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Chess Life Kids | Vol. 18, No. 6

Chess Life KIDS (USPS 023-567, ISSN: 1932-5894) is published in February, April, June, August, October, and December of every year by US Chess, 333 S. 18th Street, Suite 210, St. Louis, MO 63103. Periodical postage paid at St. Louis, Missouri, and additional mailing offices.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to US Chess, PO Box 775308, St. Louis, MO 63177.

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## ON THE COVER

It's great to win a big tournament, and IM Arthur Guo, Eric Feng, FM Brewington Hardaway, FM Erick Zhao, John Abraham, Harshin Jagirapu, and Andrew Jing should all be proud of their success. But with her third consecutive Haring win, FM Ruiyang Yan has the most to brag about. Congratulations to her, and to all the Invitational winners!

PHOTO: COURTESY OF SLCC AND CRYSTAL FULLER



# Beat the Scandi!

BY JOHN HARTMANN

**IN PREPARING OUR** 1. e4 repertoire for improving players, it's important to know what Black might play against our king's pawn push. Using the Lichess database as a reference, what are the most popular responses to 1. e4 from players rated 400-2000 in bullet, blitz, and standard online games?

It won't surprise you to learn that 1. ... e5 is most frequent, followed by 1. ... c5. What is in third place? It's 1. ... d5 — the Scandinavian Defense!

Perhaps due to the cheerful promotion of the opening by chess streamer (and one of the nicest people in chess) IM John Bartholomew, the "Scandi" is seen slightly more often than the French or Caro-Kann. Because it is so popular online, and because our response to the Sicilian (2. c3!) will require two articles, I thought it was a good idea to discuss the Scandinavian first.

Pawn structures often determine strategy. In the Scandinavian, Black will generally play for a "small center" with pawns on c6 and e6, working to keep White's d4-pawn from advancing.



In contrast to the French Defense, Black's light-squared bishop usually gets outside of the pawn chain by landing on f5 or g4, and despite lacking space, Black has a solid position with easy development. They can try various pawn breaks (... b7-b5, ... c6-c5, or ... e6-e5) to free their pieces depending on White's setup.

White often has a space advantage and can develop quickly by attacking the exposed black queen. The c7-square can be a target for a c3-knight to fork the king and rook. White has a lot of freedom in piece placement, and should generally try to keep the space advantage while avoiding excessive piece trades, which tend to help the side with less space.

Let's take a look at some specific variations.

## 2. ... Nf6

### 1. e4 d5 2. exd5 Nf6

Now 3. d4 Bg4!? is tricky, so we'll just avoid it with our own tricky...

## 3. Bb5+!?

With this move we try force Black to put pieces on bad squares and slow down their development.

## 3. ... Nbd7

If Black plays 3. ... Bd7 we retreat the bishop with 4. Be2! Nxd5 5. d4 and play for development and space, with c2-c4 coming.

After 3. ... c6 we grab a pawn with 4. dxc6 bxc6 5. Be2 and develop normally.

## 4. d4 a6

The alternative 4. ... Nxd5 5. Nf3 c6 6. Be2 is similar.

## 5. Be2 Nxd5 6. c4 N5f6 7. Nf3

White has space and easy development.

## 3. ... Qa5

### 1. e4 d5 2. exd5 Qxd5 3. Nc3 Qa5

Pinning the knight, but leaving the queen on an unstable square.

## 4. d4

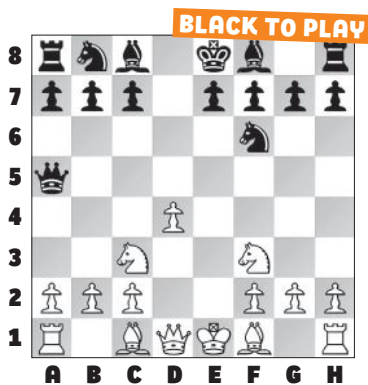
Here the exciting gambit 4. b4!?, popularized by IM Eric Rosen, can also be played, but it's not quite correct. There is analysis in the CLO Lichess study if you are interested, but you might as well just watch Rosen's videos on YouTube and learn from him!

## 4. ... Nf6

Other moves: (a) 4. ... Nc6 allows the pin with 5. Bb5 Bd7 6. Bd2! and if 6. ... Nf6?? 7. Nd5!. (b) After the ancient 4. ... e5 we continue developing with 5. Nf3 exd4

(5. ... Bb4 6. Bd2) 6. Qxd4 and better development. (c) 4. ... c6 is a way to quickly retreat the queen. It will tend to get to the kinds of lines discussed below.

### 5. Nf3



### 5. ... Bf5

This is the most natural square for the bishop. There are alternatives, of course!

(a) The move 5. ... Bg4 is played half the time in this position according to the database, but the bishop doesn't really belong here. One rule of thumb in the Scandinavian is that we should almost always meet this move with 6. h3! when Black does not have a happy choice:

(a1) 6. ... Bh5 7. g4 Bg6 8. Ne5 and the knight can either take on g6, or hop to c4 and attack the queen.

(a2) Not 6. ... Qh5?? 7. hxg4 Qxh1 8. Ne2! and the queen is trapped and soon caught after Ne2-g3!

(a3) After 6. ... Bxf3 7. Qxf3 c6 8. Bd2 and White castles queenside with a good game. The bishops will be powerful in this semi-open position.

(b) You will see 5. ... c6 often in online blitz. We play our usual 6. Bc4 when Black has a number of choices, including 6. ... Bg4 7. h3!. After 6. ... e6 and 6. ... Bf5 we can transpose to our main lines.

(c) Here 5. ... Nc6?! blocks the c7-

pawn and limits the queen. White should play the typical 6. Bd2 with advantage, ready to play Nc3-b5.

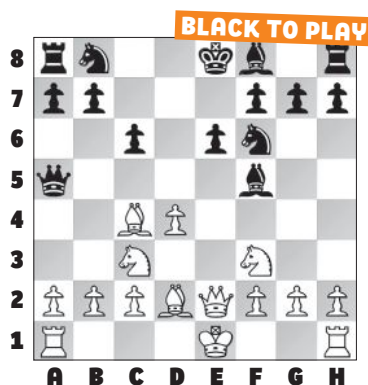
After 5. ... Bf5, White should develop normally with the bishop actively placed on c4.

### 6. Bc4 e6 7. Bd2 c6

This gives the queen an escape route, and can be played at various moments in the move order.

Instead John Bartholomew prefers the direct 7. ... Bb4, when again I recommend 8. Qe2 (or 8. a3 Bxc3 9. Bxc3 Qb6 10. Qe2) 8. ... 0-0 (8. ... Bxc2? 9. d5!) 9. a3 Nc6 (9. ... Bxc3 10. Bxc3 is similar to lines below) 10. 0-0 Bxc3 11. Bxc3 Qb6 with a complex game.

### 8. Qe2!



A sharp move, but only one option. White can also try (a) 8. Nd5?! Qd8 9. Nxf6+ Qxf6, which takes some of the tension out of the position. (b) 8. Ne4 reroutes the knight to the kingside after 8. ... Qd8 9. Ng3. (c) 8. 0-0 is tame but decent.

### 8. ... Bb4

We have reached a key position. White has more space, but Black's pieces are actively placed, and the pawns on c6 and e6 restrain White's advances. White has options to castle kingside or queenside, and can try to win the bishop pair with a2-a3. Expansion

on the kingside with Nf3-e5 followed by g2-g4 and h2-h4 is possible, and White is looking for the d4-d5 break when tactics (and the e-file pin) allow it. For their part, Black will complete development and then look for pawn breaks, and they can choose which side to castle as well.

What else can Black play?

(a) We see one argument for 8. Qe2 if Black gets greedy. After 8. ... Bxc2? 9. d5! leads to a huge attack for White.

(b) After 8. ... Qc7 9. Ne5 Bd6 we see the idea behind Nf3-e5. White plays 10. g4! Bxe5 11. gxf5 and the queen, staying on the e-file, prevents ... e6xf5. Note that this does not work after 9. ... Nbd7, when White should just castle queenside.

(c) Too slow are 8. ... Nbd7?! and 8. ... Be7?!. Both allow 9. d5!, ripping open the center.

### 9. a3

Trying to win the bishop pair. Here 9. 0-0 can transpose, while 9. 0-0-0 is outside our recommendation but also possible.

### 9. ... Nbd7

This is most often played according to the Lichess database. The bishop is safe due to the pin on the a3-pawn.

About a quarter of the time Black plays 9. ... Bxc3 10. Bxc3 Qc7 when White can play 11. Ne5 (11. Nh4!?, 11. 0-0, 11. 0-0-0) with the typical ideas of g2-g4, h2-h4, and kingside expansion.

After 9. ... 0-0 White can castle queenside and begin an attack, or play more simply with kingside castling.

### 10. 0-0

White has a choice as to which side to castle. I prefer kingside,

which gives a quieter game, but leaves White with an advantage. Both this and the sharper **10. 0-0-0** are analyzed in the Lichess study!

### 3. ... Qd6

**1. e4 d5 2. exd5 Qxd5 3. Nc3 Qd6**  
This has become popular recently. The queen may be safer here than on a5, but because it is less active White can develop easily. We will follow our plan from 3. ... Qa5.

### 4. d4 Nf6 5. Nf3

Black has a very flexible position with many options.

### 5. ... a6

This stops Nc3-b5 tricks, and prepares ... b7-b5.

Here (a) **5. ... Bg4** is also met with 6. h3! Bh5 7. g4 Bg6 and now we castle with 8. Bg2! Nc6 9. 0-0.

The main move on the master level is (b) **5. ... c6**. White gets a

good position by attacking the queen with 6. Ne5 Nbd7 7. Nc4 Qc7 8. Qf3 with Bc1-f4 to follow.

(c) Both **5. ... g6** and **5. ... Nc6** allow 6. Nb5 with good activity.

### 6. Bd3!?

Here 6. g3 makes a lot of sense, followed by Bc1-f4, but we don't usually fianchetto our f1-bishop!

### 6. ... Bg4

If 6. ... b5 7. a4, while after 6. ... g6 7. Be3 Bg7 8. 0-0 Bg4 (8. ... Nc6 9. Re1!? 0-0 10. Ne4 Nxe4 11. Bxe4) 9. h3 White has a good position.

### 7. h3

Following our standard plan when the bishop is on g4.

### 7. ... Bh5

Or 7. ... Bxf3 8. Qxf3 Nc6 9. Be3.

### 8. 0-0 Nc6 9. Ne4

White is doing well.

### 3. ... Qd8 / 3. ... Qe6

**1. e4 d5 2. exd5 Qxd5 3. Nc3 Qd8**  
Popular but very passive, allowing White to develop as they please.

Even worse is **3. ... Qe6+** when we are happy to give up a pawn to attack: 4. Be2 Qg6 5. Nf3! Qxg2 6. Rg1 Qh3 7. d4 leaves White with fantastic development.

### 4. d4 Nf6 5. Nf3 Bg4

Other ideas: 5. ... e6 locks in the light-squared bishop and leaves White better, while 5. ... Nc6 allows 6. Bb5 Bd7 7. 0-0.

### 6. h3! Bxf3 7. Qxf3 c6 8. Be3

White has a good position. ♠

Visit [new.uschess.org/clk-opening-project](http://new.uschess.org/clk-opening-project) for our Lichess studies, puzzle sheets, and videos!

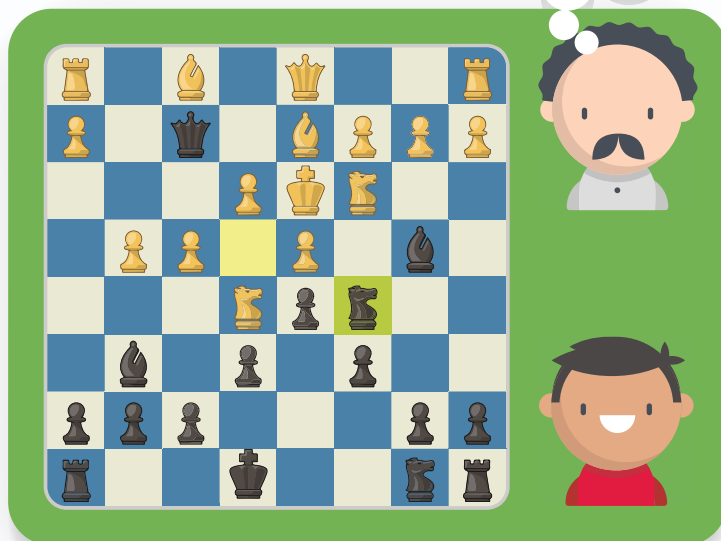


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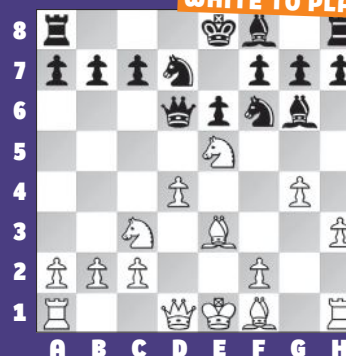
# 6.

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# 7.

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# 8.

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# 9.

BLACK TO PLAY



# 10.

WHITE TO PLAY



## THE SCANDINAVIAN DEFENSE.

It's one of the most popular responses to 1. e4 in rapid play and online chess. And we've armed you with some opening ideas and analysis on the previous pages.

With Black's queen out in the open so early in the game, White sometimes has ways to earn a quick victory through tactics, and you will see some of those typical themes in these puzzles. But Black's position is also active, and their creative possibilities should not be overlooked.

Try your hand at these positions, all of which come out of the "Scandi." The answers are on page 23.



# Never Underestimate Mom!

BY AL LAWRENCE

**T ALL STARTED** with a flyer from school and a bet about eating a mayonnaise sandwich. It led to multiple state championships for dad and daughter — and to a master-level puzzle score for mom!

Years ago while in fifth grade, Isabella — Bella for short — brought home a notice about her school chess club. “I think I’d like to do this,” she said. Her dad Steve wanted Bella to go. Before getting busy starting a family and

career, he had played in a few tournaments. He told Bella, “If there are other girls there, I’ll eat a mayonnaise sandwich.” Bella laughs about it now. “Dad was getting me to go just to find out. It turned out that there were a lot of girls there!”

Like all beginners, Bella lost a lot of games at first. But she got better as the whole family, including Bella’s mom Julie, traveled to tournaments, sometimes taking long road trips

together. “We prefer driving to flying,” Steve said. “As we traveled, we would sightsee. Later, when Bella got to be in high school, we would visit colleges all over the country.”

When Bella began a new school in the seventh grade, she had trouble adjusting. But she felt safe and comfortable at the school’s chess club. That helped her make the change. She won the girls’ state championship that year. After that, every month she gave free chess lessons to kids at her public library. Her students loved Bella’s classes, which drew as many as 40 excited beginners.

In 11th grade, Bella tried to recruit players for the state team regional championship, where the top four scorers for a school team were added together. No matter how she tried, she could get only one other student to play. But Bella is not the type to give up easily. She and her teammate went anyway. Despite the handicap of having only half a team, they finished first and second individually and qualified their school for the state finals. In the weeks that followed, Bella managed to recruit only two more



The Elkins Family:  
Steve, Bella, and Julie

PHOTOS: COURTESY SUBJECTS (ELKINS, LAWRENCE)



players, but her team went on to win the state championship that first year.

The next year, so many students got excited about playing on the reigning state championship team that Bella had to choose who would make the team. Bella created a test — using chess puzzles — to pick the eight students who were allowed to play. Clever, because it was training as well as a test! As captain, she led the team to win back-to-back state championships.

Bella has won the annual Arkansas Girls Scholastic Championship three times. Meanwhile, her dad was also playing and improving. He won the state's senior championship and was the top-rated available senior in the state. As a result, Bella and her dad each represented their state three times in the national championships that take place during the U.S. Open Championship. In the WIM Ruth Haring National Tournament of Girls State Champions, Bella won the Best Game prize in 2022.

## SICILIAN DEFENSE, KALASHNIKOV VARIATION (B33)

Isabella Elkins (1105)

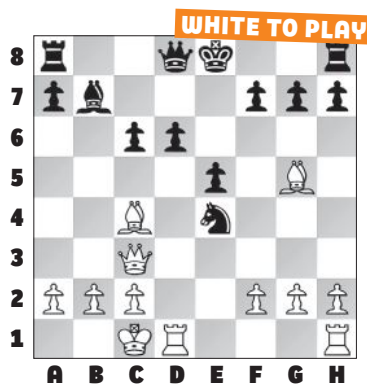
Elsa Rogers (559)

2022 Haring K-12 (3), Rancho Mirage, 07.31.2022

1. e4 c5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. d4 cxd4  
4. Nxd4 e5 5. Nxc6 bxc6 6. Nc3 Nf6  
7. Bc4 Bb4 8. Qf3 d6 9. Bg5 Bb7  
10. 0-0-0 Bxc3 11. Qxc3 Nxe4

(see diagram top of next column)

It certainly looks like White will lose material by force. But looks can be deceiving!



### 12. Bxf7+! Kxf7

Relatively best is 12. ... Kf8, although White retains a comfortable edge after 13. Bxd8 Nxc3 14. Rxd6 Kxf7 15. Rd7+.

### 13. Qb3+!, Black resigned.

With no way to avoid giving up the queen, Black threw in the towel.

Steve, for his part, has scored upsets in the John T. Irwin National Tournament of Senior Champions, a competition that includes grandmasters from around the USA.

The family has traveled to four annual U.S. Opens. Last year, in the main tournament, Steve and Bella won the father-daughter prize. Bella spent the cash prize to buy chess sets for her school.

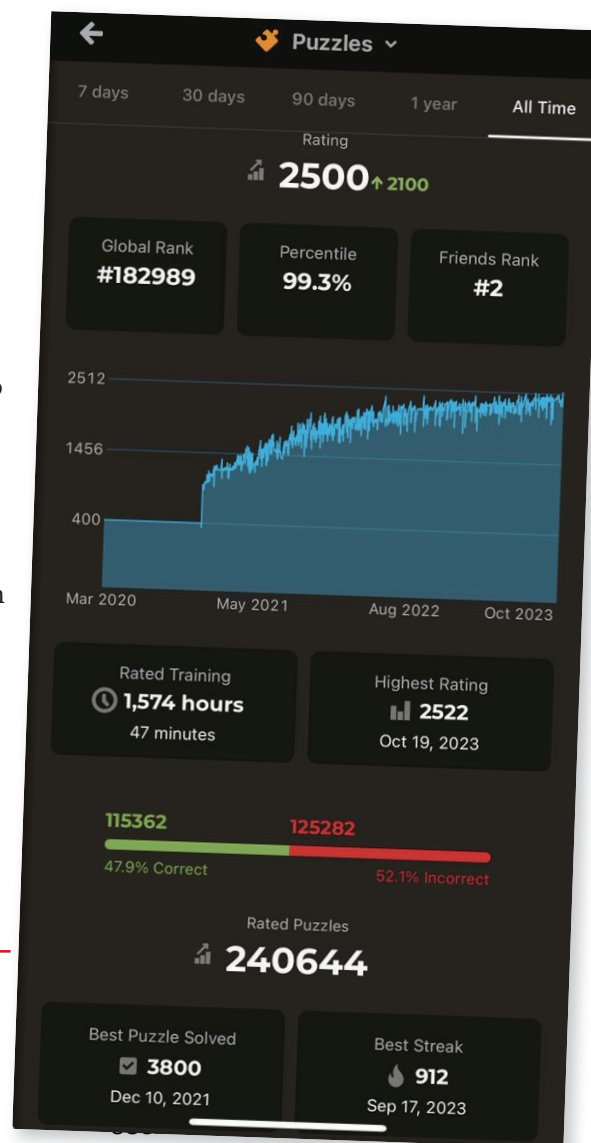
But remember: There are three members of the chess-traveling-and-winning Elkins chess family. Mom Julie spent years watching Bella and Steve play. “They’re both very calm, win or lose,” she said. “But I got really nervous watching at tournaments, even though I didn’t know what was going on! So I took some online lessons on *Chess.com* and tried some puzzles and quickly got hooked.” Since then, she has solved an amazing 240,000 of these chess brain-

Right: With over 240,000 puzzles solved and a puzzle rating of 2500, Julie Elkins has put in the work!

teasers! In fact, she has a puzzle-solving rating of 2500! It’s possible the best chessplayer of the Elkins family has still never played a tournament game!

Now a freshman in college at the University of Arkansas, Bella is no longer eligible to compete in the Haring. But the whole family still plans to attend the U.S. Open Championship this summer in Virginia. Someday soon, maybe mom will take the plunge into rated chess.

Anyway, while all three are there this year, we think it would be a perfect time to get a photo of Steve finally eating that mayonnaise sandwich. 🍷



# Puzzle Me THIS



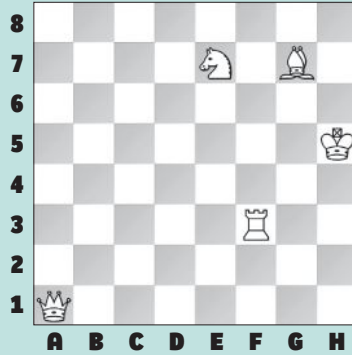
# Puzzle Me THAT

BY JEFF COAKLEY



Hey, puZZlers! We're Zed and Zephyr, here with more fun and challenging problems. A little bit of this and a little bit of that. Some of the puzzles have special rules. Others are the standard kind of positions that might happen in your own games. Which ones are your favorites? Good luck!

## 1. TRIPLE LOYD



Place the black king on the board so that

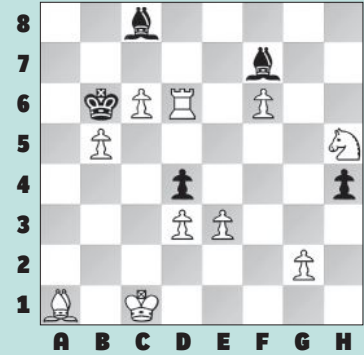
- Black is in checkmate.
- Black is in stalemate.
- White has mate in one.

## 2. PROOF GAME



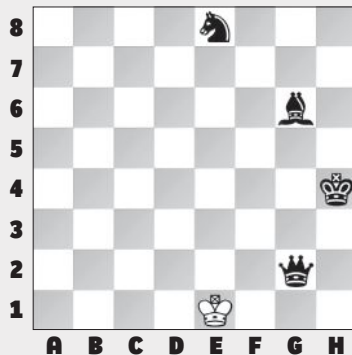
This position was reached after Black's fourth turn. What were the moves?

## 3. MAZE RACE



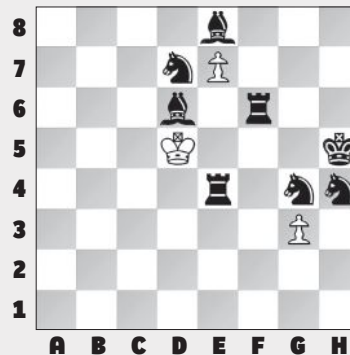
Only one white piece (rook, bishop, or knight) may move. Black does not get a turn. Capture the black king without taking any pieces or moving to a square guarded by Black. Which piece is fastest? Which is slowest?

## 4. INVERTED LOYD



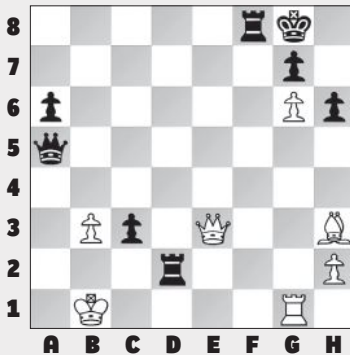
Add a white rook, bishop, and knight so that White has mate in one.

## 5. SERIES-MATE IN 14



White plays 14 moves in a row to checkmate Black. Only the final move may give check. Captures are allowed. Black does not get a turn. White may not place their own king in check, even if they get it out of check on the next move.

## 6. MATE IN 5



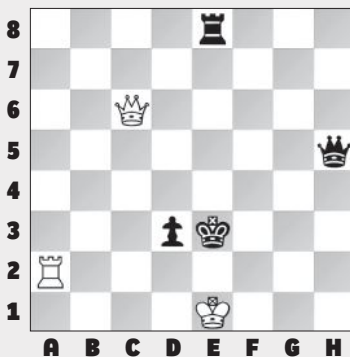
White to play. Mate in five.

## 7. COMBO



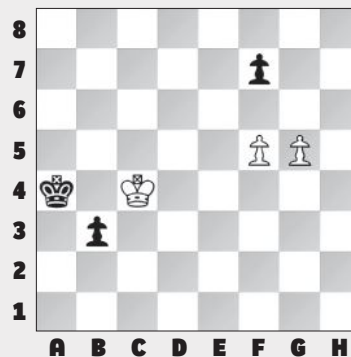
White to play and win material.

## 8. DEFENSE



White to play and not lose.

## 9. ENDGAME



White to play and win.

## 10. SYNTHETIC GAME

Make up a game in which Black wins on the fourth move with the capture 4. ... Bxb4 mate.

## ANSWERS:

**1)** A. Ka2, mate. B. Kh7, stalemate. C. Ke4 (allowing 1. Qa8 mate) **2)** 1. e3 a6 2. Bd3 a5 3. Bg6 hxg6 4. Qh5 gxh5. To make the puzzle a little trickier, put the white e-pawn on e4 and ask how the position was reached after White's fifth turn (5. e3-e4). **3)** The knight is fastest. The rook is slowest. Here are the lines: Nh5-f4-e2-g1-f3-g5-e4-f2-d1-b2-a4xb6 (11 moves). The knight could also go from f3 to e4 through the d2-square. Ba1-b2-a3-b4-e1-f2-g1-h2-f4-h6-f8-e7-d8xb6

(13), Rd6-d8-h8-h7-g7-g5-e5-e4-f4-f2-b2-b4-a4-a8-b8xb6 (15). **4)** Add Rg3 Bf2 Nf4 for 1. Rxc2 mate. **5)** **1. Kc6 2. Kb7 3. Kc8 4. Kd8 5. Kxe8 6. Kxd7 7. e8=R** Promoting to queen would give check. **8. Re6!** The rook blocks the sixth rank, allowing the king to capture the bishop. **9. Kxd6 10. Ke7 11. Rxe4 12. Rxc4 13. Kxf6 14. Rxh4 mate. 6)** **1. Be6+ Kh8 2. Qxh6+ gxh6 3. g7+ Kh7 4. gxf8=N+ Kh8 5. Rg8 mate.** White scores with a queen sacrifice followed by an underpromotion to knight. What a

great way to win! Black also meets their fate after **1. ... Rf7 2. Bxf7+ Kf8** (or 2. ... Kh8) **3. Qe8 mate. 7)** **1. Qxd6** destroys the guard of the e7-square. If Black recaptures with **1. ... cxd6**, White can finish the game in style with **2. Ne7+ Kh8 3. Rxh7+! Kxh7 4. Rh1+ Qh4 5. Rxh4 mate.** Black could try to get tricky by **1. ... Qxf5!?**, hoping for 2. exf5 cxd6, but instead White has the very cool *in-between* move **2. Qxf8+!**, and after **2. ... Rxf8 3. exf5**, White has an extra rook. So Black's least evils are 1. ... h6 2. Qg3 or 1. ... Qg5+ 2. Qd2. In either case, White has won the bishop. The line **1. Nxd6? cxd6 2. Qxd6 Qxe4** is good for Black. **8)** White has big problems. They are down a pawn and their king is in danger of being mated. There is no good way to counterattack the black king, but there is a way to avoid defeat: **1. Qxe8+ Qxe8 2. Re2+ dxe2 stalemate!** Both white pieces are sacrificed to force the draw. The white rook must be taken because **2. ... Kd4? 3. Rxe8** is winning for White. Other first moves by White lose. The usual reply is a *discovered check* by the black king. **9)** The winning idea is to *promote with check*. **1. Kc3!** The black king is forced to the a3-square where he will be checked by a queen from the f8-square. After **1. ... Ka3 2. g6 fxg6 3. f6! b2 4. f7 b1=Q 5. f8=Q+** Black can now choose between losing their queen by 5. ... Ka4 6. Qa8+ Kb5 7. Qb7+ Kc5 8. Qxb1 or losing their king by 5. ... Ka2 6. Qa8 mate. Note that White should answer 2. ... b2 with 3. gxf7 and also that Black would win after 1. g6? fxg6 2. fxg6 b2 3. g7 b1=Q 4. g8=Q Qa2+ 5. Kd4 Qxg8. **10)** **1. d4 e6 2. c4 Qg5 3. Na3 Qxc1 4. b4 Bxb4 mate.** The white moves can be played in different orders. 1. d3 by White or 1. ... e5 by Black are also possible. ♠

*The Haring National  
Tournament of Girls  
State Champions*  
**FM Ruiyang Yan**



*The Barber  
National  
Tournament of  
Middle School  
State Champions*  
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# GRAND

- *The Rockefeller*
- *National Tournament*
- *of Elementary School*
- *State Champions*

*The Denker  
Tournament of High  
School Champions*

**John Abraham**

**IM Arthur Guo**



*The Weeramantry National  
Blitz Tournament Of  
State Champions*



**FMs Terry Luo and  
Gus Huston**

# TIMES!

The National Invitationals were a hit in Grand Rapids.

BY **FM BREWINGTON HARDAWAY**

**T**HIS YEAR'S NATIONAL Invitationals were hosted at the DeVos Place Convention Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan from July 29 through August 2. The GM Arnold Denker Tournament of High School State Champions, the WIM Ruth Haring Tournament of Girls State Champions, the Dewain Barber Tournament of Middle School State Champions, and the John D. Rockefeller III Tournament of Elementary School State Champions are annual four-day events held alongside the U.S. Open, bringing in the best scholastic players from each state to battle it out across the board for cash prizes and scholarships.

All scholarships and awards are funded through generous contributions from US Chess, The U.S. Chess Trust, Dewain Barber, David and Maureen Grimaud, John D. Rockefeller V, Richard and Barbara Schiffrin, the Internet Chess Club (ICC), the Play Magnus Group, and US Chess Sales. US Chess expresses special thanks to Dwight Barber, the Ursula Foster Family, and a number of anonymous sponsors for their support.

## MY EXPERIENCE

I was extremely excited to qualify to play the Barber again, as the Invitationals are one of the most enjoyable and well-organized events on the tournament calendar. My first time playing in one of these Invitationals was in 2022, where I won first place in the Barber with a 5½/6.

I was eager to repeat my success this year, but when I woke up at six in the morning for an early flight to Grand Rapids, I

was disheartened to hear that it had been delayed. Those delays snowballed, causing me to arrive around two hours after the first round started, and forcing me to take a half-point bye. I was, of course, disappointed, as this bye would impact my tiebreaks, but it only motivated me to strive to win every game for the rest of the rounds. I chose to take control over what I could, and focus on playing to the best of my abilities.

How did I end up doing? Read on!

## DENKER

In the Denker, Georgia's IM Arthur Guo successfully defended his 2022 title with a perfect 6/6 score against an extremely strong field! His victory was not completely guaranteed, especially since his critical game against IM Maximillian Lu (CT) fluctuated, but with no time on the clocks, Arthur was able to capitalize on an unfortunate blunder made by Max.

## FRENCH DEFENSE (BY TRANSPOSITION) (C00)

IM Arthur Guo (2595)

IM Maximillian Lu (2459)

2023 Denker K-12 (5), Grand Rapids, 07.31.2023

**1. e4 a6?! 2. d4 e6 3. Nf3 d5 4. e5 c6 5. c3 Bd7 6. Bd3 Nc6 7. dxc5 Bxc5 8. b4 Bb6 9. 0-0 Nge7 10. Re1 Ng6 11. Be3 Bc7 12. Bxg6 hxg6 13. Bf4 f6 14. Bg3 Rh5 15. exf6 gxf6 16. Nbd2 Bxg3 17. fxc3 Qb6+ 18. Kh1 e5 19. Qb3 Ne7 20. c4 Be6 21. cxd5 Bxd5 22. Qa4+ Kf7 23. g4 Rhh8 24. Rf1 Nc6 25. Rae1 Kg7 26. a3 Rad8 27. Qc2 Rd7 28. Ne4 Bxe4 29. Qxe4 Qb5 30. Qb1 Qc4 31. g5 f5 32. Qa1 Qf4**

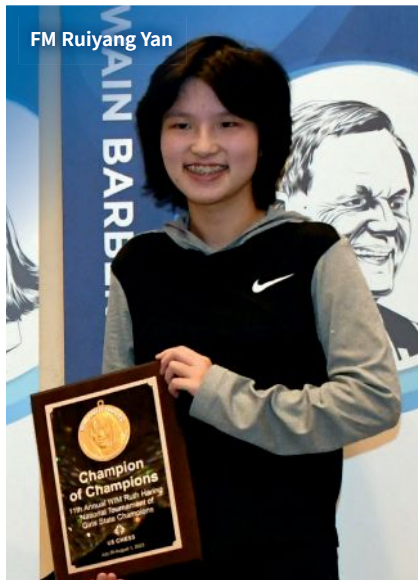
**33. h3 Rd3 34. Qb2 Nd4 35. Nh2? Qxg5 36. Rf2 e4 37. Nf1 Rd8 38. Rd2 Rxd2 39. Nxd2 Kh6 40. Nf1 Ne6 41. Rc1 f4 42. Nh2 Rd4 43. Ng4+ Kh5?? 44. Rc5! e3 45. Rxc5+ Kxc5 46. Ne5 Rd1+ 47. Kh2 Nd4 48. Qxd4! Rxd4 49. Nf3+ Kf5 50. Nxd4+ Ke4 51. Nf3 Kd3 52. g4 fxg3+ e.p. 53. Kxc3 b5 54. h4 Kc3 55. Kf4 Kd3 56. Ne1+ Kd2 57. Ng2 e2 58. Kg5 Kc3 59. Kxc6 Kd4 60. Kf5, Black resigned.**

Despite the heartbreak of his game against Guo, Lu finished strong by winning his last game to take second place with 5/6. Additionally, New York's FM Gus Huston came back after a third-round loss to Guo to finish with 4½/6, in third place after tiebreaks. Also at 4½ points were fourth-place finisher FM Sharvesh Deviprasath (TX), and in fifth was FM Terry Luo (DE), who won the \$500 Ursula Foster award for the top player age 15 and under.



## HARING

In the Haring, top seed FM Ruiyang Yan (CA-N) scored 5½/6, achieving a third consecutive victory in this competition! Her



impressive win against Esther Jou in the final round is a good representation of the skills she used to be successful in this tournament.

## FRENCH DEFENSE, STEINITZ VARIATION (C11)

FM Ruiyang Yan (2355)

Esther Jou (2161)

2023 Haring K-12 (6), Grand Rapids, 08.01.2023

1. e4 e6 2. d4 d5 3. Nc3 Nf6 4. e5 Nfd7 5. f4 c5 6. Nf3 Nc6 7. Be3 Be7 8. Qd2 0-0 9. dxc5 Qa5 10. a3 Nxc5 11. Nd4 Qd8 12. Qf2?! Nxd4 13. Bxd4 b6 14. 0-0-0 Ba6 15. Bxa6 Nxa6 16. f5 f6? 17. Qe2 Nc7 18. exf6 Bxf6 19. fxe6 Re8 20. Bxf6 Qxf6 21. Nxd5 Nxd5 22. Rxd5 Rxe6 23. Qc4 Kh8 24. Rhd1 Ree8 25. Kb1 Rac8 26. Qg4 Rcd8 27. Rd7 a6 28. Qd4 Rxd7 29. Qxd7 Qe5 30. Qc6 h6 31. h3 Qe2 32. Rd3 Re6 33. Rd8+ Kh7 34. Qd5 Qf1+ 35. Ka2 Qf6 36. Qd3+ Qg6 37. Qxg6+ Kxg6 38. Rd2 Kf6 39. Kb3 Ke7 40. Kb4 Re5 41. Kc4 Rc5+ 42. Kd4 Kd6 43. c4 b5 44. Kc3+ Ke5 45. b3 a5 46. Rd7 g5 47. Re7+ Kf6 48. Rb7 bxc4 49. bxc4 Re5 50. Rb6+ Ke7 51. Kd3 h5 52. Rb5 Re6

53. Rxa5 Rb6 54. Rxc5 Rb3+ 55. Ke2 Rxa3 56. Rxh5 Ke8, Black resigned.

Eleven-year-old Jwalanthi Ram (GA) and 10-year-old Megan Paragua (NY) were not intimidated by their older, more experienced opponents. Both ended with scores of 5/6, with Ram winning second place on tiebreaks and Paragua finishing third. Ram also earned the \$500 Ursula Foster Award for the top player under 12.

## BARBER

I had a feeling that my half-point bye would be challenging for me to overcome in the long run, especially after FM Erick Zhao (PA) took a quick draw in the final round. Much to my surprise, I was able to grind out a win in the last game after overcoming a dubious opening that set me up for uncertain positions throughout. Below is this “must win” final round battle with Massachusetts’ Eric Feng, the tournament co-leader entering the final round.

## TWO KNIGHTS TANGO (A50)

Eric Feng (2223)

FM Brewington Hardaway (2453)

2023 Barber K-8 (6), Grand Rapids, 08.01.2023

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 Nc6 3. Nc3 d5 4. e3 g6 5. cxd5 Nxd5 6. Bc4 Nb6 7. Bb5 Bg7 8. Nf3 0-0 9. 0-0 Qd6 10. b3 Bf5 11. Bb2 Rad8 12. Qe2 a6 13. Bxc6 Qxc6 14. Rac1 Qd6?! 15. Rfd1 c6 16. Nd2 h5 17. h3 Nd5 18. e4 Nxc3 19. Bxc3 Bc8? 20. Nc4 Qf4 21. d5 cxd5 22. Bxg7 Kxg7 23. exd5 Qg5 24. Qe5+ Qxe5 25. Nxe5 Kf6 26. Nc4 b5 27. Ne3 Rd6 28. a4 Bd7 29. a5?! Rc8 30. b4?! Rxc1 31. Rxc1 e6 32. dxe6 Bxe6 33. Kf1? Rd4 34. Rb1 Ke5 35.

Ke2 f5 36. Nc2 Bc4+ 37. Ke1 Re4+ 38. Kd1 Re2 39. Ne3 Bd3 40. Rc1 Rxf2 41. Rc5+ Kd4 42. Nd5 f4 43. Ke1 Rf1+ 44. Kd2 Bc4 45. Ne7 Rf2+ 46. Kd1 Kd3 47. Kc1 Rxc2 48. Nd5 Rg1+ 49. Kb2 f3, White resigned.

I was very impressed by 12-year-old Jasmine Su (CT), who ended in a three-way tie for first place with Zhao and your author by winning her final round game against Washington’s Yiding Lu. As predicted, the tiebreaks did factor, with Zhao in first, me in second, and Su in third place. Su also won the \$500 Barber Award for the top player 12 or under — there were no 11-year-olds in the field!

While I didn’t claim first place this time, I was pretty happy with my play, and I’m ready to try and qualify for next year’s Denker to take another shot at a national title!

## ROCKEFELLER

The Rockefeller features some of the youngest and most impressive upcoming talents from across the United States. This tournament





John Abraham

all ended with 5/6; Abraham was first on tiebreaks, with Jing in second, and Jagirapu in third. Nebraska's Siva Kolli won the Rockefeller Award for the top player age 8 or under.

## WEERAMANTRY

I missed the FM Sunil Weeramantry Blitz Tournament of State Champions due to my travel issues, but it was very well attended, with 162 of the Invitational competitors taking part across four sections. FMs Terry Luo and Gus Huston tied for first in the 2200+ section, scoring 6½/8. Eric Feng scored 7/8 in the 1800-2199 section. Kushagra Bhargava (CT) was a perfect 8/8 in the 1400-1799 section, as was

Varun Venkat Iyengar (OR) in the U1400 section.

## TEAM

The team scores are always a source of pride for the winners. This year, Georgia and New York ended up tying with 23/30, but after tiebreaks, Georgia finished slightly ahead, giving them bragging rights for the year.

Florida was the top finisher for the U2100 teams, while Oregon took top honors among the U1900 crowd. Congratulations to all the winners! 🏆

presented a diverse array of exciting games, with heavy emotions experienced by these competitors. Ultimately John Abraham (KY), Andrew Jing (DE), and Harshin Reddy Jagirapu (NM)

For more on the Invitationals and the 2023 U.S. Open, visit our CLO coverage at [new.uschess.org/2023-us-open](https://new.uschess.org/2023-us-open).



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# CHESS ADVENTURES

THE INVATIONALS AS TOLD BY DEWAIN BARBER

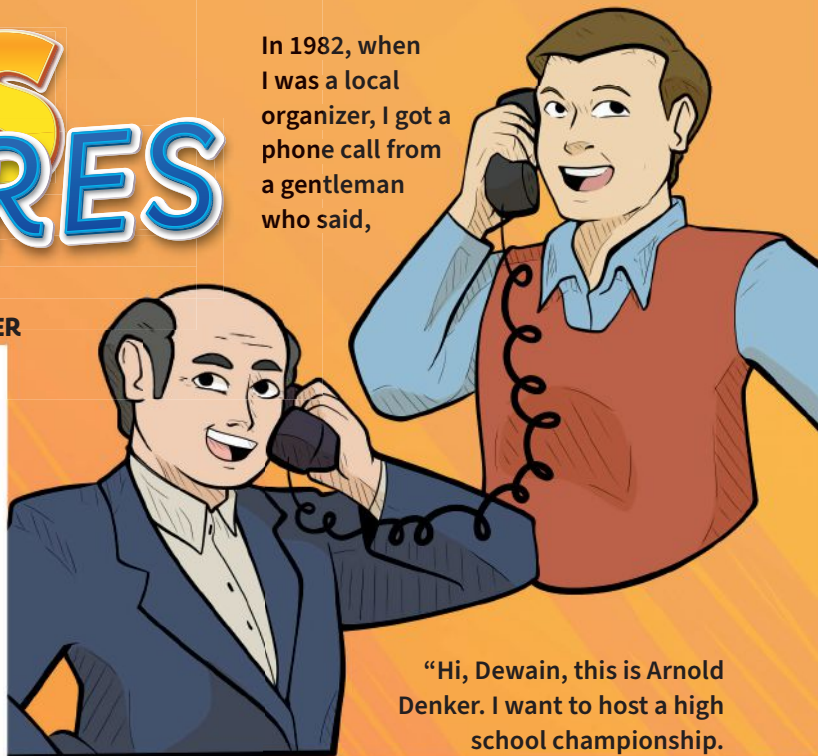
“I want to invite one student who attends high school from every state of the union to come and play in a tournament that US Chess will host.”

Arnold Denker was a GM and two-time U.S. Champion. An impressive man. He basically got the delegates to approve the tournament with one sentence: “This is good for chess.”



He left taking care of the rules and information up to me. And we pulled it off and today everyone sees it as a wonderful opportunity.

In 1982, when I was a local organizer, I got a phone call from a gentleman who said,



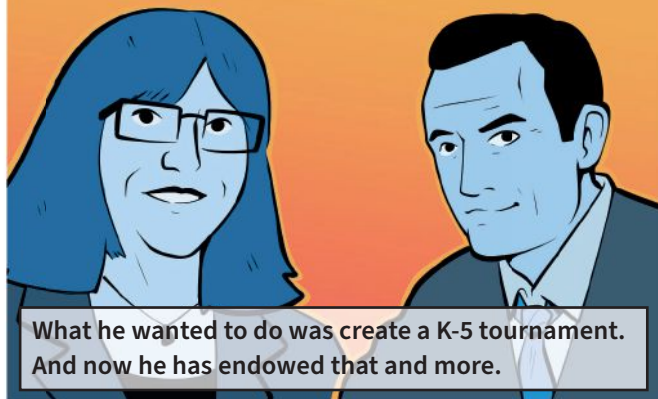
“Hi, Dewain, this is Arnold Denker. I want to host a high school championship.”

Then one day I got a call from someone whose son was the strongest in his state, but he was too young to play in the Denker. I thought, “We’ve got to take a look at those younger kids.” So I proposed a K-8 tournament. And the delegates voted for it unanimously and I went back to my seat a happy camper.



But then someone made a motion to amend the motion! And they changed the tournament name to the Dewain Barber National Tournament of K-8 Champions.

In 2013, the National Girls Invitational Tournament started and was renamed to honor former Executive Board president WIM Ruth Haring in 2018. Not long after that, a young fellow, John D. Rockefeller V, asked me how we developed the K-8 tournament.



What he wanted to do was create a K-5 tournament. And now he has endowed that and more.

So now we have multiple sections of invitationals. This has been an amazing journey that I never thought I would have been part of!





KCF 19th ANNUAL  
**2024**  
**ALL-GIRLS**  
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS



APRIL 12-14, CHICAGO, IL

Presented by



HYATT REGENCY MCCORMICK PLACE

The Champion in each age category, qualifies to represent the USA at the World Cadets, and World Youth Championships

**MAIN EVENT**

6-SS, G/90,d5

**Friday April 12**

2:30 PM Opening Ceremony

3:00 PM Round 1

**Saturday April 13**

10:00 AM Round 2

2:30 PM Round 3

6:30 PM Round 4

**Sunday April 14**

9:00 AM Round 5

1:00 PM Round 6

5:00 PM Awards Ceremony

**ENTRY FEE**

\$90 by 3/4, \$110 by 4/1, \$120 by 4/11, \$135 on-site.

**SIDE EVENTS**

**Bughouse Tournament**

Fri. April 12 11:00 AM

Entry fee: \$50 by 4/1, \$60 after 4/1 and on-site.

**Blitz Tournament (G/5,d0)**

Fri. April 12 7:00 PM

Entry fee: \$40 by 4/1, \$50 after 4/1 and on-site.



**SECTION/AWARDS**

Age as of 1/1/2024

**Under 8** top 15 individuals  
top 500 – 799, top U500, top 6 schools

**Under 10** top 15 individuals  
top 700 – 999, top U700, top 6 schools

**Under 12** top 15 individuals  
top 900 – 1199, top U900, top 6 schools

**Under 14** top 15 individuals  
top 1100 – 1399, top U1100, top 4 schools

**Under 16** top 8 individuals  
top 1300 – 1599, top U1300, top 3 schools

**Under 18** top 8 individuals,  
top 1500 – 1799, top U1500, top 3 schools

**HYATT MCCORMICK PLACE**

2233 S. Dr Martin Luther King Jr  
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Mailed Registration: make checks payable to: Rknights 599 Linden Ln, Wauconda, IL 60084

[www.kasparovchessfoundation.org](http://www.kasparovchessfoundation.org)

# TOURNAMENT LIFE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Board authorizes a temporary change in the US Chess Grand Prix (GP) rules for the period March 4, 2020 through December 31, 2023 out of concern for the unforeseeable impacts the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) could have on participation in GP events. The change allows organizers with guaranteed prize funds to change the status of their prize fund without first seeking US Chess permission to make the change. Please refer to the Tournament Life Announcement section in *Chess Life* for more information.

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

## Nationals

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 2023 National K-12 Grade Championships

DECEMBER 15-17, 2023, FLORIDA

Event site: Hyatt Regency Orlando Address: 9801 International Drive, Orlando, FL 32819 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Boyd Reed Email: [nationalevents@uschess.org](mailto:nationalevents@uschess.org) Phone: n/a Website: <http://www.uschess.org/tournaments/2023/k12> TLA ID: 39936

HERITAGE EVENT

### World Amateur Team & U.S. Team East

FEBRUARY 17-19, 2024, NEW JERSEY

Event site: Parsippany Hilton Address: 1 Hilton Ct., Parsippany, NJ 07054 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: New Jersey Chess Federation Email: [esdayle@aol.com](mailto:esdayle@aol.com) Phone: [esdayle@aol.com](mailto:esdayle@aol.com) Website: <https://njscf.org/> TLA ID: 39739

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

### 2024 KCF All-Girls National Championships

APRIL 12-14, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Address: 2233 S MLK Dr, Chicago, IL 60616 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Kasparov Chess Foundation & Renaissance Knights Email: [david.heiser@renaissanceknights.org](mailto:david.heiser@renaissanceknights.org) Phone: n/a Website: <http://allgirls.rknights.org/> TLA ID: 40271

## Grand Prix

The Grand Prix continues in 2023. For information visit [new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program](http://new.uschess.org/us-chess-grand-prix-program).

## PLEASE NOTE

### DEADLINE FOR PRINT TLA SUBMISSIONS

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

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 48th annual Eastern Open

DECEMBER 26-29, 2023, VIRGINIA

Event site: Hyatt Regency Crystal City Address: 2799 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA 22202 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](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39208

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

### 33rd annual North American Open

DECEMBER 26-30, 2023, NEVADA

Event site: Horseshoe Casino Resort (formerly Bally's) Address: 3645 Las Vegas Blvd. S, Las Vegas, NV 89103 Overall prize fund: \$130,000 GP Points: 300 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 38602

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 12th annual Boston Chess Congress

JANUARY 5-7, 2024, MASSACHUSETTS

Event site: Hyatt Regency Boston Harbor Address: 101 Harborside Dr, Boston MA 02128 Overall prize fund: \$12,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39219

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### Tim Just Winter Open XL

JANUARY 5-7, 2024, ILLINOIS

Event site: Hyatt Regency Schaumburg Address: 1800 E Golf Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173 Overall prize fund: \$10,000 GP Points: 20 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: King Registration Email: [bill@kingregistration.com](mailto:bill@kingregistration.com) Phone: 773-317-8347 Website: <https://www.kingregistration.com> TLA ID: 40644

GRAND PRIX

### Dewey Beach Open 2024

JANUARY 6-7, 2024, DELAWARE

Event site: Hyatt Place Address: 1301 Coastal Highway, Dewey Beach, DE 19971 Overall prize fund: \$2,800 GP Points: 10 FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Delaware Chess Association Email: [BradCT@verizon.net](mailto:BradCT@verizon.net) Phone: 302-312-4524 Website: <http://Delawarechessassociation.org> TLA ID: 40526

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

### 56th annual Liberty Bell Open

JANUARY 12-15, 2024, PHILADELPHIA

Event site: Sonesta Hotel Address: 1800 Market St, Philadelphia 19103 Overall prize fund: \$25,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39349

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 15th annual Golden State Open

JANUARY 12-15, 2024, CALIFORNIA, N.

Event site: Embassy Suites San Rafael Marin County Address: 101 Mclinnis Pkwy, San Rafael CA 94903 Overall prize fund: \$25,000 GP Points: 150 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39226

GRAND PRIX

### 2024 Charlotte Open

JANUARY 13-15, 2024 NORTH CAROLINA

Event site: UNC Charlotte Marriott Hotel & Conference Center Address: 9041 Robert D Snyder Road, Charlotte, NC 28262 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 gtd GP Points: 100 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Charlotte Chess Center Email: [events@charlottechesscenter.org](mailto:events@charlottechesscenter.org) Phone: n/a Website: <https://www.charlottechesscenter.org/usmasters> TLA ID: 40280

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 15th annual Southwest Class Championships

FEBRUARY 15-19, 2024, TEXAS

Event site: Westin Dallas Fort Worth Airport Address: 4545 W John Carpenter Fwy, Irving TX 75063 Overall prize fund: \$35,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 39835

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 8th annual George Washington Open

FEBRUARY 23-25, 2024, VIRGINIA

Event site: Washington Dulles Marriott Address: 45020 Aviation Dr, Dulles VA 20166 Overall prize fund: \$17,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 40252

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 31st annual Western Class Championships

MARCH 1-3, 2024, CALIFORNIA, S.

Event site: Hilton Orange County Airport Address: 18800 Macarthur Blvd, Irvine CA 92612 Overall prize

fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chessevents.us> TLA ID: 40212

GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX

### 21st annual Southern Class Championships

MARCH 15-17, 2024, FLORIDA

Event site: Wyndham Orlando Resort Address: 8001 International Drive, Orlando 32819 Overall prize fund: \$17,000 GP Points: 80 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com/TLAID>: 40675

HERITAGE EVENT • GRAND PRIX • ENHANCED GRAND PRIX • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

### 28th Annual Mid-America Open

MARCH 22-24, 2024, MISSOURI

Event site: Clayton Plaza Hotel St. Louis-Clayton Address: 7750 Carondelet Ave., St. Louis MO 63105 Overall prize fund: \$20,000 GP Points: 120 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com/TLAID>: 40663

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

### 16th Annual Open At Foxwoods

MARCH 27-31, 2024, CONNECTICUT

Event site: Foxwoods Resort Casino And Hotel Address: Rt 2, Mashantucket CT 06339 Overall prize fund: \$60,000 GP Points: 200 FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Continental Chess Association Email: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Phone: [director@chess.us](mailto:director@chess.us) Website: <http://www.chesstour.com/TLAID>: 40673

## Regional

### ALABAMA

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

#### 2024 Charlotte Open (NC)

See Grand Prix.

### CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

#### 2024 Charlotte Open (NC)

See Grand Prix.

### COLORADO

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

#### 2024 Charlotte Open (NC)

See Grand Prix.

### DELAWARE

JANUARY 6-7, 2024

#### Dewey Beach Open 2024 (DE)

See Grand Prix.

### DIST. OF COLUMBIA

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

#### 2024 Charlotte Open (NC)

See Grand Prix.

**FLORIDA**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

**GEORGIA**

APRIL 8, 2023-ONGOING MONTHLY

**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

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

**ILLINOIS**

JANUARY 5-7, 2024

**Tim Just Winter Open XL (IL)**

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

FEBRUARY 3, 2024

**2024 Greater Chicago K-12 Championship**

Event site: McCormick Place West Building Address: 2301 S Dr Martin Luther King Jr Dr, Chicago, IL 60616 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Renaissance Knights Email: info@renaissanceknights.org Phone: n/a Website: http://greaterchicago.rknights.org TLA ID: 40037

MARCH 22-24, 2024

**28th Annual Mid-America Open (MO)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

**INDIANA**

JANUARY 5-7, 2024

**Tim Just Winter Open XL (IL)**

See Grand Prix.

MARCH 22-24, 2024

**28th Annual Mid-America Open (MO)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

**KENTUCKY**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

**LOUISIANA**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

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

DECEMBER 9, 2023

**MCA Rockville Quads for K-12**

Event site: Bender Jewish Community Center Address: 6125 Montrose Rd, Rockville, MD 20852 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 TLA ID: 39025

JANUARY 6-7, 2024

**Dewey Beach Open 2024 (DE)**

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 20, 2024

**MCA Rockville Quads for K-12**

Event site: Bender Jewish Community Center Address: 6125 Montrose Rd, Rockville, MD 20852 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 TLA ID: 39026

**MASSACHUSETTS**

HERITAGE EVENT

JANUARY 27, 2024

**32nd Mid-Winter Classic**

Event site: St. John's Lutheran Church Address: 60 Broad Street, Westfield, MA 01085 Overall prize fund: \$700 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Western Massachusetts Chess Association Email: gbmpastore@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: http://www.wmass-chess.us/ TLA ID: 40306

**MICHIGAN**

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

DECEMBER 9, 2023

**2023 Michigan Action Championship**

Event site: Wyndham Garden Ann Arbor Address: 2900 Jackson Ave, Ann Arbor, MI, 48103 Overall prize fund: \$2,250 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Michigan Chess Association Email: jeffchess64@gmail.com Phone: 810-955-7271 Website: https://www.michess.org/ TLA ID: 40739

APRIL 12-14, 2024

**2024 KCF All-Girls National Championships (IL)**

See National Events.

**MISSISSIPPI**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

**MISSOURI**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

MARCH 22-24, 2024

**28th Annual Mid-America Open (MO)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

**NEW JERSEY**

JANUARY 6-7, 2024

**Dewey Beach Open 2024 (DE)**

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP EVENT

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

**2024 NJ Elementary and Junior High School Championships**

Event site: Brookdale Community College - Student Life Center Address: Arena Dr (Park in lot #7), Lincroft, NJ 07738 Overall prize fund: n/a GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: New Jersey State Chess Federation Email: tournaments.njscc@gmail.com Phone: n/a Website: https://njscc.org TLA ID: 40213

**NEW YORK**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

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

MARCH 9-10, 2024

**56th annual New York State Scholastic Championships**

Event site: Saratoga City Center, Hilton and Court-yard Address: various locations, Saratoga Springs, NY 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: director@chess.us Website: http://www.chessevents.us TLA ID: 40245

**NORTH CAROLINA**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

**OHIO**

MARCH 22-24, 2024

**28th Annual Mid-America Open (MO)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

**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

JANUARY 6-7, 2024

**Dewey Beach Open 2024 (DE)**

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

**TENNESSEE**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

MARCH 22-24, 2024

**28th Annual Mid-America Open (MO)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

**TEXAS**

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

MARCH 22-24, 2024

**28th Annual Mid-America Open (MO)**

See Grand Prix or chessevents.us.

**VIRGINIA**

DECEMBER 16, 2023

**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 TLA ID: 39036

JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

DECEMBER 19-23, 2023

**2023 North American Junior U20 Championships**

Event site: Washington Dulles Airport Marriott Address: 45020 Aviation Drive, Dulles, VA 20166 Overall

prize fund: FIDE titles GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Anand Dommalapati Email: 2023anaj@capitalareachess.com Phone: 1-703-627-5314 Website: https://www.capitalareachess.com/2023ANAJ TLA ID: 39413

JANUARY 6, 2024

**MCA Fairfax County Quads for K-12**

Event site: Pozez Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia Address: 48900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax, VA 22031 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 TLA ID: 39031

JANUARY 6-7, 2024

**Dewey Beach Open 2024 (DE)**

See Grand Prix.

JANUARY 13-15, 2024

**2024 Charlotte Open (NC)**

See Grand Prix.

**WISCONSIN**

DECEMBER 16-17, 2023

**The Wisconsin Memorial**

Event site: Courtyard by Marriott Address: 2266 Deming Way, Middleton, WI 53562 Overall prize fund: \$900 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: N Handicap accessible: Y Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Nietman Email: mike.nietman@charter.net Phone: 16084678510 Website: https://www.wisconsin.org/ TLA ID: 39080

JANUARY 5-7, 2024

**Tim Just Winter Open XL (IL)**

See Grand Prix.

HERITAGE EVENT • JUNIOR GRAND PRIX

FEBRUARY 3-4, 2024

**Michael A. Selig Memorial/57th NorthEastern Open**

Event site: DoubleTree by Hilton Address: 150 S. Nicolet Rd., Appleton, WI 54914 Overall prize fund: \$1,200 GP Points: n/a FIDE Rated: Y Handicap accessible: N Residency restriction: N Organizer: Mike Nietman Email: mike.nietman@charter.net Phone: 16084678510 Website: https://www.wisconsin.org/ TLA ID: 39081

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# Get TUF!

BY TIM MCGREW

**M**OST CHESS GAMES are lost because of silly mistakes. And most silly mistakes could be avoided if the loser had used a system of thought instead of just playing by instinct.

The trick is to find a system that is not too complicated, one simple enough that it can actually be used at every move, that will save us from making most of our blunders. It should be short, easy to understand, easy to memorize, and easy to practice.

Over decades of coaching, I have experimented with a lot of ideas, and the system of “TUF” chess — threats, undefended pieces, and forcing moves — is one of the most successful experiments. It will not turn beginners into experts or club players into masters. But it will help to turn beginners into moderately good club players and average club players into stronger ones.

Many chess players spend a great deal of time trying to improve in all the wrong ways, memorizing reams of opening analysis in lines that never occur over the board. If you are

a beginner or an average player and you really want to improve, I suggest that you put away the openings books for a while and start here.

## T IS FOR THREATS

The “T” in “TUF” stands for threats; specifically, threats created by your opponent’s last move. You must check to see whether they threaten anything — particularly checks and captures, but also standard tactics like forks, pins, and skewers. And then you must find the best way to respond to those threats.

This sounds simple, and it is. But even experienced tournament chess players often overlook their opponents’ threats. There are many causes for this problem, but the most common are laziness, fixation, overconfidence, excitement, one-track thinking, and shallowness.

## LAZINESS

There is no delicate way to put this: sometimes, we are just lazy and we don’t look for our opponent’s threats. How else do you explain something like this?



In Bogorad – Labate, US Amateur Team East 2004, Black has just played 5. ... Bc5 with a threat that everyone should be able to see. White, who obviously did not stop to think about his opponent’s move, played 6. Nf3?? and was checkmated at f2.

The lesson of this example is clear: to play good chess, you must be aware of what your opponent is threatening. This leads us to the most important rule for detecting and meeting threats:

*At each move, ask yourself what your opponent would do if it were his turn to play again.*

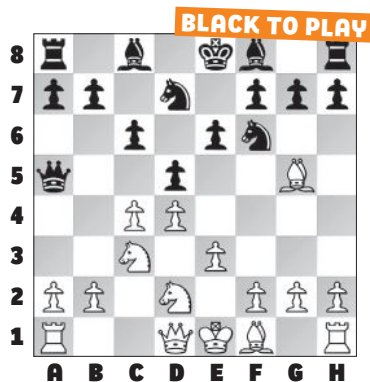
Most one-move blunders happen because we do not ask ourselves this question or do not answer it properly.

## FIXATION

This error arises from looking only at the piece the opponent has just moved rather than at all of his pieces. After laziness, fixation is probably the main cause of errors in the games of inexperienced players.

(see diagram top of next column)

This position comes from the game Obradovic – Rajcevic, Belgrade 2004. It is Black’s turn to move, and he plays 7. ... dxc4. White looks at the pawn on c4, because it is the piece that just moved; he forgets to look at

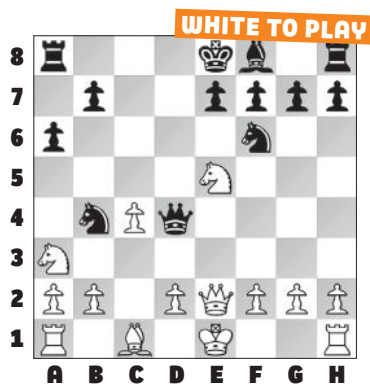


the rest of the board. After 8. **Bxc4??** White was astonished and embarrassed to find that his g5-bishop had disappeared.

White must have been a weak player, right? Not at all. In 2004, Obradovic's FIDE rating was 2201. Even masters suffer from fixation.

### EXCITEMENT

One step up from laziness is the error of getting too excited about your own plans, forgetting that your opponent may have plans of his own.



This position comes from the game Delbaere – Schuurmans, Belgian Team Championship 2004. White, who is a pawn ahead, wants to get queens off the board – a very reasonable goal. Black has just pulled his queen back from d3 to d4, and White pursues her too eagerly with 11. **Qe3??**. Black's response is 11. ... **Qxe5!** setting up a double attack on d3. White, caught off-guard, resigned rather than play on a piece down.

### OVERCONFIDENCE

It often happens in chess that we can narrow our opponent's choices, effectively forcing him to play a certain move by capturing one of his pieces or making a particular threat of our own which he must meet in a certain way. There is nothing wrong with playing forcing moves. But the sense of confidence that comes from being in command of the situation provides a golden opportunity to blunder.



The diagram shows the position from the game Forsythe – Aldrich, Michigan Class Championships 2006. With his last move White took black's f6-knight with a bishop, and Black recaptured with his queen. Without stopping to ask himself what Black threatens, White now played 8. **a3??** and resigned after Black's obvious reply.

White is not a beginner: he is a class B player with a rating in the 1600s, and most of the time he would never blunder like this. But because his last move was a capture that forced Black's reply, White's sense of danger failed him. Had he spent even two seconds asking whether Black had any threats, he would surely have seen the attack on f2 and played 8. **Nf3** or 8. **e3** stopping the attack.

### ONE-TRACK THINKING

The diagram shows the position

from Henon – De Lange, France 2004. Black has just played his queen to b6, and White sees the threat to the pawn at b2.



Having seen this one threat, White feels sure that he knows what is going on in the position. So he does not check for any further threats and overlooks the greater danger in this position. After 6. **b3??** Black played 6. ... **Qb4+** and White, now realizing that he is losing the h4-bishop, resigned.

"But wait," someone might say. "Black had two threats in that position, and White could not stop them both. So wasn't it hopeless for White no matter what he did?" Not really. The threat to b2 is a threat to win a pawn; the threat of a fork on b4 is a threat to win a piece. Faced with two threats, unable to stop them both, White needs to triage them – to decide which threat must be stopped and which one is less urgent.

One reasonable idea in the diagram is 6. **e4** allowing 6. ... **Qxb2** 7. **Nd2** when White's strong center and better development give him some compensation for the lost b-pawn.

This gives us the *triage rule* for dealing with multiple threats:

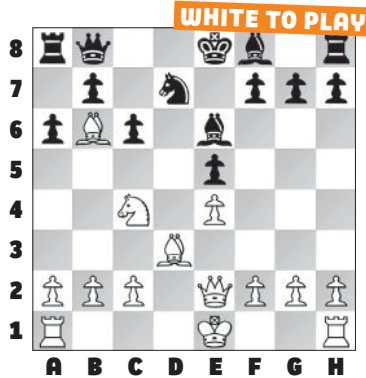
*When your opponent's move contains two threats that cannot both be met, defend against the most urgent one.*

But to apply the triage rule, you

need to see both threats in the first place. That is the secret to avoiding one-track thinking.

## SHALLOWNESS

Sometimes we misunderstand our opponent's threats because we stop thinking one move too early.



This position comes from the game Valencia Gomez – Ivanov, Spain 2004. Black has just swung a knight to d7, attacking White's bishop. White, analyzing only one move deep, assumes that

everything is under control: if Black takes on b6, White recaptures; if Black takes on c4, White has that point defended as well. It seems like everything is adequately defended.

This is too shallow: since Black has two captures, White must think out the consequences of Black's playing one and then the other. After **12. 0-0?? Bxc4!** White realized too late that Black had removed the guard of the b6-bishop.

This leads to another useful rule of thumb:

*When your opponent has several captures or checks, you must ask what happens when they are carried out one after the other.*

If White had followed this advice and analyzed a bit more deeply, he would have seen Black's threat and done something about it, perhaps by pulling his bishop back with 12. Be3.

## THE FIVE-FINGER RULE

I hope I've convinced you that alertness to your opponent's threats is absolutely critical to playing decent chess. But maybe you're worried that you won't actually use this knowledge when you're playing your own games. Here's a helpful technique I've taught for years: the five-finger rule.

When you're about to make a move, flex each of the fingers of one hand (I use my right hand, thumb to pinky in order) as you ask yourself these five words: Is this a dumb move? Amazingly, that question sometimes flips a switch in your brain, allowing you to see something obvious that you were overlooking a moment ago. And then, of course, you don't have to play that silly move at all. You can look around for something better.

Give it a try. It's the first step in your quest to get TUF! ♠

U.S. Postal Service. Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (required by 39 U.S.C. 3685). 1. Title of publication: Chess Life Kids. 2. Publication number: 023-567. 3. Date of filing: September 15, 2023. 4. Frequency of issue: Bi-monthly. 5. No. of issues published annually: 6. 6. Annual subscription price: \$34. 7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication (street, city, county, state, and ZIP code) (Not printers): P.O. Box 775038, St. Louis, MO 63177, 333 S. 18th St., St. Louis, MO 63103. 8. Complete mailing address of the headquarters of general business office of the publisher (Not printers): P.O. Box 775038, St. Louis, MO 63177, 333 S. 18th St., St. Louis, MO 63103. 9. Full names/complete mailing addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor (this item must not be blank). Publisher (name/complete mailing address): Carol Meyer, P.O. Box 775038, St. Louis, MO 63177, 333 S. 18th St., St. Louis, MO 63103. Editor (name/complete mailing address): John Hartmann, P.O. Box 775038, St. Louis, MO 63177, 333 S. 18th St., St. Louis, MO 63103. Managing Editor (name and complete mailing address): Melinda Matthews, P.O. Box 775038, St. Louis, MO 63177, 333 S. 18th St., St. Louis, MO 63103. 10. Owner. (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately there under the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other incorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, its name and address must be stated.) (Do not leave blank.): United States Chess Federation, P.O. Box 775038, St. Louis, MO 63177, 333 S. 18th St., St. Louis, MO 63103. 11. 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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, 8,777; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 10,174. (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, 77; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 96. (c) Total paid and/or requested circulation (sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4)): average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 8,854; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 10,270. (15d (1), (2), (3). Non requested distribution; average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 0; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 0. (e) Total non requested distribution (sum of 15d (1), (2), (3); 0; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 0. (f) Total distribution (sum of 15c and 15e): average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 8,854; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 10,270. (g) Copies not distributed: average number copies each issue during preceding 12 months, 708; actual number copies of single issue published nearest to filing date, 759. 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# Solutions

## PAGE 7 TEST YOUR TACTICS

(1) Remove the defender! **10. Bxc6+! bxc6 11. Qxd4** and it's bye-bye, queenie pie! (2) If you solved the November 14th "Tactics Tuesday" at *Chess Life Online*, this one is easy! **13. Qxc6+! bxc6 14. Ba6 mate** This is Boden's Mate! (3) **7. b4!** The queen cannot capture the pawn or defend c7, but worse, it lacks a good square to run to. If **7. ... Qa4 8. Bb5+! Qxb5 9. Nxc7+** with a royal fork. (4) Here White has a shot reminiscent of Legal's Mate: **7. Nxe5! Bxd1 8. Bb5+! c6 9. dxc6** and now the discovery is fatal for Black; for example, if **9. ... Bf3 10. c7+ (10.**

**cxb7+!** is even stronger) **10. ... Bc6 11. Bxc6+ bxc6 12. cxd8=Q+ Kxd8 13. Nxf7+** and wins. (aras\_hami – Sandoval703, lichess.org, 2023) (5) **7. Nd5!** hits the queen, which can no longer defend c7 and lacks good retreat squares. If **7. ... Qa4** White nudges the queen to the right square with **8. Bb5+! Qxb5 9. Nxc7+** with a royal fork. Note that **7. Nb5?** does not work due to **7. ... Qb6**. (6) **10. Bb5!** is another version of the same old story. If **10. ... Qxb5 11. Nxc7+** and wins. (7) The exposed queen lacks breathing room. White should play **10. Nb5! Qb6** (or **10. ... Qb4+ 11. c3 Qxb2 12. Nxc7+**) **11. d5 Bc5 12. Nc4!** and now if **12. ... Qxb5** White

has a brutal discovered attack with **13. Nd6+**. (8) The poorly defended d7–knight and undefended g7–rook are tactical indicators. White should play **19. Rxd7! Kxd7 20. Qd4+** with a double attack. If **20. ... Qd6 21. Qxg7 Qd1+ 22. Kb2** and White is up a piece for a pawn. (9) Black makes good use of the open h–file with the winning **19. ... Ne2+ 20. Kh1 Rxh2+! 21. Kxh2 Rh8+ 22. Bh7 Rxh7 mate**. (10) Here the weakened Black kingside and rook on the same file as the queen give White the right idea: **19. Bc2! Qc7 20. Qd3!** and now Black must give up a piece or be mated: **20. ... g6** (worse is **20. ... Kg8 21. Qh7 mate**) **21. Qxd7**.

## A Chess Game

by Ryan Bell (age 10)

I set the clock and pawn to e4  
The time, it's ticking, oh battles galore!  
I move my pony, he moves his priest  
I move my tower to the east  
His lady moves west, now it's clear, the rest  
For now I move and slap the clock  
His eyes, oh, widen up from shock  
His majesty tips, for it is now said and done  
I am victor, oh, the fun!



November 20, 2022: Liam Jesunas, age 7, of Haddonfield, New Jersey, went undefeated to win the 1st Grade section of the 2022 New Jersey K-12 Championship, earning the State Championship title.

Liam had his face painted from his two-year-old cousin's birthday the night before. He told his Mom, "I can't lose, I am a superhero!"

What can we say? It worked!

## Chess Fiction for Chess Kids by Victoria Winifred

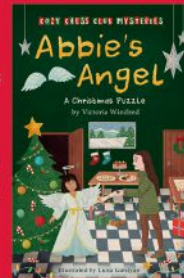
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