his many contributions to our game.

This year's high school championship was contested across six sections, featuring

633 teams from 37 states. The 413-player championship section boasted more than 40 masters and 120 experts. Overall, the crowd of 1,825 players topped last year's attendance and set a new record.

Entering the playing hall for the first round of the main event, the sheer size alone was a marvel. Walking through the sky bridges connecting the convention center to nearby hotels reminded me of international events such as the Pan-American Youth Championship, and just like the international tournaments, digital boards and clocks broadcasted the top boards of each section all around the world. With bathrooms just off the hall, and water coolers spaced all around, the tournament room was our

well-appointed home away from home for seven rounds.

Although the event is in April, preparations by organizers, schools, players, and parents from all around the country began months in advance. From the early-bird reservations of hotels and airplane tickets to the assembling of schools' chess teams, chess enthusiasts planned way ahead for the big weekend, with nearby hotels being sold out as early as mid-January.

The players were itching to play, so it was no surprise that the pre-event blitz tournament was attended by over 350 players for whom seven rounds of slow chess simply wasn't enough action for the weekend. With an undefeated finish of 11½/12, IM Nico



"Just one more picture!" was the motto of the day for Dalton.

Chasin took home his second consecutive title of national blitz champion, while also leading his school, Columbia Grammar and Prep, to the blitz team title.

Another highlight was the bughouse tournament, where players team up in duos, passing and dropping pieces onto the board amidst frantic time scrambles. At the end of five double rounds, two teams — Leo Jiang + Kitana Olson and Maximillian Lu + Gus Huston — emerged victorious with 9/10 points, with the former prevailing by just one tiebreak point and being crowned national bughouse champions for the second consecutive year.

The blitz awards were handed out before rounds three and four of the main event, just

as the tournament was starting to heat up, featuring many clashes between masters on the top boards. Especially noteworthy was the round five game between IMs Jason Wang and Maximilian Lu, a game that would ultimately prove critical in deciding the championship itself.

Both sides demonstrated strong theoretical knowledge in a sharp Grünfeld line, where Lu prioritized a lead in development over material, hoping to exploit Wang's stranded king. After a daring pawn grab on move 15, Wang managed to hold onto the extra pawn all the way into the endgame. Lu defended stubbornly, but Wang accurately converted his extra pawn to the full point, the game being one of the last to finish for the day.

GRÜNFELD DEFENSE (D83)

IM Jason Wang (2543)

IM Maximillian Lu (2439)

National HS Ch (5), Baltimore,

04.06.2024

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. Bf4

The opening choice itself promises an exciting matchup. Wang has been playing this line with good results, while Lu is an experienced Grünfeld player.

4. ... Bg7 5. e3 c5 6. dxc5 Qa5 7. Rc1 0-0 8. cxd5 Nbd7

In what seems a miraculous series of moves to someone seeing this variation for the first time, Lu delays capturing both central pawns to accelerate his development.

9. f3 Nxc5 10. e4 b5! 11. b4!



A strong series of twin b-pawn thrusts by the two IMs. In this position, time is key, and both sides are sacrificing pawns for extra tempi.

The natural pawn grab 11. Bxb5 would lead to a long series of trades, which promise comfortable equality for Black: 11. ... Nfxe4! 12. fxe4 Bxc3+ 13. Rxc3 Qxb5 14. Qe2 Qxe2+ 15. Nxe2 Nxe4.

11. ... Qxb4 12. Bd2 Qb2!? 13. Rc2 Qa3 14. Be2 Nfd7 15. Nxb5 Qa4 16. Bc3 Bxc3+?!

The correct 16. ... Ne5! would have maintained the balance. By opening lines for the c8-bishop, Black disincentivizes Ng1-h3, and he keeps more pressure by avoiding trades. A sample line is 17. Qd2 a6 18. Nd4 Rb8.

17. Nxc3! Qa5 18. Nh3 Nb6 19. Nf2 Bd7 20. 0-0

Wang has consolidated the pawn advantage. Winning this is far from easy, but now he's no longer behind in development and holds a clear advantage.

20. ... Rfc8 21. Qd2 Nca4 22. Nxa4 Qxd2 23. Rxd2 Nxa4 24. e5 a5 25. f4?!



Restricting the a4-knight with 25. Ne4! was more precise. White doesn't fear trading pieces because every trade brings him closer to a simpler, winning endgame.

25. ... Nc3! 26. Bf3 Rab8 27. d6 exd6 28. exd6



28. ... a4?

The final turning point. The push is natural, advancing a potential passed pawn for Black, but it turns out to be the decisive blunder. Now White can simply transition into a winning bishop versus knight ending.

More stubborn was 28. ... Rc4! as after 29. Ng4 Bxg4 30. Bxg4 Rd8 the active c4-rook gives better drawing chances.

29. Ng4! Bxg4 30. Bxg4 Rd8 31. d7 Kf8 32. Bf3

Both sides are under 20 minutes now, but with a star like the d7-pawn on the board, Wang doesn't let the win slip away.

32. ... f5 33. Rc1 Ne4 34. Bxe4 fxe4 35. Kf2 a3 36. Ke3 Ke7 37. Rc7 Rb4 38. g4 Ke6 39. Rc8 Ke7 40. f5 gxf5 41. gxf5 Rb6 42. Rxd8 Kxd8 43. Kxe4 Rb2 44. Ke3 Rb5 45. f6 Rf5 46. Rd6 Rf1 47. h4 h5 48. Ke4 Rf2 49. Ke5 Re2+ 50. Kf5 Rxa2 51. f7 Rf2+ 52. Kg6 a2 53. Ra6 Rg2+ 54. Kxh5 Rf2 55. Kg6 Rg2+ 56. Kh6 Rf2 57. Rxa2 Rxf7 58. Rd2 Rf1 59. h5 Rg1 60. Rd5 Rg2 61. Kh7 Rg3 62. h6 Rg2 63. Rd6 Rg3 64. Rg6 Rd3 65. Kg8 Rxd7 66. h7 Kc7 67. Rg7, Black resigned.

One of my favorite aspects of nationals is the support and teamwork within school teams and the tense yet friendly rivalry between schools. I'm lucky to go to a very chess-loving school, Hunter College High School, whose chess team is coached by FM Sunil Weeramantry and IM Farai Mandizha. This year, we assembled a team of 18 players in the champi-

onship section. I have played in weekly school club meetings and national tournaments alike with many of these players, including Jack Levine, Kiren Nasta, Ian Nicholson, and fellow senior Henry Burton, and it's always heartwarming to motivate and encourage each other before and after each round.

Despite our friendly rivalry, Nationals has ultimately also been a union of New York's super chess schools: Hunter, Dalton, Columbia Grammar, and Stuyvesant, among others. Playing together from 1st to 12th grade has made many good memories, and no matter how brutal the over-the-board fights get, we are all good friends outside of the board. Calculating tiebreaks while waiting for team results and playing blitz and bughouse on the skittles room carpets will always be delightful core memories for me.

Going into the last day, the tournament was up for grabs, with the top six teams all within mere points of each other and several players within striking range of first place. This made for some of the most exciting action in rounds six and seven. The final round game between Kent Slate and Derek Clasby was a true nail biter, with the result in jeopardy until the final moment. After Slate won back the pawn in the Scotch gambit, his active bishop pair in the open position set him firmly in the driver's seat. However, even after ceding an Exchange to neutralize the bishop pair, Clasby remained resilient, boldly venturing to the edges of the boards to snatch every extra pawn possible. The endgame, with just a rook, bishop, and pawns, was sharper than ever, with promotion tactics, trapped rooks, and even a sneaky fortress idea! After a long fight with just seconds on the clock, Clasby prevailed, helping him finish tied for second place with 6/7.

ITALIAN GAME (C50)

Kent Slate (2219)

Derek Clasby (2393)

National HS Ch (7), Baltimore, 04.07.2024

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. d4

Slate's opening choice shows that he is ready for a fight. Despite being only the sixth most popular move per the database, this ambitious central thrust shoves a pawn into the fire of three pieces and promises a sharp game no matter how Black captures.

4. ... Bxd4

Clasby opts to win the pawn safely at the cost of the bishop pair. Both of the other captures are playable too.

Top: FM William Morrison in the Baltimore Kids team room. Middle x2: I.S. 318 blows off steam. Bottom: Hunter takes home a trophy.

5. Nxd4 exd4 6. 0-0 Nge7 7. Nd2 0-0

Here 7. ... d6! would have hewn closer to equality. Black wants to get as much as possible before White takes the pawn back, i.e., 8. Nb3 Ne5 9. Qxd4 Nxc4 10. Qxc4 0-0.

8. Nf3 d6 9. Nxd4 Nxd4 10. Qxd4 Be6 11. Be2



The bishop pair promises Slate a pleasant position.

11. ... Nc6 12. Qc3 Kh8

It was essential to strike with 12. ... f5! before White gets his bishops set up. Clasby had the right idea, but perhaps he wanted to sidestep checks on the a2-g8 diagonal. White is a bit better after 13. exf5 Rxf5 14. b3 Qf6.

13. b3 f5 14. Bb2 Qd7 15. exf5 Rxf5 16. Bd3 Rc5 17. Qd2 Bf5 18. Rae1 a5 19. Re3 Rg8 20. Bc4 d5 21. Ba3



21. ... Rxc4?!

The lesser evil was 21. ... Nb4!, when Black loses a pawn instead of the Exchange: 22. Bxb4 axb4 23. Qxb4 b6 24. Bd3 with advantage to White.

22. bxc4

It would be easy to call it quits after losing an Exchange by move 22, but Clasby doesn't give up and instead defends stubbornly.

22. ... d4 23. Rb3 b6 24. Rb5 Be6 25. Qd3 Re8 26. Re1 Bf7 27. Rxe8+

Good technique by Slate. Trading off a pair of rooks eliminates the difficulties significantly.

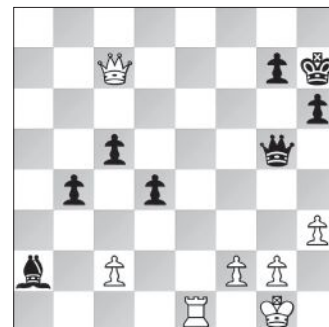
27. ... Qxe8 28. Rb1 h6 29. c5?!

Stronger was 29. Bb2! Qe6 30. Bxd4 Qxc4 31. Qxc4 Bxc4 32. Rd1 with a big advantage.

29. ... Bxa2!

Grabbing a pawn here and there may not seem like much, but it can add up.

30. Rd1 Qe5 31. Qb5 Qd5 32. Qd3 bxc5 33. Re1 Qh5 34. Qg3 Nb4 35. Bxb4 axb4 36. Qxc7 Kh7 37. h3 Qg5



38. Kh2??

The engine does not immediately approve, but strongest here is 38. Re4!. This is a hard move to find, as it seems to run into a skewer after ... Ba2-d5 and a fork after ... Qg5-c1+. But Re4-g4 is a strong threat, and Black lacks time to grab any pawns. Play might continue 38. ... Bd5 (if 38. ... Qc1+ 39. Kh2 Qxc2 40. Rg4) 39. Rg4 Qf6 40. Qxc5 and White is winning.

38. ... Bd5 39. f3 Bxf3!

All of a sudden, another pawn grab and Clasby has equalized! What a shocking turnaround!

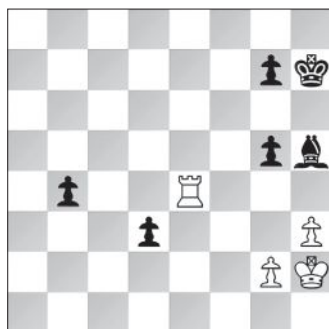
40. Qg3

Of course the bishop is taboo in light of 40. gxf3?? Qd2+!.



The key seventh round battle between Slate and Clasby

40. ... Bh5 41. Qxg5 hxg5 42. Re5 c4
43. Re4 d3 44. cxd3 cxd3



45. g4??

This natural move, cutting off the promotion square, turns out to be a decisive blunder!

Now White had to find the counterintuitive 45. Rd4!, not taking the b-pawn but instead attacking the more dangerous d-pawn. Now White is barely in time to stop the passers, and it would be Black who would have to play precisely to draw! A sample line is 45. ... Be2 46. Kg1 b3 47. Kf2 b2 48. Rb4 g4!! Only but not obvious! Black must use the initiative granted by the passed pawns to the fullest. The g-pawn push prepares simplifying trades that ensure equality: 49. h4 g3+ 50. Ke3 Kh6 51. Rxb2 Kh5 and the draw is in sight.

45. ... d2??

Both sides must have thought that Black's bishop and passed pawns would decide. Humorously, Black's pawns can waltz to

victory without help from the bishop after 45. ... b3! 46. gxh5 d2 47. Rd4 b2.

46. Rd4 Bg6 47. Rxd2 b3 48. Rb2??

The rook gets locked now, and Black is effectively up a bishop!

Here the correct 48. Kg1!! is study-esque! Black's king is trapped on h7 because any move allows a horizontal rook check to get the rook behind the passed pawn. It seems that Black can win with ... Bg6-c2 and promoting the pawn, but White sets up an impregnable fortress with the rook on f2 and king on g2/h2! We see this clearly after 48. ... Bc2 49. Kh2 b2 50. Rxc2 b1=Q 51. Rf2 and we reach a fortress draw.

48. ... Bc2!

A nice finishing touch by Clasby, sealing the deal after a roller coaster of a game.

49. Kg3 Kg6 50. h4 Kf6 51. hxg5+ Ke5, White resigned.

After a weekend that felt like a whole era, the high school nationals finally came to an end. The U1900, U1200, U800, and Unrated sections all saw a perfect 7-0 winner, with Davin Chen taking U1900, Brendan Wick coming first in U1200, Shu Leong topping U800, and Francis Casiple winning the Unrated section. U1600 saw Michael Usallan and Ethan Brush tie with 6½/7, with the former prevailing on tiebreaks.

With a super-strong field of more than 400 players, it was certainly challenging to

become a sole winner in the Championship section, but IM Jason Wang pulled it off, scoring clear first with an undefeated 6½/7, just like he did in 2023. Wang was closely followed by FM Brewington Hardaway, FM Sharvesh Devisapreth, FM Terry Luo, IM Gus Huston, Derek Clasby, and Taiwei Wu, who (in tiebreak order) all shared second place at 6/7.

The team battlefield was no less intense than the individual competition, with several teams stacked with not one but multiple titled players. Finishing on 21 points, Dalton — led by IM Gus Huston, WIM Iris Mou, Nathaniel Shuman, and Ryan Peterson — defended their championship title from 2022 and 2023, finishing a full point ahead of the field this time. Dalton was followed by Livingston High School with 20 points, and Columbia Grammar, Hunter College High School, and Stuyvesant High School, all with 19 points. Huston's round six win below, a quiet French Defense that exploded into a quick and deadly kingside attack, was one of the games of the tournament for me.

FRENCH DEFENSE, TARRASCH VARIATION (C07)

Ethan Liu (2131)

IM Gus Huston (2489)

National HS Ch (6), Baltimore, 04.07.2024

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nd2 c5 4. exd5 Qxd5 5. Ngf3 cxd4 6. Bc4 Qd6 7. 0-0 Nc6 8. Nb3 a6 9. Nbx4 Nxd4 10. Nxd4 Qc7



This position has been reached hundreds of times in the database, but things quickly go downhill for the first player here.

11. Be2

Rare, and perhaps with good reason. More precise was 11. Bb3! to discourage the typical freeing thrust ... e6-e5, which would free Black's light-squared bishop. Play can continue 11. ... Bd6 12. h3 Ne7 13. Re1 0-0 with equality.



11. ... Bd6 12. h3 Ne7 13. c4 0-0 14. Be3 e5 15. Nb3

Offense is often the best defense. Therefore, I think the right move was 15. c5! Admittedly this is a hard move to play over the board, but the pawn thrust gives White the necessary activity to maintain the balance: 15. ... Bxc5 16. Rc1 Rd8 17. Nb5 axb5 18. Rxc5 Rxd1 19. Rxc7 Rxf1+ 20. Bxf1 and now 20. ... Nd5!

15. ... Nf5!

Huston conducts the attack flawlessly from here.

16. Bd2 e4 17. Qc2?!

Again, the best chance to hold was 17. c5! to eliminate the dark-squared bishop before ... e4-e3 occurs. Black is slightly better after 17. ... Be5 18. Bc3 Bxc3.

17. ... Qe7

Notice how c4-c5 doesn't work anymore, because the dark-squared bishop can simply retreat.

18. Bc3 Nh4 19. Qd2 Rd8 20. Qe3 Nf5 21. Qc1 Bc7 22. c5 e3 23. Bf3 Bf4



24. Kh1?!

Here 24. Qc2! Qg5 25. Be4 offered more resistance. White is prepared to sacrifice the Exchange to neutralize Black's attack if needed. If Black grabs it immediately with 25. ... exf2+? (much better is 25. ... Be6! 26. Rae1 h5 with a winning attack) 26. Rxf2 Be3 27. Re1 Bxf2+? 28. Qxf2 the attack completely fizzles out.

24. ... Qg5 25. g3 Nxc3+!

A brilliant sacrifice by Huston to finish off the game.

26. fxc3 Qxc3 27. Qc2 Rd2!, White resigned.

As a famous chess streamer might say, "He sacrifices THE ROOK!"

After wrapping up the seventh round, I could not help but feel deep nostalgia. Since my

first national scholastic tournament in first grade, I have come back repeatedly over the years. Even with the rise of many new chess teams and players, and the changing playing venues across the country, these events always have the same familiar feel. The halls and team rooms are full of both seasoned veterans and fresh faces looking to make their mark, sometimes sitting across the board from me as opponents, or sitting side-to-side with me on adjacent boards.

For the past decade, scholastic chess nationals fostered little traditions that my friends and I have grown to love and cherish: the team photos in matching team shirts, the group applause thanking our amazing organizers, staff, and parents, and the welcoming of first-year players to the chess world.

This was my last hurrah. This fall, I'm fortunate and excited to head off to Yale University, where I hope to continue to play both individual and team chess in college. With so many fond memories and hours of adventures both on and off the board, it is definitely hard to bid farewell to scholastic tournaments, but no matter where my future adventures take me, scholastic nationals will always have a sweet spot in my heart.

ONE FROM JASON

As IM Jason Wang was receiving his first place medal, we asked him if he might annotate his favorite game from the tournament for us. Here's what he chose.

CATALAN OPENING (E05)

IM Jason Wang (2543)

James Oh (2241)

National HS Ch (3), Baltimore, 04.06.2024

Annotations by IM Jason Wang

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. g3 Be7 5. Bg2 0-0 6. 0-0 dxc4 7. Qc2 c6!?

Black opts for an interesting sideline in the Catalan, which turns out to be sound.

8. Qxc4

Also possible is 8. a4, delaying the pawn capture. White has the standard tiny edge after 8. ... b6 9. Qxc4.

Top: Rochelle Ballantyne in the Girls Club.
Middle: Two Scholar-Chessplayers! Bottom: GM Elshan Moradiabadi in all-comers blitz.



8. ... b5 9. Qc2 Bb7 10. Rd1 Nbd7 11. Nc3 Qb6



12. e4!?

This seems like the principled move, gaining space in the center as Black is playing on the flank. In truth, however, 12. Ne5! is probably the way to play for an advantage. After 12. ... Rfd8 13. Bg5 Nxe5 14. dxe5 Rxd1+ 15. Nxd1 Nd5 16. Bxe7 Nxe7 17. a4 White is probing weaknesses and should have a long-term advantage via the strong bishop on g2.

12. ... c5 13. d5?!

This move is also typical, but ineffective due to a lack of concrete resources on White's end.

Stronger was 13. e5 Nd5 14. Bg5 Nb4 15. Qb1 Bxf3 16. dxc5 Nxc5 17. Bxe7 Bxd1 18. Qxd1.

13. ... b4

Perhaps Black should have played 13. ... c4, opening up the c5-square for the bishop. White's pawns in the center look strong, but he currently lacks a way to use them. The computer line is 14. Be3 (14. Bg5 Bc5 is a bit better for Black) 14. ... Bc5 15. Bxc5 Nxc5 16.

b4 cxb3 e.p. 17. axb3 b4 18. e5 bxc3 19. exf6 exd5 20. fxg7 Rfc8 with dynamic equality.

14. Na4 Qa6 15. Ng5?

The right move was 15. Bg5! Rfe8 (alternatives: (a) 15. ... h6 16. Bxf6 Nxf6 17. d6 Bxd6 18. e5 Be4 19. Rxd6 Qxd6 20. Qxe4 Nxe4 21. exd6 and two pieces for the rook and pawn is much better for White, while (b) 15. ... exd5? 16. e5 wins a piece) 16. Bf1 Qa5 17. dxe6 fxe6 18. Re1 is a dynamic position, but White's control of the c4-square, coupled with the weak black pawn on e6, should give White the advantage.

15. ... h6



16. Nh3?!

Here 16. dxe6!? fxe6 17. Bf1 Qc6 18. Nxe6!? is very interesting, and I saw it during the game. Now (a) 18. ... Nxe4 is what I had calculated. 19. Bc4! Rf7 20. Bd5 Qxd5 21. Rxd5 Bxd5 and now 22. Bf4! (the position after 22. Nc7 Bc6 is wild. White has a queen for bishop and rook, but the engine returns 0.00!) is the only move to maintain White's advantage, cutting off Black's attack on the

f2-square. After (b) 18. ... Rf7! 19. Nf4 Qxe4 20. Qxe4 Bxe4 21. Bg2 Black objectively should draw.

16. ... Rfd8

After 16. ... exd5 17. exd5 c4 White again lacks concrete dynamics that might justify his awkwardly placed knights.

17. b3 Rac8

Or 17. ... exd5 18. exd5 Nb6 with an edge to Black.

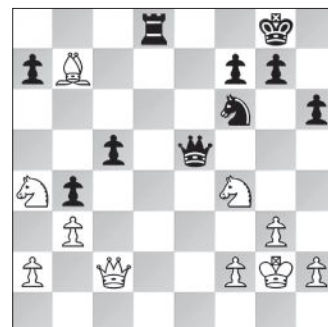
18. dxe6! Qxe6 19. Nf4! Qa6

After 19. ... Bxe4!? 20. Nxe6 (20. Qe2 Qf5 21. f3 Bc6 22. Qxe7 Re8 23. Qd6 Ne5 and Black has compensation for the piece) was my intention. The position is approximately equal after 20. ... Bxc2 21. Nxd8 Bxd1 22. Nc6 Bf8.

20. Bb2 Bd6?

Correct per the computer was 20. ... c4! 21. e5 c3 (if 21. ... Ng4 22. e6! with counter-chances) 22. exf6 Bxf6 23. Bc1 Ne5 and White's queenside looks handicapped. Play might continue 24. Nd5 Bxd5 25. Rxd5 Rxd5 26. Bxd5 Qd3 27. Qxd3 Nxd3 28. Be4 c2 29. Bxd3 Bxa1 30. Kf1 Bd4 when Black has the winning chances.

21. Rxd6! Qxd6 22. e5 Nxe5 23. Bxb7 Rc7 24. Re1 Re7 25. Bxe5 Rxe5 26. Rxe5 Qxe5 27. Kg2



White has liquidated and should be in a technically winning position.

27. ... Qe1 28. Nd3 Qe7 29. Ndx5 h5 30. h4 Ng4 31. Bf3 Qe1 32. Qe2?

Losing the advantage; now the endgame is drawn. Simple and winning was 32. Ne4, with Qc2-c7 coming.

32. ... Qxe2 33. Bxe2 Rd2 34. Bxg4 hxg4 35. Na6 Rxa2 36. Nxb4 Ra3 37. Nc5 a5?

Black perilously pushes his pawn onto a weaker square.

After 37. ... Ra1 Black's constant ability to threaten the b3-pawn, combined with



the locking in of White's king, renders this position drawn.

38. Nc2 Ra2 39. Ne3 Rd2 40. Nc4?

I think 40. Nb7 is the easiest way to win.

40. ... Ra2 41. Na4? Kf8 42. Nxa5 Ke7?

With the stronger 42. ... Ra3! White's queen-side is suddenly locked! Still, White should win after 43. Nc4 (43. Kf1 g6 44. Ke2 Kg7 45. Ke3 f5 is a bit better for White) 43. ... Rxb3 44. Ne3 with good technique.

43. Nc4 Ke6 44. Nc3 Ra1 45. Ne2 Rb1 46. Ne3 Rb2 47. Nd4+ Kd7 48. Nxc4 Rd2 49. Ne5+ Ke7 50. Kf3 f6 51. Ke3 Rd1 52. Nd3 Rb1 53. b4 g6 54. Nf4 g5 55. hxc5 fxc5 56. Nd3 Kf6 57. Ke4 Kg6 58. b5 Kf6 59. Kd5 Ke7 60. Ne5, Black resigned. ♞

2024 NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) CHAMPIONSHIP AT A GLANCE

BALTIMORE, MD | APRIL 5-7, 2024

INDIVIDUAL:

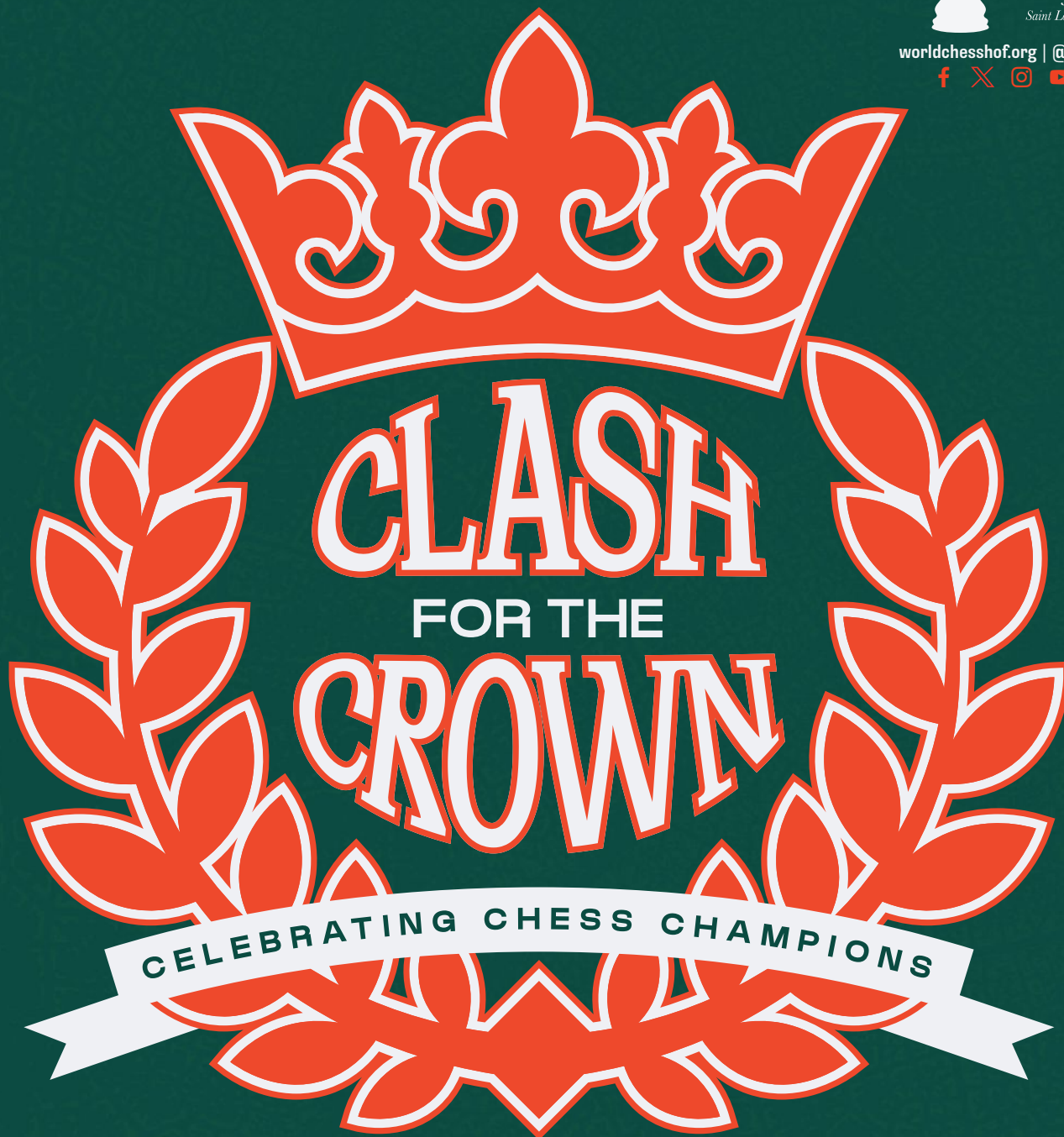
CHAMPIONSHIP: IM Jason Wang (OH), 6½/7. **U1900:** David Chen (NY), 7/7.
U1600: Jake Usallan, Ethan Brush, 6½/7. **U1200:** Brendan Wick, 7/7. **U800:** Shu Leong, 7/7. **UNRATED:** Francis Casiple, 7/7. **BLITZ:** IM Nico Chasin (NY), 11½.
BUGHOUSE: Lucas Jiang + Kitana Olson, Maximillian Lu + Gus Huston, 9/10.

TEAM:

CHAMPIONSHIP: Dalton (NY), 21 points. **U1900:** Stuyvesant HS (NY), 19½.
U1600: Sparta HS (NJ), 19½. **U1200:** Valley HS (KY), 21. **U800:** Pocono Mountain East HS (PA), 22½. **UNRATED:** Niles North (IL), 21. **BLITZ:** Columbia Grammar & Prep (NY), 40½.

IM Jason Wang never left the top board as he took the title.





ON VIEW
April 11, 2024 –
January 12, 2025

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ACHIEVING MY AIM

Reflections on
earning the
GM title, and
what I learned
along the way.

BY GM ARTHUR GUO

PART I - THE OTHER SIDE OF CHESS SUCCESS

IF ANY WORD WERE TO DEFINE ME, IT would be “chess.” Consequently, I’ve thought a lot about what I’ve told my friends and my teachers over the years about it: how I intentionally leave out the parts I think people won’t want to hear, and why I often take for granted everything this beautiful journey across 64 squares has exposed me to.

I’m writing this article because I don’t want to continue succumbing to those impulses.

I started playing chess when I was around six years old. I wish I had understood how to improve or how to approach chess at that stage, but I didn’t. It was only my mom’s

unconditional love and my dad’s unwavering support that enabled me to fail and fail again for years so I could figure things out on my own and grow.

Often, the prolonged frustration I’d feel would have me wondering if chess was actually my thing. I would put unhealthy pressure on myself to meet my standards of success, and my parents naturally had expectations for me as well. When I didn’t meet those standards, I withdrew from tournaments out of embarrassment.

I unexpectedly won the National Open in Las Vegas in the summer of 2021, right after my freshman year of high school. I finished ahead of 22 grandmasters and earned my first grandmaster norm after three-or-so-years of zero improvement. I remember feeling relieved, thinking, “Finally! This is my breakthrough.”

But the bitter truth soon became clear: I

was wrong. The following year saw some of the worst chess I’ve ever played. Between balancing AP classes and other extracurriculars, failed tournament after tournament began piling up. Chess became a nuisance, a burden. I no longer could muster anything like the same zeal and excitement as I had before.

Worse, even sitting down to study chess had become difficult. I was either too distracted and indifferent, or I made sure to procrastinate so that I didn’t have to stare at the piles of analysis. Even when I did force myself to work, I kicked the can down the road, ignoring my weaknesses and all the effort that improvement required.

I had turned my passion into labor. Even when there were bright spots in my play, light piercing through chess’ dark forest, I chose to ignore them to linger on the same fear that I would forever fall short of becoming a grandmaster. It took a toll on

me. Whether I'd wanted to admit it or not, chess had finally broken me.

So I quit.

In the summer before my junior year, my dad and I agreed I should "take a break" from chess to pursue my other passions. It was supposed to be temporary, but we both knew I was giving up the game for a long while. The shame and regret I felt were unbearable — 10 years down the drain. It felt cowardly.

Yet there was a certain peace I felt in quitting. Not thinking about chess for about a year made me rethink my standards and what I enjoyed about the game. After a few months, I began to miss the adrenaline. I missed sitting down to adjust my pieces, focusing, and immersing myself in every nuance of a position for hours on end. I missed the feeling of winning and proving myself wrong. I just missed chess.

What I realized is that sometimes, stepping back is okay; I now understand that being away brought me closer to the game. As my dad and I packed my summer 2023 schedule with two and a half months of nonstop chess, I hoped for a new start and felt excited for my last shot at this GM thing before my senior year.

It was smooth sailing at first. After achieving my second and third norms in my first two tourneys in Budapest, I thought I had finally struck gold.

Then came a harsh reality check in the Rigo Janos Memorial. Coming off an abysmal collapse, and then blowing a clearly winning endgame in the previous two rounds, I was poised to strike back against an opponent who was also struggling in the tournament.

GIUOCO PIANO (C54)

GM Adam Horvath (2472)

IM Arthur Guo (2445)

Rigo Janos Memorial (7), Hungary,
06.21.2023

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bc4 Bc5 4. c3 Nf6 5. d3 d6 6. 0-0 h6 7. a4 a6 8. Nbd2 Ba7 9. Re1 Be6 10. Bxe6 fxe6 11. Nf1?! Harmless.

11. ... a5!

The right counter. With prophylaxis against b2-b4, Black has equalized.

12. Be3 Bxe3 13. Rxe3 0-0 14. Ng3 Qd7 15. h3 b6 16. Qb3 Rf7 17. Rd1 Raf8 18. d4 exd4 19. cxd4 Nb4



I blitzed out my moves to here and accumulated a considerable time advantage. I felt confident I could outplay my opponent. Black has the half-open f-file, the outpost on the b4-square, and potential breaks with ... d6-d5 and ... c7-c5 at any given moment. Meanwhile, White has to deal with his hanging pawn center and the awkward positions of his major pieces.

20. d5 exd5??

Impatient and immature. I don't know why I rushed to play this move. White has only two options, and I didn't care to evaluate one of them. So take heart, readers: even good chess players get impulsive sometimes!

Of course the only viable option was 20. ... e5. After 21. Rc3 Na6 22. Qb5 Nc5 23. Qxd7 Nfxd7 Black will press for the win.

21. e5

We played many more moves, but the game is now as good as lost.

21. ... dxe5 22. Nxe5 Qc8 23. Nxf7 Rxf7 24. Rde1 Qd7 25. Qd1 d4 26. Rf3 Qd5 27. Nf5 Nc6 28. Qe2 Kh7 29. Qd3 Kh8 30. Nxe6 Re7 31. Rxe7 Nxe7 32. Ng4 Nd7 33. Rf4 c5 34. Re4 Qf5 35. f3 Kh7 36. b3 Qg6 37. h4 Nf5 38. h5 Qg5 39. h6 gxh6 40. Qb5 Nf8 41. Qxb6 d3 42. Qxc5 d2 43. Nf2 Ng6 44. Qxa5 h5 45. f4 d1=Q+ 46. Nxd1, Black resigned.

I was devastated after I lost that game. One cannot quantify my desperation and anger when I realized I was letting my emotions get the best of me. Going into the tournament believing I could just as quickly continue my winning ways to break 2500 was a mistake and a lesson to be learned. I had to reset. After enjoying the sunset and soaking in the serenity of the vast expanse of Hungary's largest lake, I did just that.

I won the next two rounds, and despite shedding a couple of rating points, I felt this was even for the best. The struggle, and the working through it, kept me grounded, hungry, and feeling confident for my

fourth and final tournament in Europe: the Sparkassen Chess Trophy at the Dortmund Chess Festival.

After winning my first two rounds there, I played GM Peter Prohaszka in round three. (Editor's note: for another take on this game, check out WGM Tatev Abrahamyan's annotations in our October 2023 article.)

CARO-KANN DEFENSE, ADVANCE VARIATION (B12)

IM Arthur Guo (2445)

GM Peter Prohaszka (2585)

Sparkassen A-Open (3), Dortmund,
06.26.2023

1. e4 c6 2. d4 d5 3. e5 Bf5 4. Nf3 e6 5. Be2 Nd7 6. 0-0 a5 7. a4 f6!?

An uncommon move order.

8. Bd3?!

Not the most testing. After 8. Be3 Qc7 9. c4 fxe5 10. cxd5 exd5 11. Nxe5 Black needs to be careful to develop his pieces quickly.

8. ... Bxd3 9. Qxd3 fxe5 10. dxe5 Nc5

11. Qd4 Qd7 12. Be3 Nh6

Inviting an interesting imbalance.

13. Bxh6 gxh6



14. Nbd2 Rg8 15. c3 h5 16. h3

I felt like I was already losing the thread here. Black's king is safe and his pieces are active, while he has a clear plan of targeting the fragile White kingside.

16. ... Qf7 17. Qe3 Be7 18. Kh1 Qg6 19. Ne1
Too passive.

19. ... 0-0-0?!

The first mistake, allowing counterplay.

Instead 19. ... Kd7! is what I was expecting. The king's station in the center is well-protected, and the a8-rook serves to enforce prophylaxis against any b2-b4 break.

20. b4 axb4 21. cxb4 Ne4 22. b5



22. ... Bg5??

My opponent slips in time pressure. The natural 22. ... Bc5 kept the edge after 23. Qe2 Rdf8 24. Nxe4 Qxe4 25. Qxe4 dxe4.

23. f4 Bh4 24. Nxe4 Qxe4 25. Qd2

A quiet sidestep by the queen reveals how quickly White is able to consolidate his position.

25. ... d4 26. Nf3

How the tables have turned! Now Black's king is in severe danger.

26. ... Bg3 27. bxc6 bxc6 28. Rab1 Bxf4 29. Qb4 Kd7 30. Qd6+ Ke8 31. Qxe6+ Kf8 32. Qf6+ Ke8 33. Rb7, Black resigned.

The win was not clean, and I was fortunate to stay on track. A grueling five-and-a-half hour game against GM Aryan Chopra in round four, however, brought me back to my senses. Following quick comeback win in round five, the most crucial round thus far awaited me, which would set the tone for the rest of my tournament.

RUY LOPEZ, ARKHANGEL VARIATION (C78)

GM Ruslan Ponomarev (2664)

IM Arthur Guo (2445)

Sparkassen A-Open (6), Dortmund, 06.29.2023

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 b5 6. Bb3 Bc5

This is second time I played the Archangel-sk. My opponent, a former world champion, was ready for it.

7. a4 Bb7 8. c3 d6 9. d4 Bb6 10. Bg5 h6 11. Bxf6 Qxf6 12. Bd5 0-0 13. Na3 Rfb8!

(see diagram top of next column)

Here my opponent's prep had ended, but I was still firmly in book, guided by human assistance and that of Leela.



14. Nc2 exd4 15. cxd4 bxa4 16. Rxa4 a5 17. Re1 Ne7 18. Bxb7 Rxb7 19. Ne3 Rab8 20. h3 c6 21. Nc4 Qe6 22. Qc1

Here, an equal position arises with both sides having weak pawns. This was the end of my pre-game preparation.

22. ... Bc7 23. Nxa5 Bxa5 24. Rxa5 Rxb2 25. Ra8 Rxa8 26. Qxb2



Liquidation. The rest is balanced.

26. ... Qd7 27. Rc1 Qc7 28. g3 Qa7 29. Kg2 Rb8 30. Ra1 Qc7 31. Qa3 Rc8 32. Rc1 Qd8 33. Nd2 Ra8 34. Qb3 Rb8 35. Qc3 Qb6 36. Rb1 Qc7 37. Ra1 Qb7 38. Nc4 d5 39. Nd6 Qd7 40. e5 Nf5 41. Ra6 Nxd6 42. exd6 Qxd6 43. Rxc6 Qd7 44. Rc5 Rd8 45. Qf3 Qe6 46. g4 g5 47. Rc3 Qe4 48. Qxe4 dxe4 49. Rc4 Ra8 50. d5 Rd8 51. Rxe4 Rxd5, draw.

Getting a draw as Black against a very strong grandmaster not only grew my confidence, but it also ensured I'd get even more favorable pairings (for norm purposes) in the final rounds.

The next three rounds were considerably less stressful. Solid draws against two 2600s as White and a win as Black against a lower rated player concluded my title run with another GM norm performance.

After my dad told me I broke the 2500 rating following my last round, I expelled an impassioned "YES!!," and felt nauseous (in a good way). How inexplicably weird to have the last dozen years of my life culminate in one singular moment.

Suddenly I realized that I didn't even know how to celebrate. All my friends and family were thousands of miles away — all I could do was text them. I think that's why I felt a bit empty then. I won't forget the surreal train ride back to the hotel, looking out the window in silence, and seeing all the stations and people pass by like any other normal day, oblivious to my feeling of accomplishment.

I wish somebody had told me that becoming a grandmaster is not the End-All-Be-All and that it wouldn't suddenly make me fulfilled. I wish somebody had told me what embarking on this chess expedition was really about.

It wasn't about the titles or the rating gains. It was about learning from my mistakes and growing into the person I am today.

The requirements for the GM title now completed, I returned home to the States in July for the 2023 U.S. Junior Championship. There I suffered a tough loss in the final round after going in tied for first, destroying any chances for qualifying to the U.S. Championship. But then, almost as fated, I was fortunate enough to earn a perfect score (6/6) for a second consecutive win at the 2023 Denker to cap off my summer.

Chess has taught me about ups and downs, and that life goes on. Wins and losses are both natural and necessary; both must be embraced. And even quitting is okay.

Chess has made me realize how blessed I am to have found a passion while I was young and could devote everything I had to it. It's made me appreciate all the people who have shared this journey with me. But above all, through the years I've spent on chess, and all the struggles to achieve my goals, I have been shown glimpses of myself I wouldn't have seen otherwise. That's the real gift chess has given me, and I don't think there's anything more important I could have learned along the way.

PART II – MY SECRET SAUCE AND TIPS

Every chess player is different. Likewise, their road to improvement will be unique. But I do hope you'll gain a bit from my experience. Here is my advice to readers.

1. WHAT AND HOW TO STUDY WITH A BUSY LIFE?

Like many other full-time students, or adult players with multiple life obligations, I didn't have the luxury of many hours a day to study

chess. The truth is that on many weekdays, I didn't even glance at a board.

If you don't have much time, efficiency in studying is key. For me, I spent my time studying GM Magnus Carlsen's games deeply. I would argue that all you need to become a strong player can be found there.

Carlsen's games have no weaknesses, span all kinds of openings, and reveal the best middle-game and endgame strategies. Of course, working with annotations or books on his games can help you understand how the best player in the history of chess thinks. Look up the theories if you don't understand certain openings, pawn structures, strategic themes, or endgames, and fire up your engines if you can't grasp why a move is a mistake.

Study those brilliant games — or the games of your favorite elite GM — again and again. Everything you need is there.

Also: work hard and relentlessly on your weaknesses. Chess is more like a marathon than a 100-meter dash. In other words, slow and steady wins the race.

2. PLAYING UP AND PLAYING DOWN

I learned a lesson by always playing up in my early chess career. The truth is, I “enjoyed” playing up because it often resulted in gained rating points. But playing up doesn't give you the pressure you will have to face in open tournaments, in which you inevitably will play players around your level or below your level. It took me a long time to overcome a sense of uneasiness when playing lower-rated players due to the fact I always played up.

This is why, if I had to start over, I would balance playing up with playing in my rating groups.

I continued to play in scholastic events, especially Nationals, even after I was already a titled player. Nationals are hard on the top seeds. A lot of kids are underrated, and they prepare with their grandmaster coaches to take the top players down. You rarely gain any rating points, and a slight miss is all you need to ruin your championship chances.

What, then, is the benefit of playing nationals? The experience of how to handle pressure. It is very stressful to sit on the top boards all the time; you'll learn how gravity works. Fighting against it is a path to growth.

3. COACHING AND LEARNING TO STUDY ON YOUR OWN

I believe having someone stronger than you to discuss things with is a shortcut to improvement. If you want to reach an expert level, having at least an master-level coach is

crucial; if national master is your goal, then an IM coach is needed, and so on.

However, after your US Chess rating is around 2300 or so, I think it's possible to plow ahead on your own, especially with all the tools available today: books, annotated games, videos, online classes, and chess engines.

Good coaching is expensive, and many families can't afford it. The ability to study on your own becomes critical. One thing I have noticed is that the desire to read chess books at a very young age often is an indication of how much you will remain truly passionate about chess later on.

I was fortunate to be among the few made the GM title before graduating high school without being homeschooled. I did it without a coach (though I briefly tried to find one), for the last six and half years, and after becoming a strong master. Progress is definitely possible, but I would be lying if I were to say that it had not been a very lonely and tough road to traverse. Extremely hard work is needed, and so is a pure mind/heart; both are more important than the often overrated “talents.”

4. PURSUE OTHER PASSIONS

Chess is wonderful, but it's not everything. Regardless of what your coach tells you, the truth is that it's just one of many passions, activities, or hobbies you can pursue. It's not the magic pill for your future success, but the lessons learned from chess — like those from any other competitive sport or intellectual interest, if intensely pursued — can be very helpful.

It is okay to leave chess if you find out you

may be better at something else. You will come back if you truly miss it, and then you will know chess is your thing. I would also argue that interests outside of chess may help you grow overall, helping your chess without your recognizing the benefits.

For the parents reading this article, I would refer to an old blogspot post IM Greg Shakhade wrote many years ago. There he said getting to GM is very hard, and that while chess should be encouraged, it should not be forced or falsely pushed. I completely agree.

As with any time-intensive activity, excellence in chess requires years of sacrifices. The trade-off is having less time to pursue other activities, to focus on academic interests, or to spend time with friends and family.

I would argue that even if your kids choose not to continue in chess, your investment won't be wasted. I suspect many of them will find their way back to the board again in another stage of their life, or at least, they can coach their own kids in the future!

Finally, I would like to close by thanking the people who were instrumental to my chess progress: David Vest, who got me started in a free library chess class and became my coach in my first few years playing; GM Alonso Zapata, who guided me to a rating of nearly 2300 US Chess—I was his first student when he moved to Atlanta from Colombia; IM Greg Shakhade, whose US Chess School camps made me hungry to improve; and finally, GM Sam Shankland, who helped me shake off the rustiness after a long absence from chess and boosted my confidence by working with me in an intense multi-day training session.

To all of them, I'm very grateful. ♡



PHOTO: COURTESY SUBJECT

Sammy was Real Good

Technique and tactics meet in a pleasing game.

BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI



OLISH-BORN GM SAMUEL Reshevsky (1911-1992) was a true chess prodigy and one of America's greatest players. He

won the U.S. Championship eight times (as did his famous rival Bobby Fischer) and from the mid 1930s through the early 1960s, Reshevsky was a legitimate candidate for the world chess championship. His style was an unusual mix of position play and resourceful tactics. During his heyday he was capable of beating anyone. In this month's offering, playing against Emanuel Lasker at Nottingham in 1936, Reshevsky (Black) nurses his position along until his strategic advantages lead to a surprising tactical conclusion.

QUEEN'S GAMBIT ACCEPTED (D28)

Emanuel Lasker
Samuel Reshevsky
Nottingham, 1936

1. d4 d5 2. c4 dxc4 3. Nf3 Nf6 4. e3



Now ensure that the position above is set up on your chessboard. As you play through the remaining moves in this game, use a piece of paper to cover the article, exposing **Black's** next move only after trying to guess it. If you guess correctly, give yourself the par score. Sometimes points are also awarded for second-best moves, and there may even be bonus points — or deductions — for other moves and variations. Note that ****** means that Black's move is on the next line. ******

4. Par Score 5 e6
The text enables development for the f8-bishop. You may accept **full credit** for either 4. ... a6 or 4. ... c5.

5. Bxc4
White develops and gets back the so-called gambit pawn. ******

5. Par Score 5 c5
One typical reason to play the Queen's Gambit Accepted is to liquidate a few pawns in the center and possibly saddle White with an isolated d-pawn, which can be a negative or a positive, depending on various factors. You can accept **full credit** for 5. ... a6, hoping to follow with a timely ... b7-b5.

6. Nc3
This is a typical development. White could also have castled. ******

6. Par Score 5 a6
Black continues with the plan of a subsequent 7. ... b5.

7. 0-0
White could also have played 7. a4, deterring 7. ... b5, though at the cost of weakening the b4-square. ******

7. Par Score 5 b5
By mobilizing in this way, Black now has a post for his queen-bishop at b7.

8. Bd3
A small inaccuracy that doesn't really generate an attack. Much safer was 8. Be2. ******

8. Par Score 5 cxd4
Reshevsky trades for stability and clarity. You may accept **full credit** for 8. ... Bb7, which keeps the central tension.

9. exd4
Lasker accepts the isolated d-pawn. Will it prove to be weak or strong? ******

9. Par Score 5 Bb7
Black's light-squared bishop is well posted here, but you may accept **full credit** for 9. ... Be7, expediting kingside castling.

10. Bg5
White activates his last minor piece. ******

10. Par Score 5 Be7
Black develops and breaks the pin. Accept **full credit** for 10. ... Nbd7.

11. Qe2
Having played 7. Bd3, more consistent would be 11. Bxf6 Bxf6 12. Be4. ******

11. Par Score 5 0-0
A natural move, removing the king from the center. You may accept **full credit** for 11. ... Nbd7.

12. Rad1
White overprotects his d-pawn. The advance 12. a4 also makes sense. ******

12. Par Score 5 Nbd7
The queen-knight is better placed on d7 (instead of c6), keeping the b7-bishop's long diagonal unobstructed.

13. Ne5
One plus White's isolated pawn does give is an anchor for a knightly intrusion to e5. ******

13. Par Score 7 Nd5
Blockading the d4-pawn may lead to some trades, but that's okay. Isolated pawns tend to be weaker in the endgame. You may accept **full credit** for 13. ... Rc8.

ABCS OF CHESS

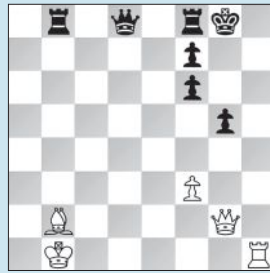
THESE PROBLEMS ARE ALL related to key positions in this month's game. In each case, White is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 63.

MAY EXERCISE:

One thing chess engines don't quite do yet is translate analysis into words. An excellent way to get more out of your chess is to summarize your games in a written paragraph of about a hundred words. There's a real art to explaining what you attempted to do and why it succeeded or failed. As you read through these accumulating abstracts, you should come away with a better sense for what you're doing right and what you must still learn how to do better.

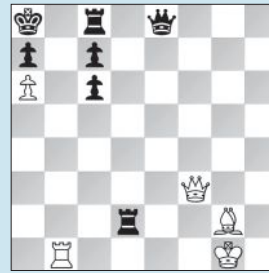
PROBLEM 1

Mating net



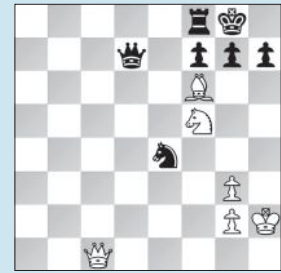
PROBLEM 2

Mating net



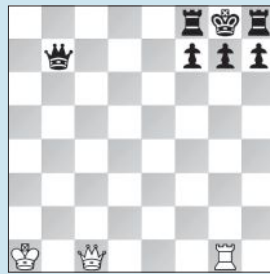
PROBLEM 3

Mating net



PROBLEM 4

Mating net



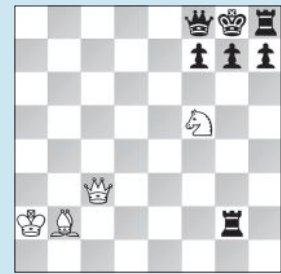
PROBLEM 5

Mating net



PROBLEM 6

Mating net



14. Bc1

Lasker avoids trading bishops, still hoping for a kingside attack. Nevertheless, Reshevsky's position is structurally solid. Advantage Black. **

14. Par Score 5 Nxc3

This exchange creates a fresh weakness in the White camp.

15. bxc3

The isolated d-pawn is gone, but now White is hampered with the hanging pawn pair at c3 and d4. **

15. Par Score 5 Nf6

Reshevsky maneuvers to occupy d5. You may accept *full credit* for 15. ... Nxe5, when 16. dxe5 Qc7 retains Black's edge.

16. a4

White tries to loosen Black's queenside. If 16. ... bxa4, there follows 17. c4, and the isolated pawn pair is now mobile. **

16. Par Score 5 Qd5

Mate is threatened, but just as logical is 16. ... Qc7 (*full credit*), pressuring the c3-pawn.

17. Nf3

Lasker thought this retreat was safer than moving the f-pawn, though both f2-f3 and f2-f4 also worked. **

17. Par Score 6 Rfc8

Black uses the king-rook to zero in on the target at c3. The queen-rook may still find action on the a-file.

18. Bb2

White's weakness is upheld, but Black's positional advantage is significant. **

18. Par Score 6 Ne4

The knight's invasion makes sense, since trading pieces increases Black's endgame superiority.

19. Rc1

White's Scotch Tape holds the position together for now, but for how long? **

19. Par Score 7 Ng5

A strong little tactic. Mate at g2 renders Black's knight immune.

20. axb5

Taking on b5 doesn't change much. Black still keeps control. **

20. Par Score 4 axb5

This simple recapture leaves White without a good answer.

21. Bxb5

Lasker takes a pawn, perhaps expecting to lose one on the kingside. **

21. Par Score 5 Nxf3+

White must allow his kingside to be ruptured, since 22. Qxf3 Qxb5 loses a bishop.

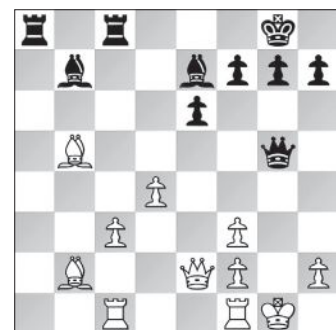
22. gxf3

Black could take back on f3, or ... **

22. Par Score 5 Qg5+

This check is decisive. If 23. Kh1, both 23. ... Qh5 and 23. ... Qg4 are crushing.

23. White resigns.



A clear, nicely played little gem by Reshevsky. ♡

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What's Old is New Again

Kuljasevic and Mendonca on the "Keymer Variation"

BY IM JOHN WATSON

T

RADITIONALLY, THE OPENING sequence 1. Nf3 d5 2. e3 hasn't attracted much interest from high-level players. The bril-

liant and unorthodox master Adolf Albin used 2. e3 in some elite level games in the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries, but for over 100 years it languished in obscurity. Over the past few years, in large part due to the successes of GM Vincent Keymer, 2. e3 has dramatically increased in popularity, including repeated use by the likes of Carlsen, Nakamura, Caruana, So, Wei Yi, and many others.

Superficially passive, 2. e3 blocks the development of the c1-bishop and neglects to acquire space, which explains its historical neglect. Nevertheless, an unprepared opponent can easily run into difficulties against it. The basic idea is that 2. e3 waits for Black to commit; after any logical reply, White can set up a position that is genuinely unbalanced. In many lines White follows with 3. c4, 4. Nc3, 5. b3, and 6. Bb2.

I suspect that some of the appeal of the "Keymer Variation" is a reaction to Black's renewed success in multiple variations of the classical Queen's Gambit Declined and Slav defenses. By delaying or not playing d2-d4, White can avoid the often extremely theoretical QGD and Slav lines that tend to peter out before the first player has the chance to set out on his or her own. With the Keymer, the play is usually less forcing and the pieces stay on the board longer.

It's remarkable to see the abundance of new theory about 2. e3 that has accumulated over such the last three years. Two e-book

products on the Keymer System appeared late last year: Davorin Kuljasevic's *Reti Opening – Repertoire for White after 1. Nf3 d5 2. e3* from Modern Chess, and Leon Mendonca's *The Keymer Variation – 1. Nf3 d5 2. e3* from ChessBase.

GM Kuljasevic (who wrote the excellent biography of Ding Liren I reviewed in the April issue) is an experienced player and author with 40 Modern Chess products to his name. Mendonca is an 18-year-old talent who achieved his Grandmaster title at age 14 and won this year's powerful Challengers section at Wijk aan Zee. Both ebooks combine video presentations with databases of theory, recommending a repertoire for White against the most likely and logical Black setups. The authors supply PGN files with their analysis, so that you get the equivalent of a small repertoire book on the opening. Mendonca's ChessBase product includes the ChessBase Opening Trainer, which makes it easy to drill with the lines and test your play; assuming that you have ChessBase, you can do similar training on Kuljasevic's PGN files by using the "replay training" function.

The authors cover the same variations with a few exceptions. Kuljasevic deals with 1. Nf3 d5 2. e3 only; the reader has to prepare answers to lines beginning with 1. ... Nf6, 1. ... c5, 1. ... f5, 1. ... g6, etc. The same applies to Mendonca's repertoire, but he makes an exception when looking at independent lines following 1. Nf3 c5 2. b3. Both authors sometimes limit their coverage of lines that are less frequently played. For example, after 1. Nf3 d5 2. e3

Bg4 3. c4, Kuljasevic looks only at 3. ... c6, Mendonca only at 3. ... e6. Mendonca covers some lines which Kuljasevic considers outside the scope of his investigation, for example, the Schlechter Slav via the order 1. Nf3 d5 2. e3 g6 3. c4 c6 4. d4 Bg7 5. Nc3 Nf6, and the sequence 1. Nf3 d5 2. e3 Nf6 3. c4 e6 4. Nc3 a6 (a type of Chebanenko Slav). Overall, Kuljasevic's coverage of the main lines tends to have more detail than Mendonca's (although not always), which might appeal to advanced players. Ideally, someone interested in using the Keymer as a weapon will want to have both products. Let's look at the most popular setup for Black, selecting just a few ideas from each author:

1. Nf3 d5 2. e3 Nf6 3. c4 e6

The Queen's Gambit Declined order, a favorite among Black players. The Semi-Slav setup 3. ... c6 4. Nc3 e6 is also very popular, when White can delay d2-d4 by 5. b3, with some surprisingly tactical consequences. One line goes 5. ... Bd6 6. Bb2 Nbd7 7. Qc2



POSITION AFTER 7. Qc2

7. ... 0-0 (7. ... e5 8. cxd5 cxd5? 9. Nb5 with

the idea 9. ... Bb8 10. Ba3! 8. Rg1!? (going for the king!) 8. ... a6 9. g4 b5 10. g5 Ne8 11. h4 bxc4 12. bxc4 Rb8 13. h5 e5! 14. cxd5 cxd5 15. Nxd5 Bb7 16. Bc4 Nb6! 17. Nf6+! gxf6 18. gxf6+ Kh8 19. Nxe5 Nxc4!? 20. Rg7! Nxe7 21. fxe7+ Kxg7 22. Nc6+ Nxb2 23. Nxd8 Ba8! 24. Rb1 Rfxd8 25. Rxb2 with White having slightly better chances due to Black's exposed king. You could write a booklet about the many possibilities for both sides with this Semi-Slav setup.

4. Nc3 Be7 5. b3 0-0 6. Bb2



A slow but unbalanced position in which things can get surprisingly tactical.

6. ... c5

My database has over 1,200 games with this move. There are 870 with 6. ... b6, when White can choose 7. cxd5 exd5 8. d4 Bb7 (there are numerous options for Black here) 9. Bd3 Nbd7 10. 0-0 c5 11. Rc1 Re8 12. Ne2! Ne4?! 13. Ne5 Bd6 14. f3 Nef6 15. f4 a6 16. Ng3 Bf8 17. Qf3 with an old-fashioned and very dangerous Pillsbury Attack in Keymer – Shuvalova, *Chess.com* 2022.

7. cxd5 Nxd5

We reach a promising version of the Tarasch Defense after 7. ... exd5 8. d4 Nc6 9. Be2.

8. Qc2 Nc6 9. a3 b6!?

Usually played, although both authors analyze alternatives such as the recently popular 9. ... Bd7, which can get exciting, e.g., 10. Bd3 h6 11. g4 Rc8?! (perhaps 11. ... Nxc3) 12. Rg1! Be8 as in Keymer – Le Quan, Biel 2022, when the variation's hero missed the remarkable 13. g5! hxg5 14. Nxd5 Qxd5 15. Rg3! g6 16. Ke2 and Black is helpless.

10. h4!

Karjakin's idea from 'way back' in 2016, threatening the brutal Nf3-g5. It is still White's favorite option.

10. ... f5!

Worse is 10. ... h6?! 11. g4! with the idea 11. ... Nxc3 12. g5!!, e.g., 12. ... Nd5 13. gxh6 f5! 14. Bxg7 Rf7 15. Rg1 Kh7 16. 0-0-0 with a great attack.

11. Rd1

This is a rich position with many possibilities. Kuljasevic likes 11. Nxd5!? exd5 12. d4 best, e.g., 12. ... Be6 (he points out 12. ... f4 as a way to muddy the waters) 13. Ba6! Rb8 14. 0-0. Mendonca gives 11. d4 cxd4 12. Nxd5 Qxd5 13. Bc4, when I think 13. ... Qd6 14. Rd1 Na5! 15. Rxd4 Qc6 should equalize.

11. ... Qe8

Here 11. ... Bb7!? may improve, when 12. Nxd5 exd5 13. Bd3 is complex.

12. Bc4! Nc7 13. h5 Bb7?! 14. h6!

White has a clear advantage. Here Keymer – Loiseau, Reykjavik 2021 finished quickly: 14. ... g5? 15. Nb5! Nxb5 16. Bxe6+ Rf7 17. Qxf5, which is winning, in view of 17. ... Kf8 18. Nxe5!.

Kuljasevic calls the following setup with 2. ... c5 the 'principled approach' against the Keymer system:

1. Nf3 d5 2. e3 c5 3. b3 Nf6

Now 3. ... Nc6 4. Bb2 (or 4. Bb5) 4. ... Nf6 5. Bb5 is a reversed Nimzo-Indian defense, which, while playable, isn't much fun for Black. Both authors cover it, Kuljasevic in great depth. And 3. ... a6 4. Bb2 Nc6 5. d4 is a reversed Queen's Indian with plenty of play and chances for Black to go wrong, as the authors show.

4. Bb2 g6

This trails 4. ... Nc6 and 4. ... e6 in popularity by a good margin, but it's arguably the best way to play.

5. c4 dxc4

After 5. ... Bg7 6. cxd5 Qxd5 7. Nc3 turns out nicely for White.

6. Bxc4 Bg7 7. d4 cxd4 8. Nxd4 0-0 9. 0-0



A position that has been well-tested in grandmaster play. With his better minor pieces, White has a tiny edge. It is probably only temporary, but the positive aspect is that most pieces will remain on the board for some time to come.

9. ... Bd7

Kuljasevic analyses 9. ... a6 10. Be2 b5 11. a4 b4 12. Nd2 Bb7 13. Bf3 Nd5! at length and says: "This is one of the few lines in this repertoire where I couldn't find too much for White to play for out of the opening." Of course, it's still a game.

10. Nd2 Nc6 11. N2f3

Kuljasevic says that White has a slight positional pull in this middlegame and shows various super-GM examples. Mendonca stops here with 11. Rc1 Rc8 12. N2f3 and gives White a small edge. IM Robert Ris in his repertoire for Black versus 1. Nf3 (another ChessBase ebook) recommends this line and shows it leading to equality. I suspect he's right, but it needn't deter either player from entering into this variation.

I am impressed by the quality of these products. The theory is clearly laid out, and in the video segments, both authors present their variations comprehensively and at a nice pace. My only misgiving is that there are fewer conceptual explanations than some students might like. Of course, the true justification for a repertoire move is precisely how it works against specific replies by the opponent, and the authors supply that information in abundance. But I suspect that less experienced readers might like more abstract verbal explanation of what the players' strategies and goals are. With that in mind, I can recommend these works to any player who is well past beginner level and already comfortable with chess theory. ♠

Kuljasevic, Davorin. Reti Opening — Repertoire for White after 1. Nf3 d5 2. e3. Downloadable text, video (four hours), and pgn available from Modern-Chess.com, 2023. €49.00.

Mendonca, Luke Leon. Fritztrainer — The Keymer Variation 1. Nf3 d5 2. e3. Downloadable video (six hours) and Chessbase files available from USCFsales.com, product code WIN0681CB. \$38.95.

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

Back in the Arena

Shaking off the rust in the rook endgame

BY GM JOEL BENJAMIN

G

M DING LIREN HAD BEEN sitting things out since winning the World Championship over GM Ian Nepomniachtchi, so

his appearance in the Tata Steel Masters in January attracted a lot of attention. His performance was rather mediocre, but he contested a particularly instructive rook ending against the strong young Dutch GM Max Warmerdam.

DON'T GO STALE

GM Max Warmerdam (2625)

GM Ding Liren (2780)

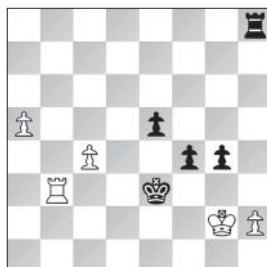
Tata Steel Masters (12), Wijk aan Zee,
01.27.2024



42. ... Rc6

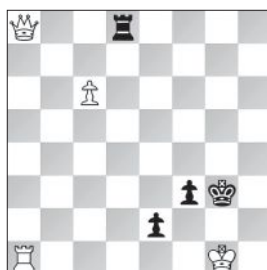
Technically this could be considered a blunder, turning a winning position into a drawable one. Yet the error is understandable, given that 42. ... Rh8! creates a lot of tactics that aren't easy to calculate. White has to hold the h-pawn, as after 43. Rxb6 Rxb6 44. Kg1 Ra2 45. Rxe6+ Kf3 Black's g-pawn produces decisive mating threats. Play continues 43. Kg2 Kxe3 44. Rxb6 e5

45. a5 f4 46. Rb3+ and Black has multiple winning moves, but they are all a bit tricky:



POSITION AFTER 46. Rb3+

(a) 46. ... Ke4 47. a6 f3+ 48. Kg1 (after 48. Kg3 Rh3+ 49. Kxg4 Rh7 the upcoming check on g7 will be crushing) 48. ... Ra8 49. Ra3 Kf4 50. c5 g3!! (Black could easily muffle this — 50. ... e4? 51. c6 g3? [51. ... Rd8 52. Ra1 e3 53. c7 Rh8 54. a7 e2 55. Ra4+ is equal] 52. hxg3+ Kxg3 53. c7 and White, against the odds, actually wins) 51. hxg3+ Kxg3 52. a7 e4 53. c6 (53. Kf1 e3 54. Rxe3 Rxa7 55. c6 Rh7 56. Kg1 Rh6 57. Rc3 Rd6 58. Rc1 Rd2 59. c7 Rg2+ 60. Kf1 Rh2 61. Ke1 f2+ 62. Ke2 f1=Q+ 63. Kxf1 Rh1+ 64. Ke2 Rxc1) 53. ... Rd8 54. Ra1 e3 55. a8=Q e2!!



POSITION AFTER 55. ... e2

White is mated by the advancing pawns or rook to the back rank.

(b) If instead 46. ... Kd4 47. a6 e4 48. a7 e3

49. Rb1 (if 49. Rb8 f3+ 50. Kg3 e2) 49. ... f3+ 50. Kg3 e2 51. Ra1 Ke3 52. Ra3+ Ke4 53. Ra1 Rh3+ 54. Kxg4 Rh8 55. a8=Q+ Rxa8 56. Rxa8 f2 and one of the pawns promotes.

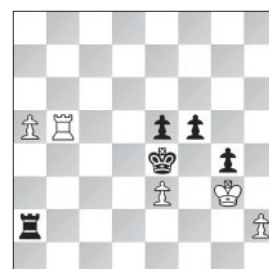
There is no way to be 100% sure of all this beyond trusting one's intuition. Ding chooses to keep control of the position, but White is still kicking.

43. Rb3!

Both 43. Rb4 and 43. Rc2 are both met decisively by ... Ke4-d3, while 43. Ke2 Rxc4 sets up a killing check.

43. ... Rxc4 44. Rxb6 e5

It is telling that Ding did not force his rook to the seventh rank here: 44. ... Rc2+ 45. Kg3 e5 46. a5! (46. Rb3 Ra2 and wins) 46. ... Ra2 (if instead 46. ... Kxe3 47. Rb3+ Ke4 48. Rb4+! Kd5 49. Ra4 and the rook behind the pawn turns the tables. Black has to go passive with his rook, allowing White to pick off Black's pawns) 47. Rb5



POSITION AFTER 47. Rb5

We have a perfect storm of luck for White. His rook protects the a5-pawn while hitting the e5-pawn, and is poised to get behind his passer if Black's rook leaves the a-file. For example, 47. ... Ra3 48. Kf2 (48. Kh4 Kxe3 49. Kg5! also holds) 48. ... Ra4 49. Kg3 Ra2

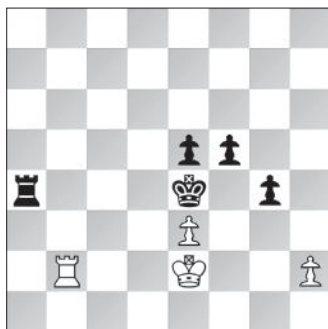
50. Rc5 Ra3 51. Kf2 f4 (what else?) 52. exf4 exf4 53. Rc4+ Ke5 54. Rc2 and White doesn't need the a-pawn anymore to hold.

45. Rb2?

Warmerdam does his own research and concludes he needs to guard the second rank. The threat is indeed stronger than the execution! We have seen that 45. a5! is correct.

45. ... Rxa4 46. Ke2

It seems at first that Black is stymied, but a little temp maneuver wrong-foots the white rook.



46. ... Rc4! 47. Ra2 Rb4 48. Rc2 Rb1 49. Ra2

White invests a whole tempo to get checking distance, as 49. Rc4+ Kd5 50. Ra4 Rb2+ 51. Kd3 e4+ wins in a walk.

49. ... Rh1 50. Ra4+ Kd5 51. e4+!

Max "warms" to the occasion (pun intended) with an ingenious trap. The alternative 51. Ra5+ Ke6 52. Ra6+ Kf7 53. Ra7+ Kf6 54. Ra6+ Kg5 offers no hope.

51. ... fxe4 52. Ke3



52. ... Rxh2??

I have to assume Ding whiffed on the stalemate trick. Here 52. ... Re1+ 53. Kf2 Rd1 wins cleanly, though White can compel a little accuracy from the champ: 54. Ra8 Rd2+ 55. Ke3 (55. Kg3 e3) 55. ... Rd3+ 56. Ke2 Rh3 57. Rd8+ Ke6 58. Re8+ Kf6 59. Rf8+ Ke7 60. Rg8 Rxh2+ 61. Ke3 Rg2 62. Rg5 (62. Kxe4 Kf6)

and now 62. ... Rg3+! (62. ... Kf6?? 63. Rf5+! the stalemate trick again produces a drawn position) 63. Kxe4 (63. Kf2 Kf6 64. Rg8 Rf3+) 63. ... Kf6 64. Rxe5 Rf3 65. Ra5 Rf1 the white king is cut off to decisive effect.

53. Ra5+ Ke6

Nothing changes with 53. ... Kd6 54. Rd5+!

54. Rxe5+ Kf6

Taking the rook is of course stalemate.

55. Ra5!

White is not home free yet. After 55. Rxe4? Kg5 56. Re8 Kh4 wins with the king cut off along the rank.

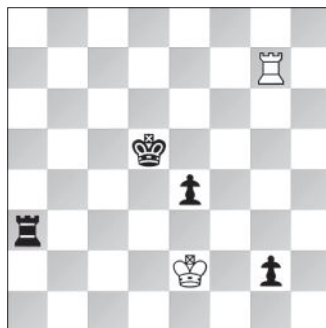
55. ... g3 56. Kf4!

Black promotes after 56. Kxe4 g2 57. Ra6+ Kg5 58. Ra8 Rh6!.

56. ... g2 57. Ra6+ Kf7 58. Ra7+ Ke6 59. Rg7 Kd5 60. Ke3 Rh3+ 61. Ke2

Or 61. Kf2 Rf3+ 62. Kxg2 Rf8 63. Ra7, leaving Black no answer to White's upcoming lateral checks.

61. ... Ra3



62. Rd7+??

This lapse is surprising after so many excellent decisions. The last draw was available with 62. Kf2 Ra2+ (or 62. ... Rf3+ 63. Ke2 Kd4 64. Rxc2 Ra3 65. Rg8 Ra2+ 66. Ke1 Kd3 67. Re8! Ke3 68. Kf1 with a textbook draw) 63. Ke3 holding.

62. ... Ke5 63. Rg7 Kf4!

Perhaps another stalemate trap 63. ... Ra1 64. Rxc2 Ra2+ 65. Ke3! was irresistible, but now Black will ensure a winning pawn ending.

64. Kf2

Now 64. ... Ra2+ 65. Kg1 e3 66. Rf7+ Kg5 67. Re7 e2 does the job, but Ding finds a more aesthetic finish.

64. ... g1=Q+!, White resigned.

Clearly hopeless is 65. Kxc1 Rg3+ 66. Rxc3 Kxc3 67. Kf1 Kf3 68. Ke1 Ke3.

I made something of a return myself, albeit with less fanfare, in the U.S. Amateur Team East. (See page 22 for our report on this tournament. ~ed.) I was able to win all my games, though my grandmaster encounter got a bit sloppy in the rook endgame. It just goes to show that over-the-board endings are an inexact science, even for endgame authors!

ENGLISH OPENING (A21)

GM Alex Fishbein (2493)

GM Joel Benjamin (2564)

Amateur Team East (5), Parsippany, 02.19.2024

1. c4 e5 2. Nc3 Bb4 3. Nd5 Bc5 4. e3 Nf6 5. b4 Nxd5 6. bxc5 Nf6 7. Nf3 Qe7 8. Be2 0-0 9. d4 exd4 10. exd4 Re8 11. Be3 b6 12. 0-0 Ng4 13. Bd3 Nxe3 14. fxe3 Nc6 15. Qb1 g6 16. d5 Ne5 17. d6 Nxf3+ 18. Rxf3 Qe5 19. dxc7 Bb7 20. e4 f5 21. Qe1 Qxc5+ 22. Kh1 Bxe4 23. Bxe4 Rxe4 24. Qd2



After surviving White's aggressive opening, I got a nearly technically winning position.

24. ... Qd4?

The right way was 24. ... Rc8 25. Qxd7 and either capture on c7 should win without many problems.

25. Qxd4 Rxd4 26. c5!

The first snag.

26. ... b5?!

The erroneous 26. ... bxc5?? 27. Rb3! is a problem, while 26. ... Rc8 27. cxb6 axb6 28. Rc3 Kf7 maintains excellent winning chances, though it's far from a knockout.

27. Ra3!

I whiffed on this move and committed a move sequence howler.

27. ... Rc4??

I have to do it the other way, with 27. ... Rc8 28. Rxa7 Rc4.

28. Rxa7?

It's counterintuitive to move the rook off the a-pawn, but after 28. Rd3! the c7-pawn, which had been sitting awaiting capture for so many moves, decides the game.

28. ... Rc8 29. h3

I noticed 29. g4!? at the time, and it probably even draws more cleanly.

29. ... Rxc5



30. Rb1??

Alex was not satisfied with this move, but with both sides feeling time pressure he couldn't work out the right path. White

needs to remove the d-pawn, and there are surprising ways to do it.

The better way forward was 30. Rd1 d5 31. a4!! (31. Ra6 R8xc7 32. Rd6 probably should hold, too) 31. ... bxa4 32. Rxa4 R8xc7 (or 32... Kf7 33. Ra6! Ke7 34. Re1+ Kd7 35. Ree6! R8xc7 36. Rad6+ Kc8 37. Re8+ Kb7 38. Red8) 33. Ra8+ Kf7 34. Rd8 and Black cannot defend his pride and joy on d5.



POSITION AFTER 34. Rd8

One line is 34. ... Ke6 35. Re1+ Kf6 36. Rd6+ Kg5 37. Rd1. The resulting three on two ending would offer few hopes of winning.

30. ... R8xc7 31. Rxc7 Rxc7 32. Rxb5 Ra7 33. Rb2

The a-pawn drops after 33. Rd5 Kf7 34. a4 Ke6 35. Rd4 d5.

33. ... Kf7

White's outside passed pawn is actually a negative, as Black can support and advance his inside passer.



34. Re2 d5 35. Kg1 Kf6 36. Kf1 d4 37. Ke1 Ra3 38. Kd1 d3 39. Rb2 Ke5 40. Kd2 Kf4 41. g4 fxg4 42. Rb4+ Kf3 43. hxg4

About the same is 43. Rxg4 Rxa2+ 44. Kxd3 Rh2 45. Rh4 h5.

43. ... g5 44. Rb7 h6 45. Rb6 Rxa2+ 46. Kxd3 Rh2 47. Rb4 Rh4, White resigned. Simplest, earning connected passers. ♡

For more of Benjamin on the endgame, check out the **Chess Life** archives at new.uschess.org/chess-life-digital-archives.



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TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

At their March 16-17, 2024 meeting, the Executive Board made the following changes to the Grand Prix program:

1. Effective April 30, 2024, the Executive Board moved to remove the temporary change to US Chess Grand Prix rules implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and to return to previous Grand Prix requirements. Motion Passed 8-0.
2. Effective immediately, the Executive Board moved to allow tournaments limited to seniors, juniors, women, or college students to be eligible for the US Chess Federation Grand Prix, provided they satisfy the other Grand Prix requirements. Motion Passed 8-0.

For complete information on the Grand Prix program, please visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

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: new.uschess.org/national-events-calendar

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

Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • HERITAGE EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2024 National Middle School (K-8) Championships

MAY 10-12, 2024, GEORGIA

Event site: Hyatt Regency Atlanta Address: 265 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30303 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: Y Organizer: Boyd Reed Email: nationalevents@uschess.org Phone: n/a Website: <http://www.uschess.org/tournaments/2024/nms> TLA ID: 41971

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

78th Annual U.S. Amateur East Championship

MAY 25-27, 2024, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Hyatt Regency New Brunswick Address: Two Albany Street New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: Y Organizer: Aaron Kiedes Email: akiedes@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://njscf.org/> TLA ID: 42115

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

2024 U.S. Women's Open

JUNE 5-6, 2024, NEVADA

Event site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino Address: 3555 Las Vegas Blvd S Las Vegas NV 89109 Overall prize fund: \$3,500 GP Points: 50 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Vegas Chess Festivals Email: vegaschess@gmail.com Phone: 702-930-9550 Website: <https://vegaschessfestival.com> TLA ID: 42475

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

2024 National Open

JUNE 5-9, 2024, NEVADA

Event site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino Address: 3555 Las Vegas Blvd S Las Vegas NV 89109 Overall prize fund: \$125,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Vegas Chess Festivals Email: vegaschess@gmail.com Phone: 702-930-9550 Website: <https://vegaschessfestival.com> TLA ID: 41728

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

124th Annual U.S. Open Championship JULY 27-AUGUST 4, 2024, VIRGINIA

Event site: Norfolk Sheraton Waterside Hotel Address: 777 Waterside Drive, Norfolk, VA 23510 Overall prize fund: \$60,000 GP Points: 300 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Boyd Reed Email: nationalevents@uschess.org

uschess.org Phone: n/a Website: <http://www.uschess.org/tournaments/2024/usopen> TLA ID: 42683

Grand Prix

The Grand Prix point totals reflect all rated event information as of December 31, 2023 for the 2023 Grand Prix.

FINAL 2023 GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

Congratulations to the 2023 Grand Prix Champion

GM JIANCHAO ZHOU

	Name	State/Ctry	Pts
1.	GM JIANCHAO ZHOU	MA	562.94
2.	GM FIDEL CORRALES JIMENEZ	NY	481.29
3.	GM MIKHAIL ANTIPOV	MO	194.33
4.	GM ARMAN MIKAELIAN	--	157.10
5.	GM RAHUL P SRIVATSHAV	--	128.74
6.	FM SHARVESH R DEVIPRASATH	TX	121.10
7.	IM SAFAL BORA	MI	115.33
8.	GM ALEXANDER FISHBEIN	TN	111.47
9.	IM JUSTIN WANG	TX	108.62
10.	GM VIKTOR MATVIISHEN	TX	106.09

2023 Awards

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

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

The Grand Prix continues in 2024. For information visit new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Cuatro de Mayo Classic MAY 4, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 9194222535 Website: n/a TLA ID: 42631

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Mother's Saturday Classic MAY 11, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 9194222535 Website: n/a TLA ID: 42632

dragonknightchess.com Phone: 9194222535 Website: n/a TLA ID: 42632

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Wake County Open Championship MAY 18, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$1,390 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 9194222535 Website: n/a TLA ID: 43076

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

11th Cherry Blossom Classic MAY 22-27, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott Address: 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles, VA 20166 Overall prize fund: \$26,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Anand Dommallapati Email: cbc2024@capitalareachess.com Phone: 703-627-5314 Website: <https://www.capitalareachess.com/cherryblossom> TLA ID: 41988

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

33rd Annual Chicago Open MAY 23-27, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 601 North Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling, IL 60090 Overall prize fund: \$100,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 41785

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

Luis Salinas Memorial 79th Annual Texas State and Amateur Championships MAY 24-27, 2024, TEXAS

Event site: DFW Airport Marriott South Address: 4151 Centrepoint D, Fort Worth, TX 76155 Overall prize fund: \$4,620 GP Points: 50 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Tom

Crane Email: trane5000@gmail.com Phone: 817-296-4287 Website: n/a TLA ID: 43138

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

92nd Massachusetts Open MAY 25-27, 2024, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Westford Regency Inn & Conference Center Address: 219 Littleton Road, Westford MA 01886 Overall prize fund: \$7,500 GP Points: 50 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Massachusetts Chess Association Email: info@masschess.org Phone: 603-891-2484 Website: <http://www.masschess.org> TLA ID: 42613

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Pre-Memorial Saturday Classic MAY 25, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 9194222535 Website: n/a TLA ID: 43059

HERITAGE EVENT • AMERICAN CLASSIC • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

44th Annual Lina Grumette Memorial Day Classic MAY 25-27, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Airtel Plaza Hotel Address: 7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406 Overall prize fund: \$17,000 GP Points: 60 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Randall Hough Email: randallough@gmail.com Phone: (626) 282-7412 Website: http://www.schess.com/tournaments_n_results/mdc/2024/2024_mdc_home.html TLA ID: 43072

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

13th Annual Chicago Open Blitz MAY 26, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 601 North Milwaukee Ave, Wheeling, IL 60090 Overall prize fund: \$2,500 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42478

PLEASE NOTE

DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

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

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

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

4th Annual Niagara Falls Open

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024, NEW YORK

Event site: Sheraton Niagara Falls Address: 300 3rd St, Niagara Falls NY 14303 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42173

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

11th Summer Solstice Open

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024, FLORIDA

Event site: Embassy Suites Hotel Address: 661 NW 53rd Street, Boca Raton, FL 33487 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 50 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: 561-302-4377 Website: <https://www.bocachess.com> TLA ID: 42704

GRAND PRIX

Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame Champions Celebration

JUNE 1-2, 2024, NEBRASKA

Event site: Graduate Hotel Address: 141 N 9th St., Lincoln, NE 68508 Overall prize fund: \$12,150 GP Points: 50 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Bruce Draney Email: gambiteer49@yahoo.com Phone: 4023126335 Website: <https://www.nebraskachess.com> TLA ID: 42343

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight International Tabletop Game Day Classic

JUNE 1, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 9194222535 Website: <http://www.dragonknightchess.com> TLA ID: 43061

GRAND PRIX

Rea Hayes Open Chess Tournament

JUNE 1, 2024, TENNESSEE

Event site: Chattanooga Christian School Address: 3354 Charger Dr., Chattanooga, TN 37409 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Travis Deere Email: TLDeere@gmail.com Phone: 423-785-6582 Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 43052

GRAND PRIX

2024 Carolinas Classic

JUNE 7-9, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Hilton Charlotte University Place Address: 8629 J M Keynes Drive, Charlotte, NC 28262 Overall prize fund: \$15,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Charlotte Chess Center Email: events@charlottechess-center.org Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.charlottechesscenter.org/events/classic> TLA ID: 42938

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

17th Annual Continental Chess Cleveland Open

JUNE 7-9, 2024, OHIO

Event site: Crowne Plaza Cleveland Airport Address: 7230 Engle Road, Middleburg Heights OH 44130 Overall prize fund: \$15,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42531

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

32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships

JUNE 7-9, 2024, CONNECTICUT

Event site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel At Bradley International Airport Address: One Airport Drive, Wind-

sor Locks CT 06096 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42489

GRAND PRIX

2024 Des Moines Open & Reserve

JUNE 7-9, 2024, IOWA

Event site: Holiday Inn Address: 6111 Fleur Drive, Des Moines, IA 50321 Overall prize fund: \$1,025 GP Points: 6 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: William J. Broich Email: broich01@yahoo.com Phone: 5152058062 Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 43124

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship

JUNE 8, 2024, NEVADA

Event site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino Address: 3555 Las Vegas Blvd S Las Vegas NV 89109 Overall prize fund: \$3,600 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Vegas Chess Festivals Email: vegaschess@gmail.com Phone: 702-930-9550 Website: <https://vegaschessfestival.com> TLA ID: 42844

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Oceans Day Classic

JUNE 8, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 9194222535 Website: <http://www.dragonknightchess.com> TLA ID: 43070

GRAND PRIX

CFCC 2024 Sunshine Open & Scholastic

JUNE 14-16, 2024, FLORIDA

Event site: Holiday Inn at Lake Buena Vista Address: 13351 State Road 535 Orlando, Florida, 32821 Overall prize fund: \$8,500 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Larry Storch Email: larrystorch8@gmail.com Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42491

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

28th Annual New York State Open

JUNE 14-16, 2024, NEW YORK

Event site: Tiki Resort Address: 2 Canada St., Lake George, NY 12845 Overall prize fund: \$3,300 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42490

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

Dragon Knight Flag/Father's Saturday Classic

JUNE 15, 2024, NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: Dragon Knight Chess Center Address: 2000 Bearcat Way, Suite 104, Morrisville, NC 27560 Overall prize fund: \$580 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Dragon Knight Chess Center Email: jon@dragonknightchess.com Phone: 9194222535 Website: <http://www.dragonknightchess.com> TLA ID: 43071

GRAND PRIX

2nd World Chess Festival

JUNE 17-20, 2024, HAWAII

Event site: Neal S. Blaisdell Center Address: 777 Ward Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96814 Overall prize fund: \$5,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Joe Hanley Email: hanleychessacademy@gmail.com Phone: 7149253195 Website: <http://www.hanleychessacademy.com> TLA ID: 42662

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2024 Chicago Summer Open

JUNE 21-23, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: DoubleTree by Hilton Lisle-Naperville Address: 3003 Corporate W Dr, Lisle, IL 60532 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: King Registration and Wilson Chess Email: bill@kingregistration.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.kingregistration.com> TLA ID: 43130

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

17th Annual Philadelphia International

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 41569

GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

2024 Castle Chess Grand Prix

JUNE 28-30, 2024, GEORGIA

Event site: Emory University - Emory Student Center Address: 605 Asbury Circle, Atlanta, GA 30322 Overall prize fund: \$12,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Castle Chess Email: tournament@castlechess.org Phone: n/a Website: <https://castlechess.org/grandprix/> TLA ID: 42413

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

18th Annual Philadelphia Open

JUNE 28-30, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 41570

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

13th Annual World Open Women's Championship!

JULY 1-2, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$2,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42670

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

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections

JULY 3-7, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$208,000 GP Points: 300 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 41566

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

13th Annual World Open Game/7 Championship

JULY 3, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$1,500 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42569

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX

26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship

JULY 5-7, 2024, CALIFORNIA, N.

Event site: Holiday Inn Express & Suites Address: 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821 Overall prize fund: \$11,000 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: John P. McCumiskey Email: sactochess@gmail.com

sbcbglobal.net Phone: 916-524-9479 Website: <https://sacramentochessclub.org> TLA ID: 42062

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

Pacific Southwest Open

JULY 5-7, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Irvine Orange County Airport Address: 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine, CA 92612 Overall prize fund: \$13,000 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Charles Ensey Email: chucnglo@aol.com Phone: (858)432-8006 Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42739

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

47th Annual Green Bay Open

JULY 6-7, 2024, WISCONSIN

Event site: Oneida Hotel (Formerly Radisson Hotel) Address: 2040 Airport Drive, Green Bay, WI 54313 Overall prize fund: \$2,545 GP Points: 15 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Luke A Ludwig Email: lukeludwig@aol.com Phone: 9204659859 Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42969

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

32nd Annual World Open Game/10 Championship

JULY 6, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$2,200 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42570

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • REGIONALS

35th Annual World Open Blitz Championship

JULY 7, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$3,000 GP Points: 30 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42571

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

29th Annual Pacific Coast Open

JULY 19-21, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Orange County Airport Address: 18800 MacArthur Blvd, Irvine CA 92612 Overall prize fund: \$30,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42922

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

17th Annual Chicago Class Championships

JULY 19-21, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel Address: 601 N Milwaukee Avenue, Wheeling IL 60090 Overall prize fund: \$30,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42770

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

32nd Annual Southern Open

JULY 19-21, 2024, FLORIDA

Event site: Wyndham Orlando Resort Address: 8001 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42771

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

25th Annual Pittsburgh Open

JULY 26-28, 2024, PENNSYLVANIA

Event site: Doubletree Green Tree Hotel Address: 500 Mansfield Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15205 Overall prize

fund: \$13,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 43154

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

29th Annual Bradley Open

JULY 26-28, 2024, CONNECTICUT

Event site: Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley International Airport Address: 1 Bradley Airport, Windsor Locks CT 06096 Overall prize fund: \$15,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: director@chess.us Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 43155

GRAND PRIX

11th Annual Washington International

AUGUST 10-14, 2024, MARYLAND

Event site: Rockville Hilton Address: 21750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852 Overall prize fund: \$40,650 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michael W Regan Email: mregan@stsci.edu Phone: 4104195130 Website: <https://mdchess.com> TLA ID: 42528

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • GRAND PRIX

96th Wisconsin Closed Championship / Marshall Rohland Memorial

AUGUST 16-18, 2024, WISCONSIN

Event site: Holiday Inn - Manitowoc Address: 4601 Calumet Ave., Manitowoc, WI 54220 Overall prize fund: \$4,500 GP Points: 40 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: Y Organizer: Terran Chess Federation Email: terranchess@gmail.com Phone: 920-279-5688 Website: <http://www.terranchess.com> TLA ID: 41708

Regional

ALABAMA

JUNE 1, 2024

Rea Hayes Open Chess Tournament (TN)

See Grand Prix.

ARIZONA

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-6, 2024

2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 7, 2024

Youth Trophy Tournament (NV)

See Nevada.

JUNE 5-9, 2024

2024 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 8, 2024

International Youth Championship (NV)

See Nevada.

JULY 5-7, 2024

26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 19-21, 2024

29th Annual Pacific Coast Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

ARKANSAS

MAY 24-27, 2024

Luis Salinas Memorial 79th Annual Texas State and Amateur Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix.

CALIFORNIA

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 24-27, 2024

2024 Memorial Day Championship

Event site: Santa Clara Convention Center Address: 5001 Great America Pkwy, Santa Clara, CA 95035 Overall prize fund: \$6,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: BayAreaChess Email: events@bayareachess.com Phone: 408.409.6596 (voicemail/text only) Website: <http://www.bayareachess.com> TLA ID: 43057

MAY 25-27, 2024

44th Annual Lina Grumette Memorial Day Classic (CA-S)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 25, 2024

MDC Scholastics

Event site: Airtel Plaza Hotel Address: 7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406 Overall prize fund: Trophies Only GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Randall Hough Email: randallhough@gmail.com Phone: (626) 282-7412 Website: http://www.scchess.com/calendar_kids.html TLA ID: 43125

MAY 26, 2024

MDC Blitz

Event site: Airtel Plaza Hotel Address: 7277 Valjean Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91406 Overall prize fund: See online TLA GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Randall Hough Email: randallhough@gmail.com Phone: (626) 282-7412 Website: <http://www.scchess.com> TLA ID: 43073

JUNE 5-6, 2024

2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 5-9, 2024

2024 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 7, 2024

Youth Trophy Tournament (NV)

See Nevada.

JUNE 8, 2024

Walter Browne Memorial National Open Blitz Championship (NV)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 8, 2024

International Youth Championship (NV)

See Nevada.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 5-7, 2024

26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 5-7, 2024

Pacific Southwest Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 19-21, 2024

29th Annual Pacific Coast Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

COLORADO

JUNE 1-2, 2024

Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame Champions Celebration (NE)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-6, 2024

2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 5-9, 2024

2024 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

CONNECTICUT

MAY 18, 2024

1st Greater Baystate Spring Classic (MA)

See Massachusetts.

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

11th Summer Solstice Open (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 7-9, 2024

32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 14-16, 2024

28th Annual New York State Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

29th Annual Bradley Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

DELAWARE

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

DIST. OF COLUMBIA

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

FLORIDA

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 14-16, 2024

CFCC 2024 Sunshine Open & Scholastic (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 19-21, 2024

32nd Annual Southern Open (FL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

GEORGIA

APRIL 8, 2024-MONTHLY ON SATURDAY

Pizza Scholastic

Event site: The Boardroom Address: 1675 Peachtree Pkwy, Suite #180, Cumming Georgia 30041 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: ThinkChess, LLC Email: info@myThinkChess.com Phone: 770.744.8595 Website: <https://mythinkchess.com/> TLA ID: 37216

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

11th Summer Solstice Open (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 1, 2024

Rea Hayes Open Chess Tournament (TN)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 19-21, 2024

32nd Annual Southern Open (FL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

IDAHO

JUNE 5-6, 2024

2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 5-9, 2024

2024 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

JULY 5-7, 2024

26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)

See Grand Prix.

ILLINOIS

MAY 11, 2024

Caveman May 3x3

Event site: Regus Address: 1222 S Prospect Ave, Park Ridge, IL 60068 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kevin Bachler Email: contact@cavemanchess.com Phone: 224-985-5245 Website: <https://www.cavemanchess.com/> TLA ID: 42750

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

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

MAY 26, 2024

13th Annual Chicago Open Blitz (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

11th Summer Soltice Open (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 1, 2024

Caveman BOM June 3x3 Pas de Prix

Event site: Regus Address: 1222 S Prospect Ave, Park Ridge, IL 60068 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kevin Bachler Email: contact@cavemanchess.com Phone: 224-985-5245 Website: <https://www.cavemanchess.com/> TLAID: 42782

JUNE 7-9, 2024

Late Spring Swiss (MI)

See Michigan.

JUNE 21-23, 2024

2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 29, 2024

Caveman EOM June 3x3 Pas de Prix

Event site: Regus Address: 1222 S Prospect Ave, Park Ridge, IL 60068 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kevin Bachler Email: contact@cavemanchess.com Phone: 224-985-5245 Website: <https://www.cavemanchess.com/> TLAID: 42784

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 19-21, 2024

17th Annual Chicago Class Championships (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

INDIANA

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 7-9, 2024

Late Spring Swiss (MI)

See Michigan.

JUNE 21-23, 2024

2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 19-21, 2024

17th Annual Chicago Class Championships (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

IOWA

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 1-2, 2024

Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame Champions Celebration (NE)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-23, 2024

2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)

See Grand Prix.

KANSAS

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 1-2, 2024

Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame Champions Celebration (NE)

See Grand Prix.

LOUISIANA

MAY 24-27, 2024

Luis Salinas Memorial 79th Annual Texas State and Amateur Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix.

MARYLAND

MARYLAND CHESS TOURNAMENTS (NORTH PENN CHESS CLUB)

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

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

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

11th Summer Soltice Open (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 8, 2024

MCA Baltimore Quads for K-12

Event site: Jewish Community Center of Greater Baltimore Address: 3506 Gwynnbrook Ave, Suite 148, Owings Mills, MD 21117 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Magnus Chess Academy Email: diyanshu@chessacademy.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://chessacademy.com/tournaments> TLAID: 39043

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

33rd annual CHICAGO OPEN

May 23-27, 24-27 or 25-27, 2024 - Memorial Day weekend - see chessevents.us
7 sections, prizes \$100,000 unconditionally guaranteed!
Westin Chicago North Shore Hotel, 601 North Milwaukee Ave., Wheeling IL 60090

Open section, 5/23-27: 9 rounds, 40/80, SD/30, d30.
U2300 through U1300 sections: 5/24-27 or 25-27: 7 rounds, 40/80, SD/30, d30 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/60 d10). All merge & play for same prizes in section. Free parking.

Open: \$10000-5000-2500-1300-1000-900-700-600-500-500, clear or tiebreak first \$300 bonus, top FIDE U2400/unr \$2000-1000-400. FIDE rated, GM and IM norms possible.

U2300, U2100, U1900, U1700 Sections:

Each \$5000-2500-1200-800-600-500-400-400-400-300.

U2300 & U2100 sections are also FIDE rated.

U1500: \$4000-2000-1000-700-500-400-400-400-300.

U1300: \$3000-1500-1000-700-500-400-400-400-300, top rated Under 1100 \$1000-600-400.

FIDE ratings used for Open, May 2024 Official USCF for others. Unofficial USCF ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. **Cannot play below** Online Regular Rating - 100 points.

If **post-event Regular OTB** or Regular Online rating posted 5/23/23-5/23/24 or current Regular Online rating is more than 40 pts over section maximum, prize limit \$800.

Under 26 games prize limit (as of May 2024 Official Rating list): U1300 \$1000, U1500 \$1500, U1700 \$2000, U1900 \$2500.

Unrated prize limits: U1300 \$300, U1500 \$400, U1700 \$600, U1900 \$800, U2100 \$1200.

Mixed Doubles: male/female combined score, any section \$2000-1000-500-400-300. See chessevents.us.

Entry fee: \$207 at chessaction.com by 3/19, \$227 by 5/22, \$250 online later or at site until 1 hour before round 1 (no checks). Open Section \$500 extra to US players below 2200 USCF and below 2000 FIDE. Senior 65+/up \$100 less. Online EF \$5 less to ICA members (join ICA at il-chess.org). Titled player entry: see chessevents.us. **Refunds,** \$15 service charge. **Re-entry** \$100 (no Open to Open).

Open titled minimum prizes: see chessevents.us. **1/2-pt byes:** limit 3 (2 last 4 rds); must commit before rd 3.

5-day schedule (Open only): enter Thu to 6 pm, rds Thu 7 pm, Fri 1 & 7, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 4.

4-day schedule (U2300 to U1300): enter Fri to 6 pm, rds Fri 7, Sat 11 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 4.

3-day schedule (U2300 to U1300): enter Sat to 9 am, rds Sat 10, 1:30 & 5, Sun 10 & 4, Mon 10 & 4.

Hotel rates: 1-4 in room \$130, use link at chessevents.us or 847-777-6500, reserve by 5/11, may sell out before.

USCF membership required, see chessevent.us for special dues rates if paid online with entry.

Bring set, board, clock if possible- none supplied. No cellphone possession during play (in bag near table OK). See devicerules.com for more electronic device rules.

Email: director@chess.us.

Entry: chessaction.com. No mailed entry.

\$2500 Blitz tournament, Sunday 10 pm (enter by 9:00).

JULY 1-2, 2024

13th Annual World Open Women's Championship! (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 18, 2024

1st Greater Baystate Spring Classic

Event site: St. John's Lutheran Church **Address:** 360 Broad Street, Westfield, MA 01085 **Overall prize fund:** \$930 b/30 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Greater Baystate Chess Association **Email:** greater.baystate.chess@gmail.com **Phone:** (413)-356-0303 **Website:** <https://www.greaterbaystatechess.com> **TLA ID:** 42503

MAY 22-27, 2024

92nd Massachusetts Open (MA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

JUNE 1-2, 2024

7th Massachusetts Senior Open

Event site: Boylston Chess Club **Address:** 35 Kingston St. Unit 1, Boston MA 02111 **Overall prize fund:** \$500 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Massachusetts Chess Association **Email:** info@masschess.org **Phone:** 603-891-2484 **Website:** <http://www.masschess.org> **TLA ID:** 43113

JUNE 7-9, 2024

32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 14-16, 2024

28th Annual New York State Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

2nd Annual World Open Junior Championship (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

14th Annual World Open Senior Amateur (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

29th Annual Bradley Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

MICHIGAN

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 7-9, 2024

Late Spring Swiss

Event site: Best Western - Okemos/East Lansing **Address:** 2209 University Park Drive, Okemos, MI 48864 **Overall prize fund:** \$3,500 **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Edward Mandell **Email:** eman.1943@aol.com **Phone:** 2486352375 **Website:** <http://www.okemoschess.com> **TLA ID:** 43116

JUNE 7-9, 2024

17th Annual Continental Chess Cleveland Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MINNESOTA

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MISSOURI

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 26, 2024

13th Annual Chicago Open Blitz (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 1-2, 2024

Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame Champions Celebration (NE)

See Grand Prix

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEBRASKA

JUNE 1-2, 2024

Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame Champions Celebration (NE)

See Grand Prix.

NEVADA

JUNE 5-6, 2024

2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)

See National Events.

JULY 5-7, 2024

26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)

See Grand Prix

JUNE 6, 2024

National Open Action Quads

Event site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino **Address:** 3555 Las Vegas Blvd S Las Vegas NV 89109 **Overall prize fund:** see TLA **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Vegas Chess Festivals **Email:** vegaschess@gmail.com **Phone:** 702-930-9550 **Website:** <https://vegaschessfestival.com> **TLA ID:** 42845

JUNE 7, 2024

Youth Trophy Tournament

Event site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino **Address:** 3555 Las Vegas Blvd S Las Vegas NV 89109 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Vegas Chess Festivals **Email:** vegaschess@gmail.com **Phone:** 702-930-9550 **Website:** <https://vegaschessfestival.com> **TLA ID:** 42841

JUNE 8, 2024

International Youth Championship

Event site: Flamingo Las Vegas Hotel & Casino **Address:** 3555 Las Vegas Blvd S Las Vegas NV 89109 **Overall prize fund:** see online TLA **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Vegas Chess Festivals **Email:** vegaschess@gmail.com **Phone:** 702-930-9550 **Website:** <https://vegaschessfestival.com> **TLA ID:** 42843

JULY 19-21, 2024

29th Annual Pacific Coast Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

MAY 18, 2024

1st Greater Baystate Spring Classic (MA)

See Massachusetts.

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

NEW JERSEY

JANUARY 14-DECEMBER 31, 2024

Hamilton Chess Club Quads

Dates: Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 9, Apr. 20, May 18, Jun. 8, Aug. 17, Sep. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Dec. 21. **Event site:** Switlik Park Pavilion **Address:** Fischer Place/Joe Dimaggio Drive, Hamilton, NJ 08610 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** N **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Edward Sytnik **Email:** edmendou@aol.com **Phone:** 609- 351- 2437 text **Website:** <http://hamiltonchessclub.com> **TLA ID:** 40988

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 25, 2024

2024 US Amateur East K-8 Scholastic

Event site: Hyatt Regency New Brunswick **Address:** Two Albany Street New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901 **Overall prize fund:** n/a **GP Points:** n/a **FIDE Rated:** N **Handicap accessible:** Y **Residency restriction:** N **Organizer:** Aaron Kiedes **Email:** akiedes@gmail.com **Phone:** n/a **Website:** <https://njscj.org/> **TLA ID:** 42116

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

11th Summer Solstice Open (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 7-9, 2024

32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 14-16, 2024

28th Annual New York State Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 21-23, 2024

2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

2nd Annual World Open Junior Championship (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

13th Annual World Open Women's Championship! (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

14th Annual World Open Senior Amateur (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

NEW MEXICO

JUNE 5-6, 2024

2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 5-9, 2024

2024 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

NEW YORK

MAY 18, 2024

1st Greater Baystate Spring Classic (MA)

See Massachusetts.

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

4th Annual Niagara Falls Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 7-9, 2024

32nd Annual Eastern Class Championships (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 14-16, 2024

28th Annual New York State Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

2nd Annual World Open Junior Championship (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

13th Annual World Open Women's Championship! (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

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

JULY 1-2, 2024

14th Annual World Open Senior Amateur (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

25th Annual Pittsburgh Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

29th Annual Bradley Open (CT)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

➡ NORTH CAROLINA

MAY 4, 2024

Dragon Knight Cuatro de Mayo Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 11, 2024

Dragon Knight Mother's Saturday Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 18, 2024

Wake County Open Championship (NC)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 25, 2024

Dragon Knight Pre-Memorial Saturday Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

11th Summer Soltice Open (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 1, 2024

Dragon Knight International Tabletop Game Day Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 1, 2024

Orchard Lake XXVI

Event site: Orchard Lake Campground Address: 460 Orchard Lake Rd, Saluda, NC 28773 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kevin J Hyde Email: chess@achievementtesting.info Phone: n/a Website: <https://achievementtesting.info/chess/> TLA ID: 42876

JUNE 8, 2024

Dragon Knight Oceans Day Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 15, 2024

Dragon Knight Flag/Father's Saturday Classic (NC)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

➡ OHIO

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

4th Annual Niagara Falls Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 7-9, 2024

Late Spring Swiss (MI)

See Michigan.

JUNE 7-9, 2024

17th Annual Continental Chess Cleveland Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

25th Annual Pittsburgh Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

➡ OKLAHOMA

MAY 24-27, 2024

Luis Salinas Memorial 79th Annual Texas State and Amateur Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix.

➡ OREGON

JUNE 5-6, 2024

2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)

See National Events.

JULY 5-7, 2024

26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)

See Grand Prix

➡ PENNSYLVANIA

North Penn Chess Club

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

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

4th Annual Niagara Falls Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

11th Summer Soltice Open (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 7-9, 2024

17th Annual Continental Chess Cleveland Open (OH)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 26-27 2024

16th Annual World Open Under 13 Championship (PA)

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [215-699-8418](tel:2156998418) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42674

JUNE 28-30, 2024

18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JUNE 28-30, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$17,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [215-699-8418](tel:2156998418) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 41567

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JULY 1-2, 2024

2nd Annual World Open Junior Championship

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$5,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [215-699-8418](tel:2156998418) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42668

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

JULY 1-2, 2024

3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$3,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [215-699-8418](tel:2156998418) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42669

JULY 1-2, 2024

14th Annual World Open Senior Amateur

Event site: Philadelphia Sheraton Downtown Hotel Address: 201 North 17th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103 Overall prize fund: \$1,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: director@chess.us Phone: [215-699-8418](tel:2156998418) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com> TLA ID: 42671

JULY 1-2, 2024

13th Annual World Open Women's Championship! (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 3, 2024

13th Annual World Open Game/7 Championship (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6, 2024

32nd Annual World Open Game/10 Championship (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 7, 2024

35th Annual World Open Blitz Championship (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 26-28, 2024

25th Annual Pittsburgh Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

➡ RHODE ISLAND

MAY 18, 2024

1st Greater Baystate Spring Classic (MA)

See Massachusetts.

➡ SOUTH CAROLINA

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

➡ SOUTH DAKOTA

JUNE 1-2, 2024

Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame Champions Celebration (NE)

See Grand Prix

➡ TENNESSEE

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

➡ TEXAS

FEBRUARY 18, 2024- WEEKLY

CYGA Academy Sunday USCF-Rated Tournament

Event site: CYGA Academy Address: 4920 River Falls Drive, Sugarland, TX 77479 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Wei Yang Email: contact@cyga-academy.org Phone: 281-832-6159 Website: n/a TLA ID: 42647

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 24-27, 2024

Luis Salinas Memorial 79th Annual Texas State and Amateur Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 5-6, 2024

2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 5-9, 2024

2024 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

UTAH

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023-ONGOING WEEKLY

Chess Knight

Event site: Kiln (Lehi) Address: 2701 N Thanksgiving Way #100, Lehi, UT 84043 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Rob Harker Email: utahchessknight@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: n/a TLAID: 39726

JUNE 5-6, 2024

2024 U.S. Women's Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 5-9, 2024

2024 National Open (NV)

See National Events.

JUNE 7, 2024

Youth Trophy Tournament (NV)

See Nevada.

JUNE 8, 2024

International Youth Championship (NV)

See Nevada.

JULY 5-7, 2024

26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)

See Grand Prix

VERMONT

MAY 18, 2024

1st Greater Baystate Spring Classic (MA)

See Massachusetts.

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

VIRGINIA

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

MAY 23-27, 2024

33rd Annual Chicago Open (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

11th Summer Solstice Open (FL)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 1, 2024

MCA Arlington Quads for K-12

Event site: Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington Address: 4444 Arlington Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22204 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Magnus Chess Academy Email: divyanshu@chessacademy.com Phone: n/a Website: <https://chessacademy.com/tournaments> TLAID: 39040

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

JUNE 7-9, 2024

2024 Virginia Senior Open

Event site: Country Inn & Suites by Radisson Address: 10358 Patriot Highway, Fredericksburg, VA 22408 Overall prize fund: \$2,000 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Hoffpauir, NTD/IA Email: mhoffpauir@aol.com Phone: 7578464805 Website: <https://www.vachess.org> TLAID: 42109

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2024

17th Annual Philadelphia International (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

18th Annual Philadelphia Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JUNE 28-30, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, Under 1200 and Under 1000 Sections (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

3rd Annual World Open Amateur Championship (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

13th Annual World Open Women's Championship! (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 1-2, 2024

14th Annual World Open Senior Amateur (PA)

See Pennsylvania or chessevents.us.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 10-14, 2024

11th Annual Washington International (MD)

See Grand Prix.

WASHINGTON

JUNE 8, 2024

International Youth Championship (NV)

See Nevada.

JULY 5-7, 2024

26th Annual Sacramento Chess Championship (CA-N)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 19-21, 2024

29th Annual Pacific Coast Open (CA-S)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

WEST VIRGINIA

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

WISCONSIN

MAY 22-27, 2024

11th Cherry Blossom Classic (VA)

See Grand Prix.

JUNE 21-23, 2024

2024 Chicago Summer Open (IL)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 3-7, 2024

52nd Annual World Open, top 6 sections (PA)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

JULY 6-7, 2024

47th Annual Green Bay Open (WI)

See Grand Prix.

JULY 19-21, 2024

17th Annual Chicago Class Championships (IL)

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

AUGUST 16-18, 2024

96th Wisconsin Closed Championship / Marshall Rohland Memorial (WI)

See Grand Prix.

WYOMING

JUNE 1-2, 2024

Nebraska Chess Hall of Fame Champions Celebration (NE)

See Grand Prix.

GAME ON.

Norfolk, Virginia



124th U.S. OPEN

July 27 - August 4, 2024

For full information including updates, schedules, meetings, and other special events and happenings please see uschess.org/tournaments/2024/usopen/.



NATIONAL OPEN

JUNE 5-9 (OPEN ONLY), 6-9, 7-9, OR 8-9

\$125,000 GUARANTEED PRIZE FUND

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(MAP)

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PCT GAIN STANDINGS

State	Dec20	Dec21	PCT
SD	81	172	112.35
WY	68	134	97.06
KS	402	776	93.03
DC	260	497	91.15
RI	215	409	90.23
SC	556	1,043	87.59
HI	162	296	82.72
ID	239	422	76.57
CO	952	1,607	68.80
AZ	1,293	2,162	67.21

Name	State	Count	Name	State	Count	Name	State	Count
Overall Affiliate Standings			State Chapter Affiliate Standings			Scholastic and Youth Membership Standings		
CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOCIATION	NY	1,714	MICHIGAN CHESS ASSOCIATION	MI	222	CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOCIATION	NY	715
PAPERCLIP PAIRINGS	TX	431	WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	221	PAPERCLIP PAIRINGS	TX	430
BAY AREA CHESS	CA	303	MARYLAND CHESS ASSOCIATION	MD	65	BAY AREA CHESS	CA	237
SAN DIEGO CHESS CLUB	CA	294	MASSACHUSETTS CHESS ASSOC.	MA	58	BOCA RATON CHESS CLUB	FL	221
BOCA RATON CHESS CLUB	FL	263	MINNESOTA STATE CHESS ASSOC.	MN	57	WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	179
CHESS CLUB & SCHOLASTIC CENTER	MO	224	UTAH CHESS ASSOCIATION	UT	56	BERKELEY CHESS SCHOOL	CA	166
MICHIGAN CHESS ASSOCIATION	MI	222	TENNESSEE CHESS ASSOCIATION	TN	49	MICHIGAN CHESS ASSOCIATION	MI	160
WASHINGTON CHESS FEDERATION	WA	221	NORTH DAKOTA CHESS ASSOC.	ND	47	NEW ENGLAND CHESS SCHOOL	MA	143
BERKELEY CHESS SCHOOL	CA	191	NEW JERSEY STATE CHESS FED.	NJ	45	ROCKS & ROOKS CHESS CLUB	TX	117
SOUTH MIAMI CHESS CLUB	FL	172	MAINE CHESS ASSOCIATION	ME	42	CINCINNATI SCHOLASTIC CHESS	OH	117
Small State Affiliate Standings			Adult Membership Standings			Member Standings		
NORTH DAKOTA CHESS ASSOC.	ND	47	CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOCIATION	NY	990	WILLIAM GOICHBERG	NY	3
MAINE CHESS ASSOCIATION	ME	42	SAN DIEGO CHESS CLUB	CA	202	STEVEN JOSEFOWICZ	NY	3
HARRISON COUNTY CHESS CLUB	WV	28	CHESS CLUB & SCHOLASTIC CENTER	MO	186	DAMIAN NASH	HI	2
NEW MEXICO CHESS ORGANIZATION	NM	24	ROCHESTER CHESS CENTER	NY	90	BENNY N. ORMSON	OK	2
LIKENS CHESS	SD	23	CHESSPALACE	CA	83			
TOURNAMENT IN A NOX	NH	21	DOWNRIVER CHESS CLUB	LA	70			
WVSCA	WV	21	MARSHALL CHESS CLUB	NY	69			
NEW HAMPSHIRE CHESS ASSOC.	NH	18	BAY AREA CHESS	CA	64			
KNIGHTS CHESS CLUB	NH	16	MICHIGAN CHESS ASSOCIATION	MI	62			
OCEAN STATE CHESS ASSOCIATION	RI	15	SOUTH MIAMI CHESS CLUB	FL	59			



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www.coramdeoacademy.org/chess

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www.evangelchurch.me

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7-Player Championship Events

2024 Golden Knights (Postal) | 2024 Electronic Knights

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on order entries received. Players start in Preliminary round and qualify for Semi-final and then Final rounds based on scores in previous round. **ENTRY FEE:** \$35 per entry. Players can enter up to a maximum of 10 times per event. **PRIZES:** Prize fund of \$2300 based on 200 entries. \$15 correspondence chess gift certificate to players knocked out in Preliminary round.

7-Player Round Robins

Victor Palciauskas Tournament (ICCF Server)

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as single round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives a signed certificate.

4-Player Quads

John W. Collins Memorial (Postal) | Walter Muir E-Quads (ICCF Server)

FORMAT: Players play 6 games as double round robin, groupings based on ratings. **ENTRY FEE:** \$10 per entry. **PRIZES:** 1st place receives \$25 correspondence chess gift certificate and signed certificate.

2-Player Matches (Postal or Email)

FORMAT: Players play either 2, 4, or 6 games against the same opponent. Selecting multiple options may facilitate faster pairings. Pairings based on ratings or players may name their own opponent. **ENTRY FEE:** \$5 per entry. **PRIZES:** None.

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o Class B: 1500-1999	o Class D: 1399 and below
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- ☐ Golden Knights EF: \$35
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 2-player matches, EF: \$5 per entry, see above for options
☐ Electronic Knights EF: \$35
 ☐ Collins Quad EF: \$10
 Postal Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐
 Email Match: 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐
☐ Check here if you do not wish to have an opponent who is incarcerated (note that this may slow down your assignment).

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PAGE 13 CHESS TO ENJOY

PROBLEM 1. 31. ... Ra8! threatens 32. ... Rxc1+! 33. Kxg1 Rh8 and 34. ... Rh1 mate. **PROBLEM 2.** 33. ... Bxg3+! wins following 34. Bxg3 Rxf1 or 34. Kg1 Bxh3. After 34. Kxg3 he has a choice of wins: 34. ... Rf3+, 34. ... Bxh3 or 34. ... Qe5+, i.e. 35. Kxg4 Qg5 mate, or 35. Kg2 Bf3+. **PROBLEM 3.** 46. ... Rxc3! so that 47. Qxc3 Bf4 or 47. Kxg3 Bf4+ 48. Kg4 Qc7 (with the idea ... Qc7-g7+) wins the queen. White resigned after 47. Qxb6 Bf4 48. Rf2 Rg2+ 49. Kh1 Rg8+. But the mating 49. ... Rh2+ is faster. **PROBLEM 4.** 21. f4! wins the queen after 21. ... Qh6 (or 21. ... Qh4 22. Bxg7! Kxg7 23. Rh5) 22. Bxg7! Qxc7 23. Rg5. The game went 21. ... Qe7 22. Bxh7+? Kxh7 23. Qh5+ Kg8 24. Bxg7 f5! 25. Be5 Nc4?? 26. Qg6+ and Black resigned. But 25. ... Qh7! defends. Correct was 22. Bxg7! Kxg7 23. Rg5+ Kh8 24. Bxh7! and wins. **PROBLEM 5.** 28. ... Qxf4 29. Nxf4 Rxd4 and White resigned. If 30. Qf5 Rxf4 31. Qxf4 e2 and Black promotes. **PROBLEM 6.** 32. Rxd4! Qxd4 33. Bxg5! Qa7 34. Nxd5+ Kd7 35. Qb5+ and mates. Or 33. ... Qxd1+ 34. Qxd1 hxc5 35. Qd4! followed by Qd4-a7+ or Qd4-c5+.

PAGE 21 MAKE YOUR MOVE

TACTIC 1. After 11. ... e4! White resigned, as the queen cannot keep guarding the c3-knight while successfully getting out of the fork from the e4-pawn. (Saine – Lu Miaoyi, Reykjavik Open 2024) **TACTIC 2.** 19. ... Qxf2+! and White resigned on account of 19. ... Qxf2+! 20. Qxf2 h2+ 21. Kxh2 Rxf2 and Black has a winning position. (Beisteiner – Sachdev, Reykjavik Open 2024) **TACTIC 3.** 18. Bxc6! The onslaught begins. 18. ... Bxc6 19. Rcl1 Nab8 No choice but to defend the bishop. 20. Qa3+! Suddenly White is hitting Black's king on the diagonal. 20. ... Kf6 Or 20. ... Ke8 21. Ne4 Qa6 22. Qxa6 Nxa6 23. Rxc6 and White is winning. 21. Rxc6 Qxc6 Or 21. ... Nxc6 22. Ne4+ Kf5 23. Qf3 mate. 22. Nxc6 Nxc6 23. Qf3+ and Black resigned. (Kistrup – Saine, Reykjavik Open 2024) **TACTIC 4.** 21. Nxf7! Nxf7 Or 21. ... Qxb3 22. Nxd6+ Rxd6 23. axb3 Rdd8 24. Be3 and White has won a pawn, the better pawn structure, and a decisive advantage. Also 21. ... c4 22. Nxd6+ wins easily. 22. Qxe6+ Rd7 23. Qb6 Or 23. c4 Bc6 24. b3, and White wins. 23. ... Rhd8 24. b3 Qa3 25. Bf5 and Black resigned in Harish – Garifullina, Reykjavik Open 2024. **TACTIC 5.** 22. e6! After this move, Black's position immediately starts crumbling. 22. ... Rxe6 Or 22. ... Qc7 23. Qf5 Nh8 24. Rab1 and White completely dominates the board. 23. Rxe6 Qxe6 24. Qxb7 Qc8 25. Rb1 Nf4 It was better to play 25. ... Rb8 26. Qxc8+ Rxc8 27. Rb7 Bb8 28. g3 and White has a clear advantage thanks to Black's passive pieces. 26. Ne5! In the game, White won after 26. Kf1 f6 27. Bd6 Ne6 28. Qxc8+ Rxc8 29. Rb7 Ra8 30. Re7 Nd8 31. Re8+ Kf7 32. Rf8+ Ke6 33. Bc7 Ke7 34. Rg8 Rc8 35. Bxa5 Bb8 36. Nh4 Bc7 37. Rxc7+ Nf7 38. Nf5+ Ke6 39. Bxc7 and Black resigned in Cieslak – Mammadzada (Reykjavik Open, 2024). 26. ... Ne2+ 27. Kh1 Qxb7 28. Rxb7 Nxc3 29. Nxc6 and White wins easily. **TACTIC 6.** 22. ... Rxc3! 23. Nxe5 After 23. fxc3, White's positions completely falls apart: 23. ...



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Nf5 24. Qc1 Nxc3+ 25. Kh2 e4, threatening ... Ng3-f1+ followed by ... Qd6-h2+ and ... Nf1-g3 mate. 23. ... Qxe5 24. Rbe1 Here 24. fxc3 Nf5 immediately decides. 24. ... Qg5 25. Qxg5 Rxc5 26. Rxe6 Re5 27. Re1 Rxe1+ 28. Rxe1 Nf5 29. c3 Re7 and White resigned. (Karamsetty – Thorhallsson, Reykjavik Open 2024) **TACTIC 7.** 20. ... d4! 21. Bxb7 Qxb7 22. Nxd4 Ng5! This was the point behind the pawn sacrifice: White is hopelessly weak on the light squares and is lost. 23. h4 Or 23. e4 Nfxe4 24. Qd5 Nh3+ 25. Kg2 Nhx2 and Black is winning. 23. ... Nh3+ 24. Kf1 Qh1+ 25. Ke2 Qg2 26. Rf1 Nh5 There is no good defense against ... Nh5xc3+. 27. Ke1 Nxc3 28. fxc3 Rxe3+ 29. Nde2 d5 30. Qxd5 and White resigned without waiting for Black's response. (Markuszewski – Xu Xiangyu, Reykjavik Open 2024) **TACTIC 8.** 21. ... Qg6! 22. hxc4 Rxc2+! Boom! Black's attack crashes through with brutality. 23. Kxc2 Nxc4 24. Qe2 Or 24. Kf1 Rf8+. 24. ... Rf8 25. Rf1 Nf2+ 26. Kh2 Qh6+ and, facing mate, White resigned. (Brackmann – Dauner, Reykjavik Open 2024) **TACTIC 9.** 35. ... Re2!! Only like this does Black manage to get his counterplay to hit in timely fashion. In the game, Black missed his chance and lost after 35. ... Qa7?? 36. Bxf8 Nxf8 37. Ng4 Qe7 38. Nf6+ Kh8 39. Rxd3 Qb4 40. Kg2 Ra2 41. Rd8 Rxf2+ 42. Kh3 and Black resigned in Sanal – Jin Yueheng, Reykjavik Open 2024. 36. Qxd7 Rxe3 37. Qd8 Rxc3+ 38. Kf1 Is it over? 38. ... Rg1+ Nope! 39. Kxc1 Qg4+ with a perpetual check.

PAGE 47 ABCS OF CHESS

PROBLEM 1: It's mate in two for White: 1. Qxc5+ fxc5 2. Rh8 mate. **PROBLEM 2:** White mates in two with 1. Qxc6+ Qxc6 2. Bxc6 mate. **PROBLEM 3:** White mates

in two moves: 1. Qh6 gxh6 2. Nxe6 mate. **PROBLEM 4:** White scores in two: 1. Rxc7+ Kxc7 2. Qg5 mate. **PROBLEM 5:** Black is mated in two: 1. Qxb7+ Qxb7 2. Rxb7 mate. **PROBLEM 6:** White mates in two: 1. Nh6+ gxh6 2. Qxh8 mate.

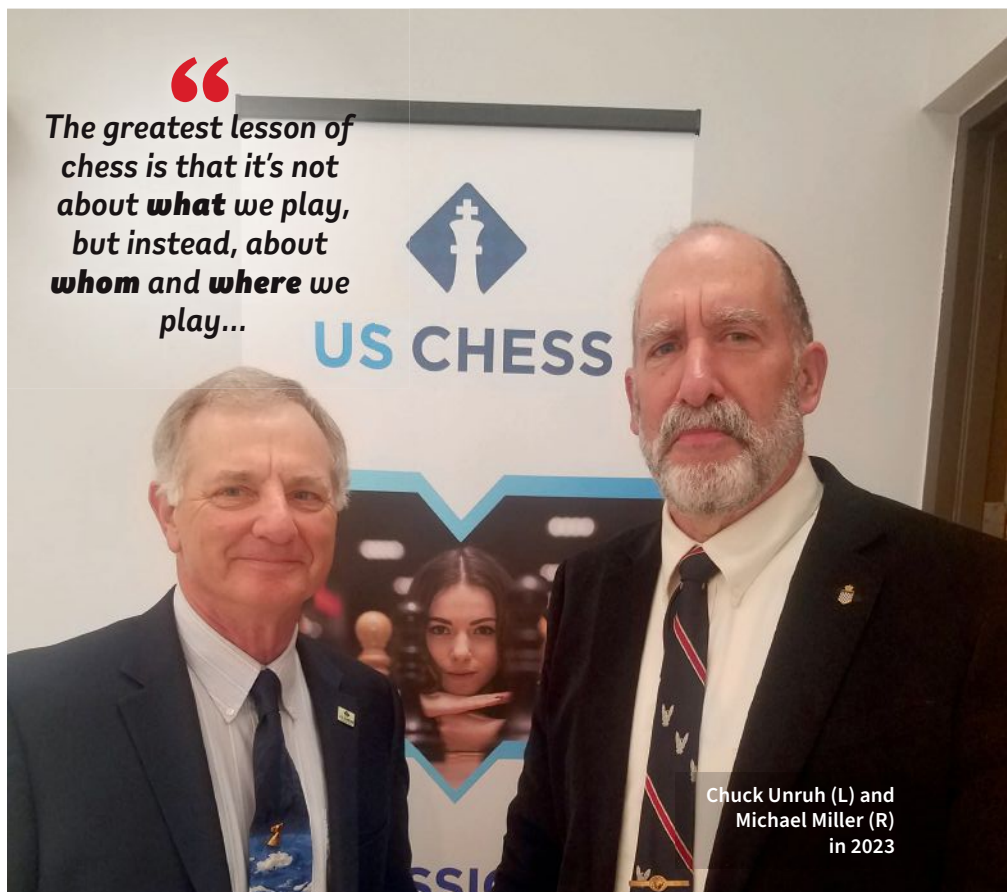
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MY BEST MOVE

MICHAEL MILLER

LIFE BENEFACTOR MEMBER,
CHESS CLUB CONVENER,
CLASS B PLAYER

“
The greatest lesson of
chess is that it's not
about *what* we play,
but instead, about
whom and *where* we
play...



Chuck Unruh (L) and
Michael Miller (R)
in 2023

I AM FORTUNATE TO HAVE HAD some truly wonderful times playing chess. My first rated tournament was the New York State Junior Championship in 1970, while I was in high school. The winner of that event was a 12-year-old future GM, Jon Tisdall!

In 1972 I joined the U.S. Marine Corps. This was my best career move. Military orders put me near Memphis, where I met John Hurt, and Washington D.C., where I got to know Homer Jones. In both places I found warm, welcoming chess communities.

While assigned to HMX-1, the Presidential Helicopter Squadron, I received orders to play in the 1974 and 1975 U.S. Armed Forces Chess Championships as a member of the Sea Services Team. Our team captain was Charles Lawton (USN), a strong master who years later participated in the 2009 U.S. Championship!

One favorite memory comes from the 1974 Armed Forces Championship, where George Koltanowski was a honored guest. He played skittles with many of us.

Of course, it was tough going in these events — I was a B player competing with experts and masters, and the Air Force teams won both years. Current US Chess board member and national master Charles Unruh (USAF) won the individual title in 1975, with one of his victories coming at my expense. Some 47 years later I played Chuck again in the 2023 Armed Forces Championship Veterans Section. This time we drew our game, and Chuck took clear first in the tournament, while I finished second on tiebreaks.

Chuck is from Oklahoma, and I'm from upstate New York. We took very different career paths after our enlistment, but we both actively promote US Chess through education and local events. I host three library chess clubs in the Syracuse area, and I have formed a US Chess affiliate with the goal of growing over-the-board chess in central New York.

Other favorite memories include partic-

ipating in simulms with GMs Arthur Bisguier and Svetozar Gligoric, and facing GMs Joel Benjamin and Robert Byrne in successive New York State Quick Championships.

My best chess move came in a game against Syracuse master Peretz Miller in 1993. In the game, Peretz gambited two pawns with Black and intensified his attack on my king. He may have overlooked that I could castle into safety. With this move, simultaneously strengthening my offense and defense, I took over the game.

IT'S A KING MOVE

Michael Miller (1793)

Peretz Miller (2212)

2nd Sunday Mini-Swiss (2), 06.13.1993

(see diagram top of next column)

21. 0-0! f6 22. e5! Rxe5 23. gxf6 g5

Now comes **MY BEST MOVE**, opening a space for a possible queen advance.

24. f7!! Rh6 25. hxc5 Rxc5 26. Qe3!

Attacking both rooks and the king!



26. ... Re6

Black offers both rooks, hoping to wriggle out of the situation. Which one to take?

27. Qxc5!, Black resigned.

The right capture. The win is much easier this way than if I had taken the rook on e6.

The greatest lesson of chess is that it's not about *what* we play, but instead, about *whom* and *where* we play, and about the friends we make over the course of a lifetime. I may not be a Jimmy Stewart, but in summary, I'll borrow that famous phrase: it has been a wonderful "chess" life. ♠



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3) Prize limit \$1000 if post-event OTB or online rating 7/1/23-7/1/24 (6/26/23-6/26/24 in U1200 & U1000) was more than 40 points over section maximum.

4) Provisional (under 26 games) and unrated prize limits.

5) Under 2200 & U2000 sections, as well as Open, are also FIDE rated.

6) International 6/27-7/1, Philadelphia Open 6/28-30, Under 13 6/26-/27, Amateur 7/1-2, Junior 7/1-2, Senior Amateur 7/1-2, Womens Championship 7/1-2, other side events.

7) Free lectures by GM Sam Palatnik, maybe others.

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UNDER 2200: \$12000-6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-400-400, top U2100 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$1500.

UNDER 2000: \$12000-6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-400-400, top U1900 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$1000.

UNDER 1800: \$12000-6000-3000-1500-1000-800-600-500-400-400, top U1700 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$800.

UNDER 1600: \$10000-5000-2500-1300-900-700-600-500-400-400, top U1500 (no unrated) \$2000-1000. Unrated prize limit \$600.

UNDER 1400: \$7000-4000-2000-1200-900-700-600-500-400-400, top U1300 (no unrated) \$1600-800. Unrated prize limit \$500.

UNDER 1200: \$4000-2000-1000-800-600-500-400-300-300-300. Unrated prize limit \$400.

UNDER 1000: \$2000-1000-700-500-400-300-300-200-200-200. Unrated prize limit \$200.

MIXED DOUBLES: Top 6 sections \$2400-1200-700-500-300. Lower 2 sections \$500-300-200. Male/female teams averaging U2200.

Reserve hotel room early! Special chess rate \$148-148-168-188, link at chessevents.us or 215-448-2000, may sell out by early June.

July official USCF ratings used for U2200 to U1400, July FIDE for Open, June USCF for U1200 & U1000. Unofficial ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. Cannot play below USCF Online Regular Rating - 100 points.

Foreign player ratings: see www.foreignratings.com.

Unclaimed prizes usually paid by PayPal (may take around 3 weeks). For income tax reporting and withholding info, see chessaction.org.

Titled player entries: see chessevents.us

Entry fees: \$318 at chessaction.com by 5/15, \$328 by 6/29 (U1200 & U1000 6/25), \$350 online or at site until 90 min. before rd 1 (U1200 & U1000, 60 min. before).

Open Section: All \$500 more if not rated 2200/over by USCF or 2000/above FIDE.

U1200 Section entry fees: All \$100 less.

U1000 Section entry fees: All \$200 less.

Seniors 65/up: entry fee \$100 less in U1400 & above.

If any post-event regular OTB or online rating posted 7/1/23-7/1/24 (U1200 & U1000 6/26/23-6/26/24) or current regular online rating is more than 40 points over section maximum, prize limit \$1000.

If under 26 regular OTB total games rated by July 2024 official list (June official for U1200, U1000), prize limit \$500 U1000. \$1000 U1200, \$2000 U1400, \$3000 U1600-U2000.

Entries posted at chessaction.com: click "entry list" after entry. Refunds, \$15 service charge. Special USCF dues: see chessevents.us.

Bring set, board, clock- none supplied.

5-day schedule: 7/3 7 pm, 7/4-5 11 am & 6 pm, 7/6-7 10 am & 5 pm.

4-day schedule: 7/4 11 am, 2:30 pm & 6 pm, merges with 5-day 7/4 6 pm.

3-day schedule: 7/5 11, 1:30, 3:30, 6 & 8:30, merges with others 7/6 10 am..

U1200, U1000 schedule: 6/28 1, 4 & 7, 6/29 11, 2 & 5, 6/30 10, 1 & 4.

Half point byes OK all, limit 3 (limit 2 in last 4 rounds). Must commit before round 4.

PAST WINNERS

1973 Walter Browne **1974** Bent Larsen **1975** Pal Benko **1976** Anatoly Lein **1977** John Fedorowicz **1978** Peter Biyiasas **1979** Haukur Angantytsson **1980** Larry Christiansen **1981** Igor Ivanov **1982** Nick de Firmian **1983** Kevin Spraggett **1984** Joel Benjamin **1985** Maxim Dlugy **1986** Nick de Firmian **1987** Boris Gulko **1988** Maxim Dlugy **1989** Mikhail Gurevich **1990** Igor Glek **1991** Gata Kamsky **1992** Gregory Kaidanov **1993** Alex Yermolinsky **1994** Artashes Minasian **1995** Alex Yermolinsky **1996** Alex Yermolinsky **1997** Alex Shabalov **1998** Alex Goldin **1999** Gregory Serper **2000** Joel Benjamin **2001** Alex Goldin **2002** Kamil Miton **2003** Jaan Ehvest **2004** Varuzhan Akobian **2005** Kamal Miton **2006** Gata Kamsky **2007** Varuzhan Akobian **2008** Evgeny Najer **2009** Evgeny Najer **2010** Viktor Laznicka **2011** Gata Kamsky **2012** Ivan Sokolov **2013** Varuzhan Akobian **2014** Ilya Smirin **2015** Aleks Lenderman **2016** Gabor Papp **2017** Tigran Petrosian **2018** Illia Nyzhnik **2019** Liem Quang Le **2020** P Iniyar **2021** Hans Niemann **2022** Mikhail Antipov **2023** Fidel Corrales Jimenez