

# CHESS LIFE

December 2021 | USChess.org

# Kids

Also in this  
issue:

The 2021  
North American  
Youth Chess  
Championships

Resolutions:

**IMPROVE  
YOUR  
CHESS**

 **US CHESS**



Happy Holidays from the  
Saint Louis Chess Campus!

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This month: WGM Katerina Nemcova

### In this issue

A new year is upon us, and one of your resolutions might be to get better at chess. But where to begin? Dr. Alexey Root, WIM, offers tips and resources that will jump-start your path to improvement. In a similar vein, Chess Stories introduces you to educational programs at the Saint Louis Chess Club that you can join — no matter where you live! FM Robert Shlyakhtenko reports on the North American Youth Chess Championships and includes a few puzzles to challenge you. And in My First Move and Chess Adventures, WGM Katerina Nemcova talks about teamwork and balancing chess with her studies.

**This month's cover** by Chandler Ellison portrays a wise mentor handing down knowledge to a questing student.

# CHESS STORIES

ACROSS THE



# BOARD

BY AL LAWRENCE

Celebrating *Chess Life Kids* Stories from across the country.

## Tune Up Your Game with Lessons from the

# SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB!

The state-of-the-art set up at the Saint Louis Chess Club makes online lessons readily available to students everywhere.



Why not improve your chess with lessons from the teachers at the famous Saint Louis Chess Club? You can even get instruction from one of its world-class grandmasters!

Group lessons for K-12 students are very affordable. The club wants to give everyone a chance to learn the game. For years, the club has provided in-person instruction to local schools with a team of well-prepared teachers. “Then, in March of 2020, most of the schools told us that COVID prevented in-person visits,” Scholastic Manager

Richard Pointer said. That didn’t faze

Richard and his crew of 25. “Within about two weeks, we had our online programming set up.”

You’ll share an online class with perhaps a dozen other students and get three hours of daily instruction by choosing from six options. Pointer likes to explain the possibilities this way: “Imagine you walk into a school and there are six classrooms, each one with a teacher. And each *hour* you can decide which classroom to go in.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB



If you want to learn about strategic elements, or endgames, or openings — we have all those types of classes.” Then Pointer almost laughs at his own punchline: “And, on top of that, *every day* you can get a *grandmaster* lesson from 6 to 7 p.m. central time!”

Group classes are offered every weekday. The cost for a *whole month* of non-GM classes is only \$30 a month per student. You can add the GM classes for just an additional \$15 a month! Sign up to be in a class with others from all over the U.S. Or ask your school club to arrange special group instruction to include only its students.

If one-on-one lessons are what you crave, the club offers that as well. Unlike the group program, which includes beginner to intermediate instruction, the one-on-one lessons can be personalized to all levels. Like the group program, it started as an in-club program but expanded to online during COVID-19. “When ‘The Queen’s Gambit’ Netflix series hit, we had to add instructors,” Senior Chess Associate and Chess Instructor Nicholas Risko said. “We give lessons to people around the world.”

Individual online instruction is only \$30 an hour. A “10 pack” of lessons is just \$240. Private lessons

with a GM are \$100 an hour. Whether you choose group or individual lessons, as an online club student, you do not have to pay any additional dues.

Instructors use a curriculum developed with input from grandmasters. In just six months, one of Risko’s students went from just knowing how the pieces move to an official US Chess rating of 1855!

Go online to [www.saintlouischessclub/education](http://www.saintlouischessclub/education) to get started!

## GM SO AND IM YIP WIN U.S. CHAMPIONSHIPS IN ST. LOUIS!

The Saint Louis Chess Club hosts some of the most important, top-level tournaments in the world. On the accompanying webcast, famous grandmasters like former U.S. Champ Yasser Seirawan and Maurice Ashley explain the on-board action. Following along online is free — and a great way to improve.

On October 19 at the club, GM Wesley So won the 2021 U.S. Chess Championship, which is open to both men and women who qualify. So began competing in chess tournaments at only nine years old and, in 2007, became a grandmaster at just 14. In a separate event held at the same time, 18-year-old IM Carissa Yip won the U.S. Women’s Chess Championship. When she was only 10, Yip became the youngest female player ever to defeat a grandmaster. The top 12 players qualifying in each event played head-to-head match-ups, with one game per day.

You can still view the play-by-play by searching for “2021 US Chess Championship” on YouTube.





# AVOID THE by Bruce Pandolfini TRAP!

## SETTING UP A DOUBLE CHECK DOUBLE CHECK

This column teaches you openings by helping you learn to avoid opening traps. Set up your board and pieces and play through the game below. Have paper and pen by your side. When you reach a question, write down your answer. After you are done with all 10 questions, check your answers at the end of this column. Total your points and see how you did against the scoring scale at the end!

Double check is perhaps the most awesome move in chess. The only way to get out of double check (if there is a way in the position at hand) is by moving the king. While double checks can be deadly, they seldom just happen. They usually have to be prepared. A typical way to set up a double check is with a preliminary queen sacrifice that must be accepted by the enemy king. The idea is to lure the enemy king to an exposed square on which two friendly pieces can then both give a check, one by moving and the other by discovery. The tactic tends to happen more in the middlegame, but it can suddenly pop up in the opening, too. This month's contest illustrates a case in point.

**1. e4**

A straightforward central advance. White's queen and king-bishop can now enter the game.

**1. ... e6**

The French Defense. This is a solid way for Black to answer 1. e4. It also releases the queen and king-bishop.

Q1) What move is Black preparing by 1. ... e6? (10 points)

**2. d4**

White now has more space and temporary control of the center.

Q2) To develop fully, how many pawns must White move? (10 points)

**2. ... d5**

Black directly attacks White's e-pawn.

Q3) How might 1. ... e6 and 2. ... d5 affect the c8-bishop? (10 points)

**3. Nc3**

White develops and defends the e-pawn.

Q4) What were three other reasonable answers to 2. ... d5? (10 points)

**3. ... Bb4**

This is the Winawer Defense, which is a popular continuation.

Q5) What does 3. ... Bb4 seemingly threaten? (10 points)

**4. Bd2**

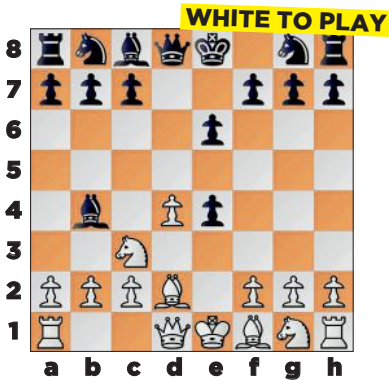
This quiet move breaks the pin. But it doesn't stop Black from removing the defender by 4. ... Bxc3.

Q6) Does 4. ... Bxc3 win the white king-pawn? (10 points)

**4. ... dxe4**

Black takes the e-pawn anyway.

Q7) Can White safely take back 5. Nxe4? (10 points)



5. Qg4

White's queen issues a double attack. Both the e4-pawn and g-pawn are threatened.

5. ... Nf6

Black develops a piece, attacking White's queen, while adding protection to the e4-pawn.

6. Qxg7

The rook is now hanging, so Black saves it with a gain of time.

6. ... Rg8

Q8) Why is 6. ... Rg8 better than 6. ... Rf8? (10 points)

7. Qh6

White saves the queen. But his d-pawn remains under attack.

7. ... Qxd4

Black takes the d-pawn. In this complicated position, chances remain about equal.

8. 0-0-0

Castling secures White's position and sets up possible discoveries.

Q9) How does White continue after 8. ... Qxf2? (10 points)

8. ... Ng4

This is aggressive, but probably safer was 8. ... Nbd7. It would overprotect the f6-square and close the d-file.

9. Qh4

White moves the queen to safety, while it now eyes the d8-square.

9. ... Qxf2

10. Qd8+!, Black resigned.

Ouch! After the forced 10. ... Kxd8, White mates with 11. Bg5+ (a double check) 11. ... Ke8 12. Rd8 mate.



Q10) What was the last move Black could have avoided the trap? (10 points)

### ILLUSTRATIVE GAME:

O. Linder vs. Aleksandr Kruglikov Moscow 1965

1. e4 Nf6 2. Nc3 d5 3. e5 d4 4. exf6 dxc3 5. fxg7 cxd2+ 6. Bxd2 Bxg7 7. Qh5 Qd4 8. Nf3 Qxb2 9. Rd1 Qxc2 10. Qd5 c6 11. Qd8+. Black resigned.

It is mate after 11. ... Kxd8 12. Ba5+ (double check) 12. ... Ke8 13. Rd8 mate. Shades of Reti-Tarkatower, Vienna, 1910 — another great example! (see diagram top of next column)

### ANSWERS

1. With 1. ... e6, Black prepares the advance 2. ... d5.
2. Just two: d-pawn and e-pawn. All the pieces can then move.



FINAL POSITION IN THE ILLUSTRATIVE GAME

3. Those two pawn moves obstruct the movement of the bishop.

4. White could have reasonably played 3. e5, 3. exd5, or 3. Nd2.

5. It threatens the e4-pawn by pin and capture of the c3-knight.

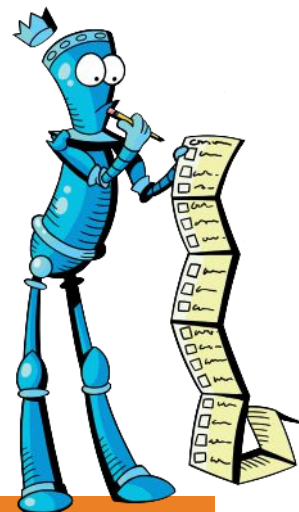
6. No. After 5. Bxc3 dxe4, White has 6. Qg4, attacking e4 and g7.

7. No, since the move 5. Nxe4 loses a pawn to 5. ... Qxd4.

8. The move 6. ... Rf8 is passive and weak; 6. ... Rg8 attacks the white queen.

9. The answer would be 9. Nh3, developing with a gain of time.

10. On move 9, Black shouldn't have played 9. ... Qxf2. Better was 9. ... Nd7.



Make sure to check your score!

## How Did You Score?

The score is based on the US Chess rating system and is intended only as a fun way to monitor your progress each issue as you Avoid The Trap!

- 100: 1800+
- 90: 1600
- 80: 1400
- 70: 1200
- 60 or lower: 1000

# 2021 NAYCC

## U.S. PLAYERS DOMINATE THE NORTH AMERICAN YOUTH BY FM ROBERT SHLYAKHTENKO

In another sign of the return of over-the-board chess, the North American Youth Chess Championship (NAYCC) took place in Chicago from August 16-21. In ordinary times, this tournament is an annual competition open to players from the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the Bahamas that cycles between the first three locations. Players from across the continent compete in 12 different sections, divided into Open and Girls U8, U10, U12, U14, U16, and U18.

Most high-level junior tournaments are pressure-filled and are by invitation only. The NAYCC bears the distinction that all players, no matter their rating, are welcome to compete. This year the NAYCC hosted a record 400 players, most from out-of-state and many from out-of-country. For this reason, among many others, the event was a nice chance to spend some time with friends, and the organizers did a great job in ensuring a fun atmosphere for all.

Of course, there was also chess to be played. The top two sections — U18 Open and U18 Girls — are particularly significant because

the winners in those sections automatically receive the title of International Master (IM) or Woman International Master (WIM). Normally, earning one of these titles is a complicated affair. To become an IM, for example, you need to achieve an international (FIDE) rating of at least 2400, and perform above the IM level in three tournaments. Each such performance gives you an “IM norm” towards the title. First place in the NAYCC, while by no means easier, does avoid all that; you just get the title, with no questions asked.

The possibility of earning this prestigious title inspired two very young players — Dimitar Mardov (born 2008)

and Alice Lee (born 2009) —

to participate in the U18 sections. And they did not just participate. Both Mardov and Lee won their respective events, despite the huge age gap between themselves and their opponents!

Let’s take a look at how that happened. I think there were several key components to Dimitar’s and Alice’s success:

**1. Not losing!** This might sound obvious, but playing nine games without a couple of losses is actually quite hard to do. Both Dimitar and Alice finished with 7½ points out of 9. Dimitar won six games and drew three, losing none; Alice won an incredible seven games, drawing one, and losing one. In this nine-round event, with two games played each day, losing your concentration for even a moment can be disastrous; you have to play consistently well throughout the tournament.

**2. Setting the pace.** Dimitar started off by winning four games in a row, getting a clear advantage over the rest of the field. That gave him the breathing room to slow down later. On the other hand, Alice managed to win five games in a row at the end of the tournament,

This page: Alice Lee, NAYCC U18 Girls winner, at the 2021 U.S. Girls’ Junior championship. Facing page: NAYCC U18 Open winner, Dimitar Mardov, receives his trophy.





# THE 2021 NAYCC

August 16-21, 2021 | Chicago, Illinois | 403 players

## OPEN:

**U18:** Dimitar Mardov, 7½/9; **U16:** Erick Zhao, 8/9; **U14:** Arthur Xu, 8½/9; **U12:** Tanitoluwa Adewumi, 8/9; **U10:** Marcel Podraza, Bobby Qian, 8/9; **U8:** Luke Hong, Ethan Guo, 7/9

## GIRLS:

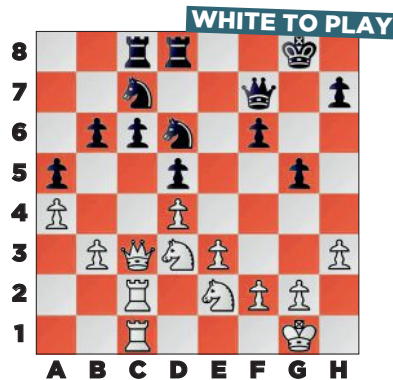
**U18:** Alice Lee, 7½/9; ; **U16:** Kelsey Liu, 8½/9; **U14:** Zoey Tang, 8½/9; **U12:** Omya Vidyarthi, 8½/9; **U10:** Olivia Laido, 8/9; **U8:** Irene Jiao Fei, 8½/9

For complete results and additional photos, visit [naycc2021.com](http://naycc2021.com).

in this tournament. Both sent very instructive games from which there is a lot to learn, so set up a board and follow along!

## SPOTTING THE MOVE

**Dimitar Mardov (2377)**  
**Samrug Narayanan (2323)**  
**2021 NAYCC U18 (8), Chicago, 08.20.2021**



Black has set up a clever idea — if White captures the c6-pawn, Black will try to trap White’s queen by playing ... Nc7-a8. Many players would stop looking at this point and play a different move as White, but Dimitar saw further:

### 34. Qxc6! Na8

This was Black’s point. White’s queen doesn’t have a square to retreat to. Now, try to find White’s next move.

Bad is 34. ... Nce8 35. Qxb6 when, as Dimitar notes, “White is simply up two pawns.”

### 35. Qxd6!

A great move, sacrificing the queen but getting more than enough material for it. Spotting these kinds of moves can be difficult even for experienced players, as it’s not easy to part with such an important piece as the queen.

### 35. ... Rxd6 36. Rxc8+ Kg7 37. Rxa8

Dimitar comments: “White has a rook and two knights for the queen and Black’s king is very weak. White’s idea to win the game will be Ng3-f5. As a result, the game ended in a few moves with White’s victory.”

By giving up a queen, Dimitar actually ended up with a material advantage — a rook and two knights are worth about 11 points, whether a queen is worth about nine — and Black’s rook and queen are so badly placed that he is powerless to resist White’s eventual infiltration, so **Black soon resigned.**



I also participated in the event, and while I didn't have my best tournament, I wanted to share the following position with you. When searching for tactics, we should always be aware of the following things: 1) Undefended or poorly defended pieces — we call these targets. 2) Tactical elements such as double attacks (forks), pins, etc., that are present in the position. In this case, there is a pin on the d5-knight, and both the knight and the h6-pawn are targets. There is also the future possibility of a fork on the f6-square. Putting all this together...

## SEARCHING FOR TACTICS

**FM Robert Shlyakhtenko (2462)**

**Jin Ashton (2222)**  
**NAYCC U18 (3), Chicago, 08.18.2021**



### 14. Bxh6!

Winning a pawn and destroying the cover of Black's king.

### 14. ... Bxh6

An important point is 14. ... fxe4 15. Bg5! when White follows with d3xe4, winning the d5-knight.

### 15. Bxd5+ Kh7

The queen is lost after 15. ... Qxd5 16. Nf6+.

### 16. Bxc6 bxc6 17. Nc5

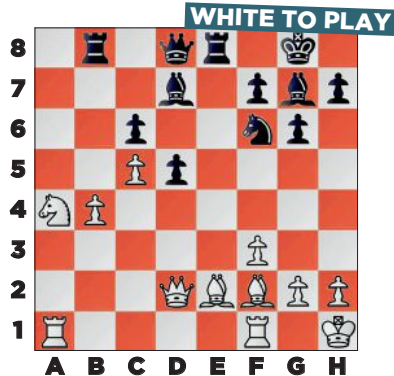
White is up a pawn and went on to win.

## LOOKING FURTHER

**Alice Lee (2215)**

**Arya Kumar (2030)**

**NAYCC U18 Girls (5), Chicago, 08.19.2021**



White has a better position, mainly because of the bind of the queenside. Alice played...

### 21. Nb6

This puts the knight on an outpost square and preparing to make use of the open a-file.

### 21. ... Bf5 22. Bg3

Black is under some pressure — the b8-rook does not have much space.

### 22. ... Rxb6?

A mistake. Black does not get enough compensation for the Exchange.

The most natural move for Black is 22. ... Rb7, but it allows White to seize control of the a-file with 23. Ra8! Qe7 24. Rfa1 and White has a clearly better position. Note that Black cannot capture the e2-bishop due to the pin on the e8-rook. The best move was 22. ... Nd7!, counterattacking White's rook on a1 with the bishop on g7. Now the position is very unclear.

### 23. cxb6 Qxb6 24. Bf2

A good move. White wants to put the bishop on d4, where it defends many important dark squares.

### 24. ... d4!?

Black finds a good try to complicate the position. However, Alice looks further than her opponent and spots a clever refutation.

### 25. Bxd4! Rxe2

This was Black's idea the queen on d2 is overloaded. Now if White's queen

captures the rook, Black could take the bishop on d4. Also, Bd4xb6 amounts to a trade of queens. In view of this, try to figure out what White should play.

### 26. Ra8+

A good start — Black's back-rank is weak.

### 26. ... Bf8

Now what?

### 27. Rxf8+!

This is the point of the tactic — White attracts the black king to the f8-square. **Black resigned** here, seeing that after 27. ... Kxf8 there follows 28. Qh6+, saving White's queen, and now 28. ... Ke7 29. Bxb6 is an elementary win for White.

Congratulations to both Dimitar and Alice on their great performances!

A short analysis:

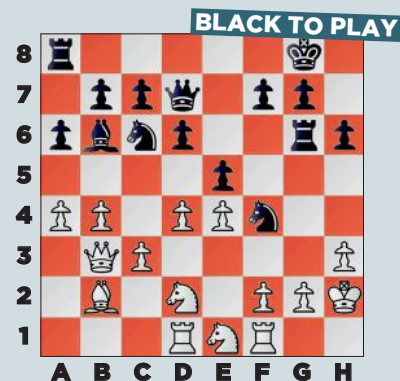
## FORCED MATE?

**Stephen Willy (1355)**

**Ryan Min (1679)**

**2021 NAYCC U12 (6), Chicago, 08.19.2021**

In the game White played 17. Nf3-g1, giving up the g2-pawn, and lost a few moves later. But how should Black continue if White plays 17. Nf3-e1, as shown here.



### 17. ... Rxxg2+!

Mate is forced.

### 18. Nxxg2 Qxh3+ 19. Kg1 Qxxg2 mate.

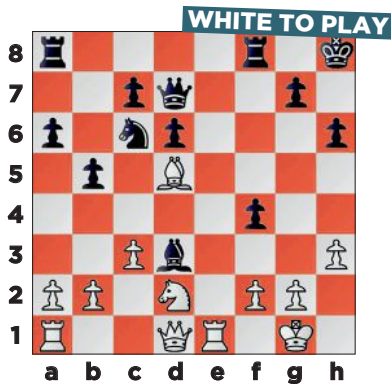
Another possibility was 19. ... Ne2 mate.

# TACTICS FROM NAYCC

Challenge yourself with these puzzles by FM Robert Shlyakhtenko — developed from games played in the U12 section of the NAYCC — and hone your tactical skills.

## UP A PIECE

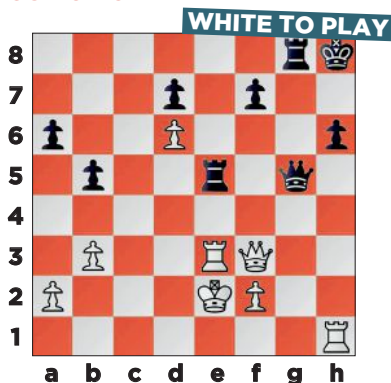
**Aaradhya Panda (1718)**  
**Sujay Sureshkumar (1375)**  
 2021 NAYCC U12 (6), Chicago,  
 08.19.2021



**23. Qf3!** A fork on the bishop on d3 and the knight on c6. **23. ... Ne5 24. Rxe5! dx5 25. Bx8** at move 72.

## PASSED PAWN

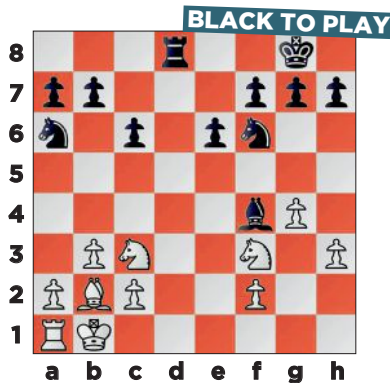
**Ronak Hiwale (1583)**  
**Sujay Sureshkumar (1375)**  
 2021 NAYCC U12 (8), Chicago,  
 08.20.2021



**31. Rxh6+!** Deflection. **31. ... Qxh6** Black had to play 31. ... Kg7! keeping the position roughly equal. **32. Rxe5** Now Black is faced with the threat of Rh5. **32. ... Rg5 33. Rxg5 Qxg5 34. Qh3+! Kg7 35. Qxd7** and the passed d-pawn is very strong. White went on to win at move 50.

## TAKING ADVANTAGE

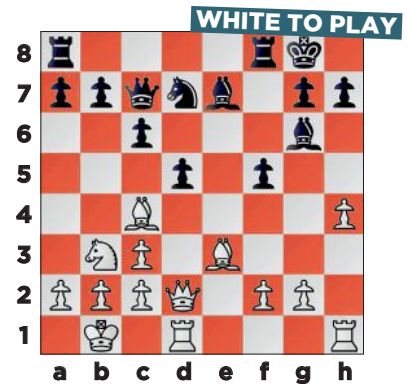
**Aly Muhammad Hemani (807)**  
**Aayush Wadhwa (1533)**  
 2021 NAYCC U12 (6), Chicago,  
 08.19.2021



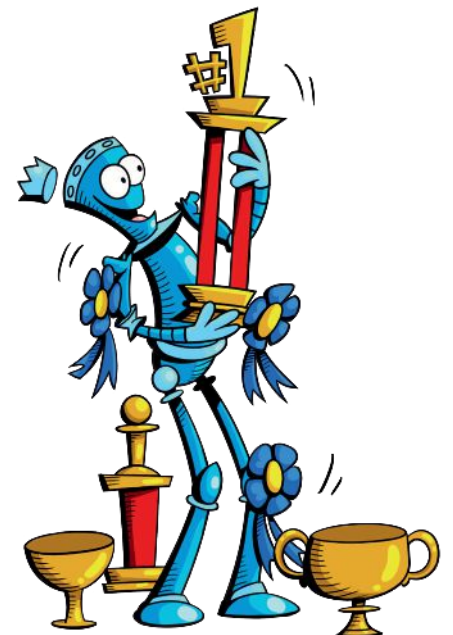
**19. ... Ne4!** Deflecting White's knight from the c3-square and taking advantage of the weak back-rank. **20. Nxe4** White didn't have to take, but the position would have been desperate anyway. **20. ... Rd1+ 21. Bc1 Bxc1 22. g5** Allowing mate, but otherwise White would have been faced with a deadly discovered check. **22. ... Ba3** mate.

## MORE PRESSURE!

**Havish Sripada (1733)**  
**Stephen Willy (1355)**  
 2021 NAYCC U12 (9), Chicago,  
 08.21.2021



**16. Bxd5+ Kh8** After 16. ... cxd5 **17. Qxd5+ White** nets two pawns. **17. Bf4 Qb6 18. h5 cxd5 19. hxg6 Qxg6 20. Qxd5** and White went on to win at move 58.





# New Year's Resolution: IMPROVE YOUR CHESS

By Dr. Alexey Root, WIM

The new year is traditionally a time for resolutions, which are promises you make to yourself. Maybe one of your resolutions is to get better at chess. So if chess improvement is on your resolution list, here are some ideas on how to fire up your game in 2022.

## CHESS CLUBS

Historically, players improved by attending chess clubs. As the pandemic eases, in-person chess clubs are re-opening, so now is the time to check out your local club. Most clubs feature a mix of casual, non-rated chess and US Chess-rated

tournaments. The website for US Chess ([www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org)) lets you search for a club near you.

If there is not a chess club near your home, maybe you can start your own! Perhaps a restaurant would be willing to host a club. Fridays and weekends are usually busy for restaurants, so choosing a weekday might be best for your club. One example of a successful, restaurant-based club is the Alliance Chess Club (<http://www.facebook.com/AllianceChess>) in Fort Worth, Texas. Run by the husband-and-wife team of Louis and Wendy Reed, the club meets once a week on Tuesdays at a La Madeleine

restaurant for a mix of casual and rated play. Since the chess club meets in a restaurant, chess players are encouraged to buy (and eat!) food during their casual games.

Libraries are great locations for chess clubs, too. The meeting space is free because libraries want visitors in their buildings. When I was a child, I attended the Lincoln Chess Club, which met on Wednesday nights at the Bennett Martin Public Library in Lincoln, Nebraska. I loved playing chess there. I also loved sitting in the stacks reading the *Lad, a Dog* series. Albert Payson Terhune's books may not have improved my chess, but meeting



my first chess coach, Loren Schmidt, at the library, did. Later, Schmidt became a FIDE master. By the mid-1970s, he was the highest-rated member of the Lincoln Chess Club.

## CHESS COACHES

One-on-instruction is another path for improvement. But how do you find the right coach? If you observe high-rated chess players socializing and competing at your local chess club, you might approach one of them for chess lessons. Look for someone who explains chess concepts in a fun and understandable way.

Alternatively, US Chess has a

Certified Chess Coach List, and many of those coaches teach in person or online. Whoever you choose for in-person lessons, your parent or guardian should stay in the room with you and your chess coach. The same is true if you find an online coach. Safety first!

## CHESS BOOKS

Chess books claiming they can improve your chess are everywhere, and it can be difficult deciding which ones are best for you. Two recently published chess books are specifically aimed at young players interested in improving. *Everyone's First Chess Workbook: Fundamental Tactics and*

*Checkmates for Improvers* by FM (FIDE Master) Peter Giannatos is for players rated under 1000 over-the-board or under 1300 online. It has 738 chess exercises. You write your answers to the right of each chess diagram. Tactics include forks, pins, and skewers, and checkmates include Boden's checkmate and the smothered checkmate. Each section's initial problems include hints, and each problem's solution is in the answer key. Giannatos' book ends with positions taken from the games of the World Chess Champions, which fits well with the next book, *World Champion Chess for Juniors: Learn*

## READY FOR THE NEXT STEP? GET EQUIPPED!

The night before the 2021 FM (FIDE Master) Sunil Weeramantry National Blitz Tournament of State Champions, my husband, IM (International Master) Doug Root, realized that the chess clock he brought to New Jersey did not have an increment setting. The tournament's rules stated, "Players must bring a chess clock, and it should support time increment. US Chess does not plan to supply clocks to players. If neither player brings a clock to the board, then both players forfeit the round."

Doug was ready to leave the tournament site hotel and return to our home in Texas! To avoid his panic, your clock should allow for all US Chess time controls.

Chess boards and sets also must conform to tournament standards. Maybe you have a novelty chess set and board, such as one featuring Star Wars or Super Mario. While you can use those at home, tournament directors don't allow them. Purchase a Staunton design set with a king that is 9.5 centimeters or 3.75 inches tall. The light-colored chessmen should be white or cream and the dark-colored chessmen should be brown or black. The most common board is vinyl with white and green squares, but other contrasting light and dark colors, such as cream and

brown are fine too. Wooden boards and some other solid boards are okay too. Each square's sides should measure between five and six centimeters, or about two inches.

US Chess Sales can help you select a tournament-appropriate clock, set, and board. Unfortunately for Doug, the onsite US Chess Sales bookstore wasn't going to open until after the blitz tournament. I asked chess players gathered in the hotel's restaurant for help. Dora Martínez of the US Chess Trust loaned her clock. It brought good luck, as Doug finished third in the blitz and second in the John T. Irwin National Tournament of Senior State Champions. One of his prizes was a bookstore certificate, which was used to buy a new chess clock!

from *the Greatest Players Ever*, by GM (Grandmaster) Joel Benjamin.

Benjamin's book seems best suited for players who are slightly more advanced than Giannatos' target audience. He annotates champions' games, from opening to middlegame to endgame. Understanding entire games demands more diverse skills from the reader than solving tactical combinations. A checkmate from Gelfand-Kramnik (Berlin, 1996) 1996 appears in both Giannatos' and Benjamin's books, but Benjamin presents it at a higher difficulty level and with no explanatory text.

### SEMI-SLAV DEFENSE (D45)

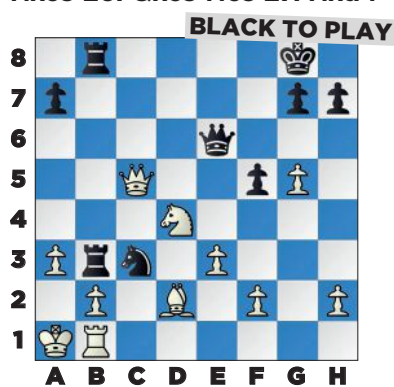
Boris Gelfand (2665)

Vladimir Kramnik (2765)

European Club Cup, Berlin (2), 06.09.1996

1. d4 d5 2. c4 c6 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. Nf3 e6 5. e3 Nbd7 6. Qc2 Bd6 7. g4 Bb4 8. Bd2 Qe7 9. a3 Bxc3 10. Bxc3 b6 11. Bd3 Ba6 12. Qa4 dxc4 13. Qxa6 cxd3 14. Qxd3 0-0 15. g5 Nd5 16. Bd2 f5 17. 0-0-0 c5 18. Kb1 b5 19. Qxb5 Rab8 20. Qa5 Rb3 21. Ka2 Rfb8 22. Rb1 e5 23. Rhc1 Qe6 24. Ka1 exd4 25. Rxc5

Nxc5 26. Qxc5 Nc3 27. Nxd4



Benjamin's diagram is after 27. Nxd4. He does not say how long the solution is but indicates that it is Black to move.

27. ... Rxb2

Benjamin gives the solution as: 27. ... Rxb2! 28. Rxb2 Qa2+ which is where Grandmaster Boris Gelfand resigned. However, the position is not checkmate and some readers may not see what the black player, future World Champion Vladimir Kramnik, would have done next.

28. Rxb2

Giannatos gives the diagram after 28. Rxb2 and offers the following hint: "CONCEPTS USED Arabian Checkmate." He provides spaces for a black move, a white move, and a final

black move. Readers write those moves, which go all the way to checkmate.

28. ... Qa2+

The answer in Giannatos' book is: 28. ... Qa2+, forcing the rook on b2 out of the way of the rook on b8. 29. Rxa2 Rb1 mate.

### CHESS WEBSITES

Chess websites can help you improve, too. Two popular ones are [lichess.org](http://lichess.org) and [Chess.com](http://Chess.com), which has a version for kids ([Chesskid.com](http://Chesskid.com)). They offer articles, videos, chess problems, and opportunities to play chess games against other people or computers.

A less well-known website is Chess Girls DC (<https://chessempowergirls.org/>), which includes advice, podcasts, and book reviews by chess-playing girls. On that website, WIM (Woman International Master) Akshita Gorti advises, "A very crucial part of improving in chess is to always analyze your games. ... Analyzing the games helps identify the mistakes and most importantly helps you to not repeat the same mistakes in another game."

And be sure to make this critical move: always include a parent or a trusted adult in your online activities.



# CAN DO IT!

BY SIM JON EDWARDS

10TH U.S. CORRESPONDENCE CHESS CHAMPION

Many years ago, I reached the following position with Black to play. Any movement by Black's knight will deliver a discovered check from Black's queen.



Many of Black's moves look wonderful here, but I knew that one of Black's moves was going to be better than the rest. In the end, I played ... Nd5+ followed by ... Nxc3, and White resigned immediately.

In honor of that game, I have assembled six positions that all involved discovered checks. They are not easy, but I know that You Can Do It!

This is my last column for CLK. Hopefully, I will be back from time to time with something to say. Please say hello if you see me at a tournament!

Solutions on page 18.

## QUIZ 1



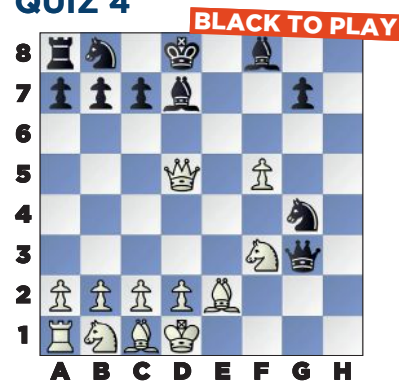
## QUIZ 2



## QUIZ 3



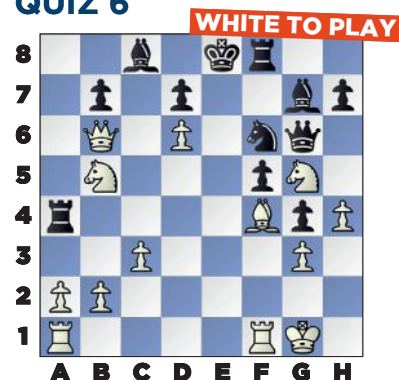
## QUIZ 4



## QUIZ 5



## QUIZ 6









## MISSOURI

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### North American Junior (U20) Championships (NC)

See North Carolina.

## NEVADA

DECEMBER 18, 2021

### North American Action

See Online Events or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### North American Junior (U20) Championships (NC)

See North Carolina.

## NEW JERSEY

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### North American Junior (U20) Championships (NC)

See North Carolina.

JANUARY 14-17, 15-17, OR 16-17, 2022

### 54th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

FEBRUARY 19-21, 2022

### World Amateur Team & U.S. Team East (NJ)

See National Events.

FEBRUARY 27, 2022

### New Jersey Junior High Championship

A State Championship Event! Feb. 27, New Jersey Junior High School Championship 555, G/25 d5. Brookdale College, 765 Newman Springs Rd., Lincroft, NJ 07738. Student Life Center, use Parking Lot #7 or #6; 5 minutes from Garden State Parkway exit 109. **Section:** JHS (K-9). **All:** Trophies to top 15 individuals, top 5 teams. **Rds.:** 10am then ASAP. Top 4 scores constitute team score. **EF:** \$40 before 2/22, \$55 at site. USCF memb. req'd. **Reg.:** 8-9:00 am. After 9:00 am, half-point bye for round one. **Info:** 732-259 3881, [halsprechman@gmail.com](mailto:halsprechman@gmail.com). **Ent:** Hal Sprechman, 15 Reigate Ln, Manchester NJ 08759 or online by 9:00pm, Feb 25 at [www.NJSCF.org](http://www.NJSCF.org). Entries must include name, grade, school, date of birth, USCF ID #, & expiration date, mailing address, phone number & entry fee. Checks made out to NJSCF.

MARCH 12-13, 2022

### 54th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)(NY)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## NEW YORK

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### North American Junior (U20) Championships (NC)

See North Carolina.

DECEMBER 26-28 OR 27-28, 2021

### Empire State Open (NY)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

DECEMBER 28, 2021

### New York State Under 13 Action

## Championship (out of state welcome)

State Championship event. 555, G/30 d10, Albany Marriott, 189 Wolf Road, Albany 12205. Free parking, wireless, & airport shuttle, restaurants nearby. Open to all born after 12/28/08. Top NYS player in Championship is state Under 13 Action champion. **In 2 sections**, Championship and Under 1000. **EF:** \$48 at [chessaction.com](http://chessaction.com) by 12/23, \$60 online or at site by 9 am 12/28. **No checks** at site, credit cards OK. **Plaques to top 5 each section**, top U1400, U1200 (Championship), U800, U600, U400, Unr (U1000). **Unofficial or Online Regular** [uschess.org](http://uschess.org) ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. **Special 1 yr USCF with magazine** if paid with entry. Online at [chessaction.com](http://chessaction.com), Young Adult \$25, Youth \$18. Mailed or at site, \$27 or \$20. **Reg. ends** 12/28 9 am, **rds.** 10:00, 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00. **Awards** 7:30. **Bye:** all, limit 2; must commit before rd 2. **HR:** \$100-100, reserve by 12/12, link at [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us) or call 518-458-8444. **Ent:** [chessaction.com](http://chessaction.com) or Continental Chess, Box 249, Salisbury Mills NY 12577. **Questions:** [www.chessour.com](http://www.chessour.com), [Director@Chess.US](mailto:Director@Chess.US). Please claim plaques at site. **Refunds:** \$15 service charge. **Entries posted** at [chessaction.com](http://chessaction.com) (click "entry list" after entering). **Bring set, board, clock** if possible- none supplied.

DECEMBER 29-30, 2021

### New York State Junior Championship (out of state welcome)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

JANUARY 7-9 OR 8-9, 2022

### 7th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open (FL)

See Grand Prix or [www.bocachess.com](http://www.bocachess.com).

JANUARY 14-17, 15-17, OR 16-17, 2022

### 54th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

MARCH 12-13, 2022

### 54th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (out of state welcome)(NY)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## NORTH CAROLINA

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### 2021 North American Junior (U20) Championships

An official FIDE Continental Championship offering IM, FM, WIM, WFM FIDE titles and GM, IM, WGM, WIM norms for winners! 2020 North American Junior, held in Charlotte, had a record 95 players. **Two sections** - Open U20 and Girls U20 (girls may enter either section). 9 rounds, G/90 inc/30, USCF and FIDE rated, FIDE norms and titles available. **Venue:** Hilton Charlotte University Place Hotel, 8629 JM Keynes Dr., Charlotte, NC 28262. **Hotel:** \$105/night (single/double), free internet, free parking, many restaurants and shops in walking distance. **Eligibility:** Open to all players from USA, Canada, and Mexico who are under 20 (19 & younger) as of 1/1/2021 (born 2001 or after). This is a completely open event for those who meet the age and eligibility requirements. **Awards/Direct FIDE Titles:** Medals to top 3 in each section (on tiebreaks if necessary). Open section - Gold medal = IM title and GM norm; if tie for first, top 3 on tiebreaks receive IM title, gold medalist also earns GM norm. Silver medal = FM title and IM norm. Bronze medal = FM title and IM norm. Girls section - Gold medal = WIM title and WGM norm; if tie for first, top 3 on tiebreaks receive WIM title, gold medalist also earns WGM norm. Silver medal = WFM title and WIM norm. Bronze medal = WFM title and WIM norm. **Schedule:** suggested arrival Saturday 12/18. Players meeting (required) Sunday 12/19 11:30am, Rounds Sunday 12/19-Wed 12/22 each 12pm

and 6pm, Round 9 Thu 12/23, 11am. **Registration:** Players should register directly with the organizers online at [www.charlottechesscenter.org/najunior](http://www.charlottechesscenter.org/najunior). **Entry Fee:** \$260 by 11/20, \$280 between 11/21-12/10, \$300 between 12/11-18, no registration after 12/18. Refunds will incur 5% service fee. **No half-point byes.** All equipment provided! FIDE Rules, December FIDE ratings used for pairings. **COVID Policy** - will be posted on website by 11/15 based on CDC and local guidelines at the time. **Organizer:** Charlotte Chess Center, **contact:** [grant@charlottechesscenter.org](mailto:grant@charlottechesscenter.org). **Info, invitation, regulations, registration:** [www.charlottechesscenter.org/najunior](http://www.charlottechesscenter.org/najunior).

## PENNSYLVANIA

SEPTEMBER 18-DECEMBER 31, 2021

### In-Person Tournaments for Both Adults and Children in Philadelphia by DMV Chess (PA)

DMV Chess runs semi-regular USCF-rated tournaments in Philadelphia at The Warwick Hotel. Check the in-person tournaments calendar on [dmvchess.com](http://dmvchess.com) for exact dates of upcoming events. Events include scholastic tournaments, open action tournaments, and open blitz tournaments! **HOW TO REGISTER OR VIEW MORE INFORMATION:** Registration links are posted online on our website: <https://www.dmvchess.com/impersontournaments>. **CONTACT:** For questions, please email us at [josh@dmvchess.com](mailto:josh@dmvchess.com) or call us at 703-609-0499. **Address:** 1701 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### North American Junior (U20) Championships (NC)

See North Carolina.

JANUARY 7-9 OR 8-9, 2022

### 7th Annual Gulf Coast New Year's Open (FL)

See Grand Prix or [www.bocachess.com](http://www.bocachess.com).

JANUARY 14-17, 15-17, OR 16-17, 2022

### 54th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## SOUTH CAROLINA

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### North American Junior (U20) Championships (NC)

See North Carolina.

## TEXAS

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### North American Junior (U20) Championships (NC)

See North Carolina.

FEBRUARY 17-21, 2022

### 13th annual Southwest Class Championships (TX)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## VIRGINIA

SEPTEMBER 19-DECEMBER 31, 2021

### The Tysons Corner Weekly Scholastic Tournament - In Person Every Sunday (VA)

**Location:** Westin Hotel on 7801 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22043. **4 round** Swiss tournament. **USCF**

**regular and quick rated. Time control:** Game in 25 minutes with a 5-second delay. **Every Sunday, 10:00 am to approximately 2:00 pm. Entry fee:** \$35 on or before Wednesday, \$40 on or before Saturday, \$45 on Sunday (on-site registration is allowed, registration for round one closes at 9:45 am on Sunday). Participants are not required to play all rounds. Please inform the tournament director if you plan to show up late or leave early. **Three Sections: K-3, K-5, and K-8. PRIZES: Trophies to the top three in each section!** We will have enough chess sets for all players. If you would like to use a clock, please bring one. **For questions,** please email us at [josh@dmvchess.com](mailto:josh@dmvchess.com) or call us at 703-609-0499. **HOW TO REGISTER:** Registration links are posted online on our website: <https://www.dmvchess.com/impersontournaments>.

SEPTEMBER 19-DECEMBER 31, 2021

### Tysons Corner Weekly Action and Blitz Tournaments - Every Sunday In Person (VA)

**Location:** The Westin Tysons Corner, 7801 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22043. Every Sunday at 3 pm (Action) and 12:30 pm (Blitz). **3 PM ACTION TOURNAMENT INFORMATION:** 4 round Swiss tournament. **USCF regular and quick rated. Time control:** Game in 30 minutes with a 5-second delay. Every Sunday, 3 pm to approximately 7:30 pm. **Entry fee:** \$30 on or before Wednesday, \$35 on or before Saturday, \$40 on Sunday (on-site registration is allowed, registration for round one closes at 2:45 pm on Sunday). **Two Sections:** Open and Under 1500. **Prizes:** \$100 for 1st in Open; \$50 for 1st in U1500. We will have enough chess sets for all players, but clocks will not be provided for everyone. If you have a clock, please bring one. For questions, please email us at [josh@dmvchess.com](mailto:josh@dmvchess.com) or call us at 703-609-0499. **12:30 PM BLITZ TOURNAMENT INFORMATION:** 5 round double Swiss tournament (10 total rated blitz games). **USCF blitz rated. Time control:** Game in 5 minutes with no delay or increment. Every Sunday, 12:30 pm to approximately 2:30 pm. **Entry fee:** \$20 if also signed up for action. If only playing blitz then \$30 on or before Wednesday, \$35 on or before Saturday, \$40 on Sunday (on-site registration is allowed, registration for round one closes at 12:15 pm on Sunday). **One section. Prizes:** \$100 for 1st. We will have enough chess sets for all players, but clocks will not be provided for everyone. If you have a clock, please bring one. For questions, please email us at [josh@dmvchess.com](mailto:josh@dmvchess.com) or call us at 703-609-0499. **HOW TO REGISTER:** Registration links are posted on

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### North American Junior (U20) Championships (NC)

See North Carolina.

JANUARY 14-17, 15-17, OR 16-17, 2022

### 54th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

FEBRUARY 25-27 OR 26-27, 2022

### 7th annual George Washington Open (VA)

See Grand Prix or [chessevents.us](http://chessevents.us).

## WASHINGTON

DECEMBER 19-23, 2021

### North American Junior (U20) Championships (NC)

See North Carolina.

## WISCONSIN

JANUARY 8-9, 2022

### Tim Just Winter Open XXXVIII (IL)

See Grand Prix.

# ANSWERS

## PAGE 16/YOU CAN DO IT!

**Solution #1:** 1. Nf7 Kg8 2. Qh8 mate

**Solution #2:** 1. Nf6+ Kf8 2. Re8 mate

**Solution #3:** 1. Nd6+ Kd8 2. Qe8+ Rxe8  
3. Nf7 mate

**Solution #4:** 1. ... Nf2+ 2. Ke1 Nd3+

3. Kd1 [3. Kf1 Qf2 mate] 3. ... Qe1+ 4.

Nxe1 Nf2 mate

**Solution #5:** 1. ... Nxf3+ 2. Kf1 Bd3+ 3.  
Qxd3 Re1 mate

**Solution #6:** 1. Nc7+ Kd8 2. Nce6+ Ke8  
3. Qd8 mate

## Ziggurat3DChess.com

Available on Steam and Oculus Rift



Queen's Gambit or Wizard's Gambit?

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

# THE 2022 SPRING SCHOLASTIC NATIONALS

## 2022 NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (K-12) CHAMPIONSHIP

**APRIL 8-10**

Sheraton Memphis  
Downtown Hotel  
MEMPHIS  
Tennessee

## 2022 NATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL (K-8) CHAMPIONSHIP

**APRIL 29-MAY 1**

Gaylord Texan Resort  
and Convention Center  
GRAPEVINE  
Tennessee

## 2022 NATIONAL ELEMENTARY (K-6) CHAMPIONSHIP

**MAY 13-15**

Greater Columbus  
Convention Center  
COLUMBUS  
Ohio

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(b) Paid and/or requested circulation: (1) Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 5,674; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 5,041. (2) Paid in-county subscriptions (include advertisers' proof copies/exchange copies): average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 0; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 0. (3) Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales (not mailed): average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 0; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 0. (4) Paid distribution by other classes of mail through the USPS (e.g. First Class Mail): average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 58; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 65. 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(h) Total (sum of 15f and 15g) average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 6,289; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 5,728. (i) Percent paid. 15c divided by 15f x 100, per cent on average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 100; per cent on actual no. copies of single issue published nearest filing date, 100. 16. Electronic Copy Circulation. (a.) Requested and Paid Electronic Copies, average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 13; Number Copies of Single Issue Published nearest to filing date, 28. (b.) Total Requested and Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a), 5,745; Number Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to filing date, 5,134. (c.) Total Requested Copy Distribution (Line 15f) + Requested/Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a), 5,745; Number Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to filing date, 5,134. (d.) 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# MY FIRST MOVE



WGM KATERINA NEMCOVA  
2008 AND 2010 WOMEN'S  
CZECH CHAMPION

In this column, we feature advice from your chess heroes and explore what shaped their development when they were *Chess Life Kids* like you!

## A FAMILY ENDEAVOR

I grew up in a big family where everyone plays chess. I have six siblings (five sisters and one brother) and we all started playing chess by throwing pieces around and making up our own chess rules! I don't recall learning to play chess the same way I don't recall learning to walk. My parents say I picked up on proper rules when I was about three years old. I played my first tournament when I was five.

## GETTING BACK TO THE BOARD FOR THE 2021 U.S. WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP

After being away from tournament games for over three years, I'd forgotten how cool over-the-board chess can be. I admit that at the start of my first game against IM Anna Zatonskih, I felt a little awkward and nervous. I was making sure that I played legal moves and wasn't hanging pieces — things I would normally not even consider — but luckily this weird feeling disappeared



PHOTO COURTESY SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB/CRYSTAL FULLER

quickly. All-in-all, playing in the U.S. Women's Championship again was a fantastic experience. (*Katerina was at the top of the leaderboard for the first six rounds and finished tied for fourth place. ~ed.*)

## INFLUENCES

I didn't have many opportunities to learn about chess history or personalities when I was growing up. YouTube and Twitch didn't exist yet, and only a few chess books were available in the Czech language. So my early heroes were people outside the chess world, such as Czech soccer icon Petr Čech. However, when I started traveling to international events, I began to like GM Veselin Topalov, as his chess style was similar to mine. These days, I think GM Magnus Carlsen is a cool guy and a really fantastic chess ambassador.

## FAVORITE OPENINGS

I was a very aggressive player as a kid. I loved to attack and sacrifice! My favorite openings were the King's Gambit and the Smith-Morra Gambit for White, and the Dragon Sicilian for Black. You could also find me playing the Scotch Gambit and Latvian Gambit — they were fun! Now I am a little more chill. I enjoy playing the London Opening for White and all kinds of less popular Sicilians for Black.

## MEMORABLE BOOKS

My first chess book was Aron Nimzovich's *My System* and, truthfully, it was a real struggle to finish it because the analyses were quite advanced for me. After I moved to the U.S., I found tons of attractive books and read a lot of them! One of my favorites is *Move First, Think Later* by IM Willy Hendriks. I can also recommend *Play like a Girl* by WGM Jennifer Shahade.

## WHEN THE STARS ALIGN

Winning the 2008 European Chess Championships for Girls U18 was



Above: Katerina with her six siblings, all of whom play chess. Left: Katerina as a child in Czechoslovakia, where she grew up. She began playing chess at age three — not long after this photo was taken!

that we are imperfect, but they also motivate us to grow and do better.

## CHESS GOALS

I have put my chess goals on hold for now, as I am about to finish my doctoral studies and school is my priority. But I am an IM-elect and one of my future goals is to get that title. I would also love to get back on the U.S. Women's Olympiad team.

## MY BEST ADVICE

Enjoy chess to its fullest! Join a chess club, travel to tournaments, make new friends, play online... have fun! And remember: no player is smarter than you. Believe in yourself, work hard, learn from your losses, and you're on the road to accomplish your goals.

This is the final My First Move column. Look for an exciting new column in February!

a big moment for me. Winning any tournament is really hard because one needs to play great chess, make almost no mistakes, keep up good energy for all the rounds, and also have a bit of luck. All the stars need to align! I was quite pleased that I pulled that one off.

## HANDLING SETBACKS

When you play chess for a long time, you encounter a lot of disappointments. One such moment for me was the 2007 World Youth Championship for Girls U18. I was leading with eight points out of nine, but then scored only a half a point in the last two rounds, lost the lead, and finished second.

My takeaway is that disappointments are part of life. They remind us

# CHESS ADVENTURES

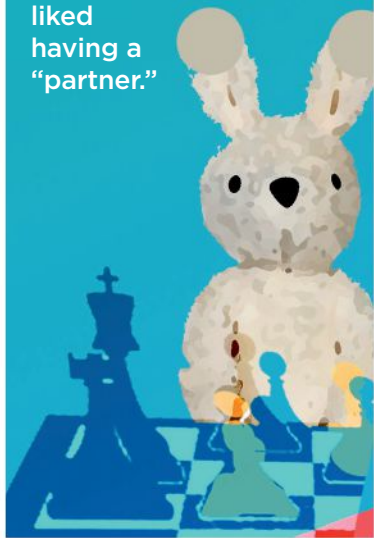
with  
WGM Katerina  
Nemcova



I grew up in a large family with six siblings. All of us play chess, so I was used to a team dynamic.



As a child, I even carried a pink rabbit with me to tournaments because I liked having a "partner."



Because of my childhood experiences, I have always enjoyed team events. Representing one's country is a huge privilege, and I've never declined invitations to play on a team.

I've played on teams for both the Czech Republic and the U.S., and I've made friends from all around the world.



Chess may be an individualistic sport, but when one fights for a team, it's a great balance. You work on your own game but you celebrate each other's successes. No matter the results, it's a win-win!



ART BY VAL BOCHKOV



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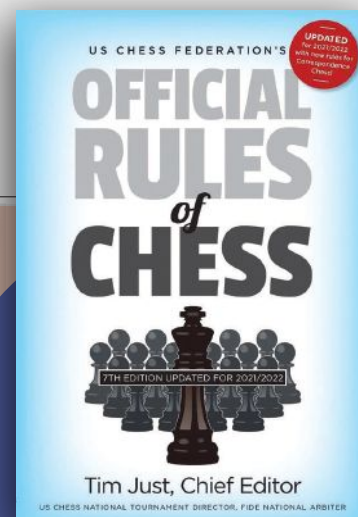
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