

CHESS LIFE

Kids





US CHESS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Carol Meyer

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
Daniel Lucas

EDITORIAL

PUBLICATIONS EDITOR
Melinda Matthews
mmatthews@uschess.org

ART DIRECTOR
Natasha Roberts

CHESS LIFE/CLO EDITOR
John Hartmann

GRAPHICS ASSISTANT
Nicole Esaltare

TECHNICAL EDITOR
IM Ron Burnett

CHARACTER DESIGNER AND
ILLUSTRATOR
Chandler Ellison

For communications and press inquiries, please contact Dan Lucas at dllucas@uschess.org

To submit letters to the editor, or for advertising inquiries or TLA display ads, please email mmatthews@uschess.org

Chess Life Kids provides a foundational interest in chess for beginning level pre-teens through the use of games, instruction, and human-interest stories. It is intended to be useful for Youth members, parents, and coaches. If interested in writing for this publication, send a well-crafted query with writing samples to the editor at mmatthews@uschess.org.

Teachers may photocopy instructional articles for classroom use, but republication or widespread copying without the written consent of US Chess is forbidden.

Chess Life Kids | Vol. 17, No. 4

AUGUST 2022

CHESSLIFE Kids

4 IN SESSION *Fast and Slow*
BY JOHN HARTMANN

6 AVOID THE TRAP *The Unpin*
BY BRUCE PANDOLFINI

8 JUDIT POLGAR VS THE WORLD
BY LAUREL ARONIAN

12 COVER STORY
WELCOME TO THE GIRLS CLUB
BY DR. ALEXEY ROOT, WIM

17 CHESS ADVENTURES *Gisela Gresser*
ART BY NICOLAS BARRIOS

20 CHESS STORIES *Girls Who Play "Up"!*
BY AL LAWRENCE



ON THE COVER

This issue celebrates girls in chess! Our cover story, by Dr. Alexey Root, WIM, takes you inside the popular Girls Club that has become a fixture online and at national scholastic events. Team club ambassador Laurel Aronian gives the inside scoop on the international simul, "Judit Polgar vs The World." And

all of our regular columns highlight a stellar array of girls and women in chess. Art: Jui Talukder



JUDIT POLGAR VS THE WORLD

BY LAUREL ARONIAN

WE HAD MET with GM Garry Kasparov. We had met with “The Queens Gambit” star, Anya Taylor-Joy, and its director, Scott Frank. The members of the US Chess Girls Club had had private Zoom meetings with so many of the greats and top chess influencers that it seemed impossible for Women’s Program Director WGM Jennifer Shahade to dream up anything more amazing.

It was stunning, then, when Shahade announced an upcoming “surprise event”: The Girls Club would participate in a worldwide simul, playing as one group taking on the chess legend, GM Judit

Polgar.

Polgar hosted her once-in-a-lifetime international exhibition, “Judit Polgar vs The World,” on March 20. The simul was held in and organized by the Hungary Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. In this ground-breaking global and integrated social event, millions of people virtually sat down to play against Polgar live. Participants included WGM Anna Rudolf, WFM Anna Cramling, and popular streamer Agadmator (Antonio Radic).

The US Chess Girls Club, together with their cross-cultural counterparts from Africa and South America, partnered with education initiatives Lighthouse Chess (Kenya) and Business Meets Chess & Kids (United States) in the

simul. WGM Sabina Foisor, WGM Nadya Ortiz, and WFM Alessia Santeramo also joined the Zoom to assist the nearly 100 members of the Girls Club in their epic battle. The eight (!) hour, 69-move game resulted in a victorious draw against Polgar, the highest-rated female player of all time!

During the simul, multitasking Shahade collaborated with her Girls Club, elite chess influencers, and titled guests while (simul) taneously providing her classic commentary throughout the match:

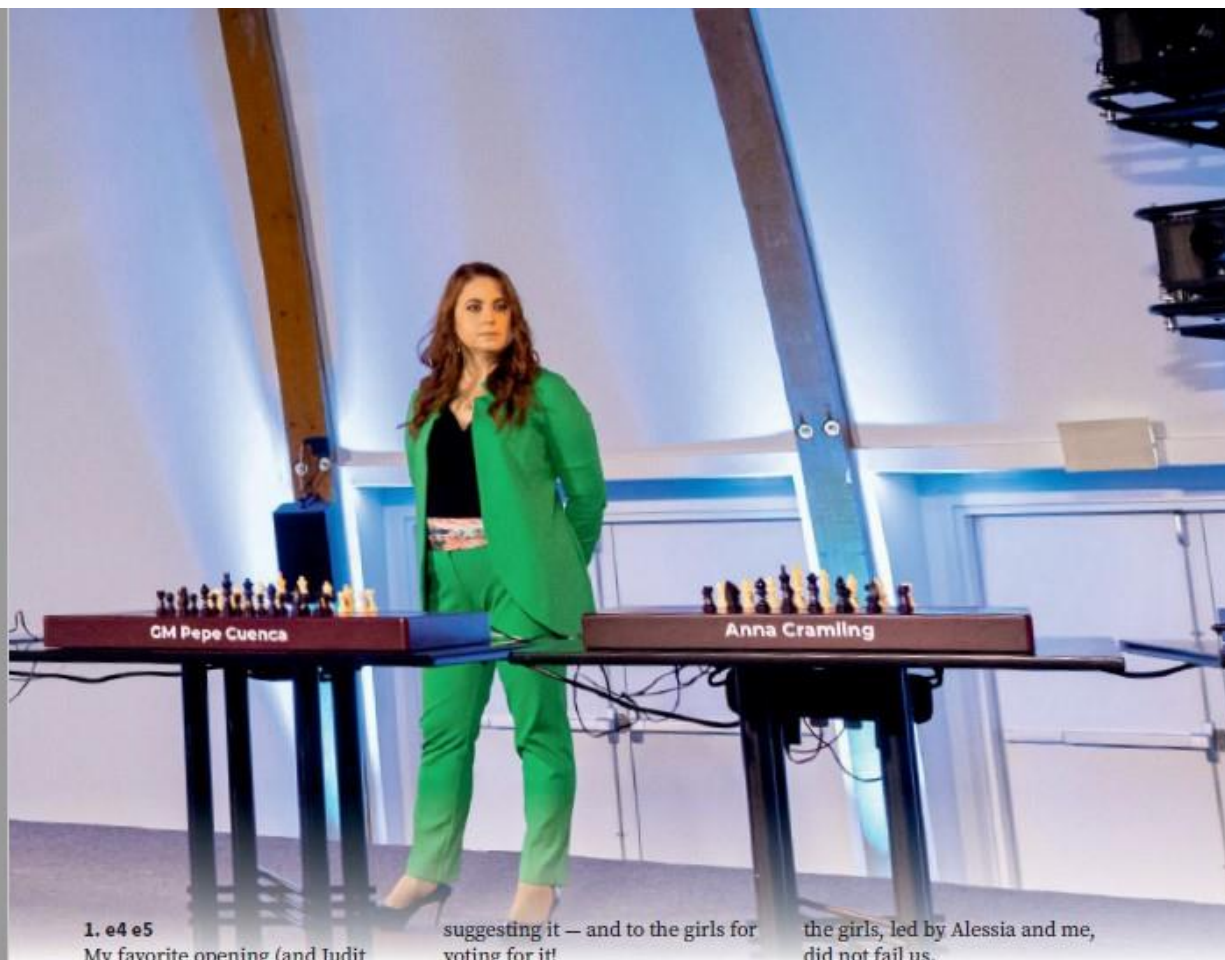
RUY LOPEZ [C88]

jpvstheworld5

jenshahade

Chess.com, 03.20.2022

Annotated by Jen Shahade



1. e4 e5

My favorite opening (and Judit Polgar's too!) is the Sicilian.

This was a hotly debated moment. It was ultimately up to the girls to break the tie. It pained me to play the move ... e7-e5, but I did it! And after the game [spoiler alert], who knows, I may do it again.

2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. O-O Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 O-O 8. h3 Bb7 9. Nc3

The battle for the d5-square quickly begins.

9. ... d6 10. a4 Na5 11. Ba2 b4 12. Nd5 Nxd5 13. Bxd5 Bxd5 14. exd5 f5
An excellent move that I wouldn't have played on my own. Thanks to WGM Nadya Ortiz of Colombia for

suggesting it — and to the girls for voting for it!

15. d3 c6

We have to improve our misplaced knight on a5.

16. dxc6 Nxc6 17. c3 a5

According to Stockfish the move a5 was our first “mistake” of the game. It weakens our b5-square. The move 17. ... Ra8-b8 achieves the same aim of bolstering b4, but without making a weakness.

18. Bd2 Rb8 19. Qb3+ Kh8 20. Qd5

Coaches often tell kids not to “get their queen out too early,” but if you can nestle your queen into a central square where it's unassailable, it can create devastating pressure. Thankfully,

the girls, led by Alessia and me, did not fail us.

20. ... Qb6 21. Bg5

There was much debate here! But eventually we agreed on this final choice: 21. ... Rb8-e8, which turns out to be a mistake.

21. ... Rbe8 22. Rac1 h6 23. Be3 Qa6 24. Qb5

We could not allow Judit to trade queens with 24. ... Qxb5 25. axb5 because of her stronger queenside structure.

24. ... Qa8 25. d4 Rb8 26. Qc4

Thanks to WGM Ortiz and the girls, who convinced me to play the great tension-keeping move, 26. ... Bf6!

26. ... Bf6! 27. dxe5 Nxe5

POLGAR SIMUL



We were all so excited to get rid of our “bad knight” that we missed 27. ... dxe5, which may have given us the initiative. Never make captures super quickly; there are often nuances that require deeper thought.

28. Nxe5 dxe5 29. Bc5

We underestimated the danger. We thought that we could just pin the bishop.

29. ... Rfc8 30. cxb4 Rxb4

The computer thinks 30. ... axb4 is better; the active rook can become a tactical problem for US, too.

31. Qe6 Re8 32. Qxf5 Rxb2

Collectively, we were worried about 32. Bc5-e3, threatening Be3xh6 here. Apparently we were right to be worried — and this is a rare moment in the game where Judit did not make the most of her chances.

33. Red1 Bg5!

(see diagram top of next column)

Great move, this stops 34. Be3.

34. Rc4 Qa6! 35. Qf7 Qe6 36. Qxe6



Rxe6 37. h4 Be7 38. Rd7 Bxc5 39.

Rxc5 Rf6 40. Rc8+ Kh7

All these positions are 0.00.

41. Rcc7 Rg6 42. Ra7 Rb1+ 43. Kh2

Rb4 44. Rxa5 Rxh4+ 45. Kg1 e4 46.

Re7 Rhg4 47. g3 Rf6

Skye and Kate, two young sisters from Lebanon, pointed out: Why not be even more active with ... Rg6-c6 or ... Rg6-d6? Absolutely correct! Luckily we are drawing.

48. Kg2 Rf3 49. Re8 Ra3 50. Kh3 Rf4

51. Kg2 Rg4 52. Kh3 Rf4

It was hour six, and we were sure Judit was going for three-move repetition. And then ...

53. Ra7

She rejected the DRAW OFFER!

As Alessia pointed out, an elite Grandmaster will always go for the “best try.”

53. ... Rxf2 54. Ree7 Rff3 55. Rxc7+

Kh8 56. Rg4 e3 57. Re4 Kg8 58. Kg4

Rf7 59. Ra6 Rg7+ 60. Kh4 Ra1 61.

Kh3 Ra3 62. g4 e2+ 63. Kh4 Ra1 64.

Rxe2 Rh1+ 65. Kg3 Rg1+ 66. Rg2

Rxc2+ 67. Kxc2 Rxc4+ 68. Kh3 Rb4

69. Rxh6 Rxa4

And we erupted into cheers as Judit Polgar, the greatest female player of all time, offered us a DRAW! Special thanks to WGM Nadya Ortiz and to host Alessia Santeramo.

The excitement of facing a player as powerful as Judit Polgar is

indescribable: She’s a legend and a dream opponent. Gaining insight into how the WGMs and FMs who helped us get the draw calculate was perfectly summed up by Shahade: experiences that “couldn’t be taught in a book.”

The simul event also illustrated what talented youth and seasoned chess professionals can learn from each other. As a girl who attended a Montessori middle school, my classroom held students ranging from 9-12 years old in the same space. We were always teaching each other — we learned from both our younger and older peers. Similarly, the balance between beginner ambition and seasoned expertise boosted our belief in ourselves during the simul.

We were in tough positions multiple times throughout the game. Sometimes, only the fresh perspective of one of the girls helped us find the saving-grace calculation. Other times, wise advice from the elite WGMs and FMs kept us from making spontaneous, dubious moves and getting into risky positions against Polgar. We grounded each other as a group: instead of panicking in the trickiest positions, we figured a way out together.

The to-be legends of the chess world worked together with the champions of the field — a killer combination that led us to our triumphant draw. I’m endlessly grateful to be part of the Girls Club (and can’t wait to see who shows up next!)

Find Laurel:

Chess.com: MountainLaurelA

Youtube: MountainLaurelA

Lichess.org: Laurel-A-IsTaken



JUDIT POLGAR FACTS

Born in Budapest on
JULY 23, 1976

Won her **FIRST**
international tournament
in New York at **AGE 9**
and was featured in
The New York Times.

Defeated a **GM**
for the first time at
AGE 11

Became a
**WORLD YOUTH
CHAMPION** at **AGE**
12 and then **14,**
both times in the Open
sections

Earned the **GM** title
in **1991** at **AGE 15,**
the youngest at the time

Has **DEFEATED**
11 **WORLD
CHAMPIONS**
— including Boris Spassky,
Anatoly Karpov, Garry
Kasparov, Viswanathan
Anand, and Magnus
Carlsen — at international
competitions



RETIRED as an active professional chess player
after the **2014** Chess Olympiad in Tromsø

Currently focuses on promoting chess internationally,
refining educational programs, writing books, and
overseeing the **JUDIT POLGAR CHESS
FOUNDATION**, which she established in 2012