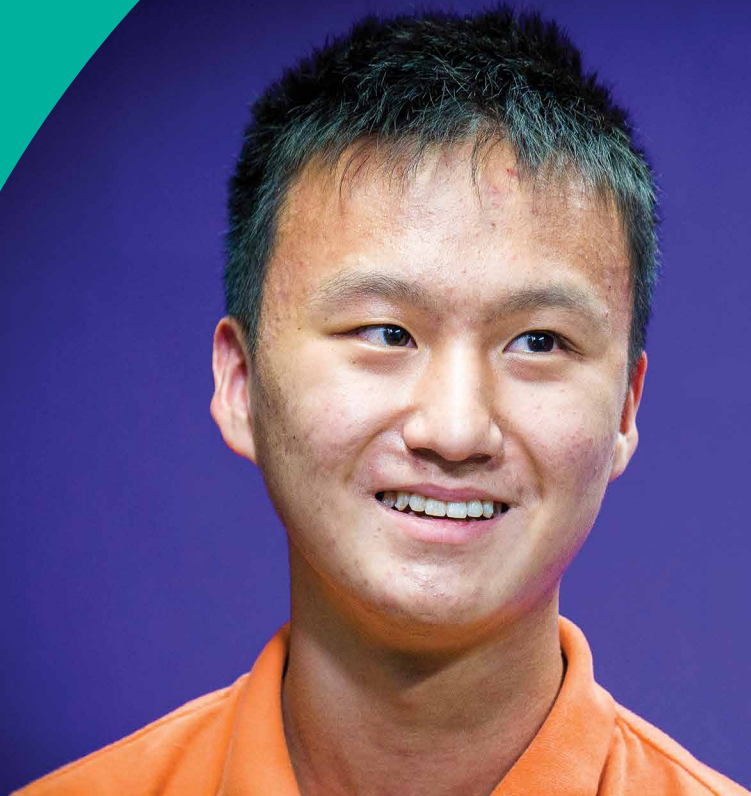




## 15-YEAR-OLD GM CHRISTOPHER YOO BECOMES THE NEW U.S. JUNIOR CHAMPION IN ST. LOUIS



In what was one of the most dominant winning runs at the U.S. Juniors' in recent years, the Californian GM was able to hold on to pole position from start to finish! Eventually, Christopher triumphed with seven points from nine games – a full-point ahead of his closest rival.

# NO BRAKES for the TOP RACER!

By NM Grayson Rorrer

Every year in July, many of the top U.S. players under the age of 21 gather at the Saint Louis Chess Club to battle it out to determine who will be the winner of the prestigious U.S. Junior Championship. It's essentially the culmination of the highly competitive American scholastic chess scene. The main prize up for stakes – besides a significant purse – is a seat in the U.S. Championship for the victor, which ensures beyond a doubt that the players have extra incentive to fight hard.

It's always an action-packed event that's fun to follow, and this year was no different. The 2022 U.S. Junior Championship was held on July 6-16, in the midst of an intense summer heatwave that was gripping much of the country (and indeed, the world); no doubt a great time to be inside at the chess board beneath the benevolent breezes of central air conditioning.



**Grayson Rorrer** is a 16-year-old national master from Texas. Apart from being an avid player and chess lover, Grayson is a great fan of chess books, with a collection of 350 volumes and counting. A versatile young man, he also runs his own website grandmaster2b.com where he writes a variety of articles, sharing his experiences on his quest to become a grandmaster.



ACM issue #29 will feature a report from the U.S. Junior Girls' Championship which was won by Jennifer Yu who was able to break a three-way tie only after rapid and blitz playoffs.

But that's not to say that things weren't about to heat up inside the SLCC.

Amongst a typically strong and balanced field rating-wise, three-time champion GM Awonder Liang, who was returning for the first time since 2019, seemed to be the odds-on favorite. He had a strong start to 2022, breaking through to 2600 FIDE for the first time in February. On top of that, he was 70 points higher than the next in line.

And yet, from the moment the event got underway, it became clear that very little would proceed as expected. Liang started out with a dismal 1/2/3 and never seemed to properly find his form, which allowed one of the other capable and talented juniors to take charge. GM Christopher Yoo was ready to take up the slack, starting with a blazing 5 1/2/6, which afforded him a one-and-a-half point lead over the rest of the field.

Junior tournaments are full of ups and downs, unexpected results, and huge upsets. This is why, from my experience, in the U.S. Junior the player who gets off to a fast start is nearly always the one who ends up prevailing in the end. In such a strong event there will always be bumps in the road, but a bit of cushion goes a long way. Yoo's defeat against Brodsky in round 7 was unexpected but certainly not undeserved (see page 81 -Ed).

In my opinion, this was the point in the tournament where Yoo showed that he deserved to take home the crown. It is easy in a way to win game after game, overcoming any and all obstacles and riding the momentum. After this momentum has been upset by a loss,

however, it can often be difficult to recover. There is many a GM who, upset by a loss, goes on to lose several more games before getting back on the saddle.

Yoo handled the less-than-ideal result very professionally, defeating second seed GM Abhimanyu Mishra the next day, and more-or-less securing the tournament victory.

[As Christopher confessed in ACM issue #25, page 37 – "I have a history of rebounding after bad losses. I've played some of my best games after painful defeats." -Ed.]

**DO2**

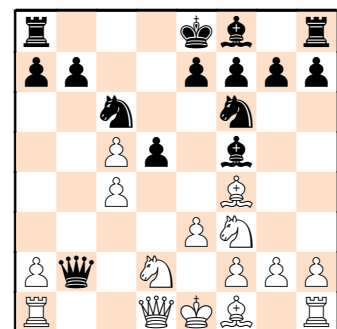
Christopher Yoo	2550
Abhimanyu Mishra	2553

U.S. Junior Championship, Saint Louis 2022

1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♙f4 c5 4.e3 ♘c6 5.♘bd2 ♚b6!? This is a critical line that poses White some difficult questions.

6.dxc5 ♚xb2 7.c4!? This sideline is rather interesting, if only due to the fact that it allows White to avoid a great deal of theory in the main line, but Black shouldn't have major issues. After 7.♙b1 ♚c3 8.♙b5 e6 9.0-0 ♙e7, a great deal of testing in high level praxis has shown that Black is doing perfectly fine here. I'm sure Yoo also factored into his decision the fact that Mishra's preparation would mainly be focused on this variation, and not the less critical main line.

7...♙f5 There are alternatives, but this looks very healthy.



8.g4!? Very aggressive, and the choice of several strong players in online games. Over the board, however, this is a novelty.

U.S. JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP, Saint Louis, Jul 6-16 2022.															
Rk	Name	Title	Elo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts	TPR
1	Christopher Yoo	GM	2550		1	1	1	0	1	1/2	1	1/2	1	7	2689
2	Andrew Hong	GM	2504	0		1/2	1	1	1/2	1/2	1	1	1/2	6	2600
3	Abhimanyu Mishra	GM	2553	0	1/2		1/2	1	0	1	1/2	1/2	1	5	2512
4	Balaji Daggupati	IM	2488	0	0	1/2		1/2	1	1/2	1	1/2	1	5	2519
5	David Brodsky	IM	2496	1	0	0	1/2		1/2	1	0	1/2	1	4 1/2	2475
6	Justin Wang	IM	2469	0	1/2	1	0	1/2		1	1/2	1/2	1/2	4 1/2	2478
7	Awonder Liang	GM	2625	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	0	0		1	1	1	4 1/2	2461
8	Brandon Jacobson	GM	2544	0	0	1/2	0	1	1/2	0		1	1	4	2427
9	Carissa Yip	IM	2416	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	0			0	2 1/2	2318
10	Pedro Espinosa		2130	0	1/2	0	0	0	1/2	0	0	1		2	2296



8.♞c1 has been the choice of Correspondence players, but it is too dry to offer any realistic chance for White to gain an advantage in practice. 8...♞xc1+ 9.♞xc1 g6! 10.♟d4 (10.♟e5!? d4! A very alert counter that promises Black full compensation. As a general rule, those doubled pawns on the c-file aren't worth much more than Black's lone foot soldier on b7! 11.♟xc6 dxe3 12.♟xe3 bxc6 13.h3 h5!? 14.g3 ♟d7 15.♟g2 ♞c8∞ M.Ciklabakkal 2186 – J.Walton 2193, ICCF email 2020.) 10...♟xd4 11.exd4 ♟g7 12.g3 0-0 13.♟g2 ♞fd8 14.0-0 ♞c8∞ Black has full compensation for the pawn, as in M.Romm 2439 – P. Kouba 2427, ICCF email 2017, which was swiftly agreed drawn.

8...♟e4!? 8...♟xg4!? Both moves are totally fine, though I feel it is more consequent to snap off the pawn, following Steinitz's rule. 9.♞b1 ♞xa2 10.cxd5 (10.♞xb7?! was seen in J.Van Foreest 2702 – A.Sarana 2685, Internet 2022, after which Black needs to find an only move to grab the advantage: 10...♟e4!?) 10...♞xd5 11.♞xb7 ♞xc5 12.♟c4 e6 Black lags slightly in development, but once he is able to get the kingside pieces out the position is very sound. 13.h3 ♟xf3 14.♞xf3 ♞c8 15.0-0 ♟d6 16.♟a6!? ♟e5 17.♞e2 ♞b8 White has sufficient compensation for the two pawns, but no more. I find the following line quite illustrative of this fact. 18.♟b3! ♞d5 19.♞d1 ♟f3+ 20.♞xf3! Otherwise this knight would have hopped to d4, with mating threats. 20...♞xf3 21.♟b5+ ♟d7 22.♟xd7+ ♟d8 23.♞xd6 ♞xb7 24.♟c6+ ♟e7 25.♟xb7 ♞xb7∞.

9.♟g2 g5!? It's always fun to meet g2-g4 with ...g7-g5! Yoo's ploy hasn't gained much yet, as Mishra was clearly still in his prep. 9...♟d3!? was played in the last but one game to reach this position and is also a very good way to continue. 10.♞c1 (10.g5? is far too ambitious. After 10...♟b4! 11.♟d4 ♟d7 12.a3 ♟c2! 13.♟xc2 ♟xc2+ 14.♟e2 ♟xa1 15.♞xa1 ♞xa1 16.♞xa1 e5 17.♟g3 Black won on move 42 in J.Van Foreest 2702 – A.Sarana 2685, Internet 2022. 17...f6!?)



▲ Abhimanyu Mishra

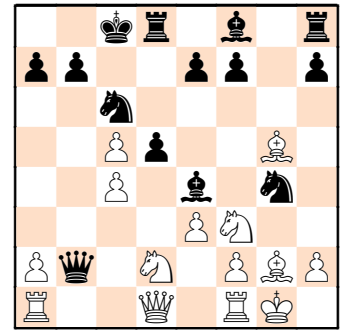
Photo by Lennart Ootes

The final important move. White is lacking sufficient compensation for the exchange.) 10...♞xc1+ 11.♞xc1 e6 12.g5 ♟d7 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♟b3 a5 15.a4 ♟b4!∞ There is still a great deal of play left in the position, but Black seems to be doing perfectly well.

10.♟xg5 0-0-0!? Judging by the time spent over the next few moves, this seems to have been the moment when both players left their respective preparations.

11.0-0 It's difficult to find another plausible move.

11...♟xg4?? Perfectly natural, but a blunder all the same. 11...dxc4! 12.♟xf6 exf6 13.♟xc4 was clearly Yoo's reasoning behind castling, as now the capture on d1 doesn't come with a check. All the same, Black has a number of different methods to reach a fine position. 13...♞xd1 14.♟xb2 ♞xa1 15.♞xa1 ♟xc5 16.♟h4!? ♟xg2 17.♟xg2 ♞d8 18.♟f5 The knight has landed on a nice outpost, but not for long! After 18...b6! 19.h4 ♟e7 Black has no problems.

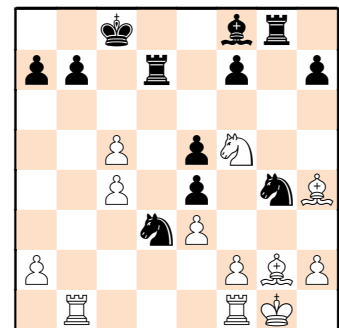


12.♞a4?? Yoo obviously overestimated the strength of his position after the queen trade. 12.♟d4! is a beautiful idea that simply creates more threats than Black is able to handle. 12...♟xd4 (12...♟ge5 runs into 13.♟xc6 ♟xc6 14.♟xe4 dxe4 15.♞g4+ with a close to winning position.) 13.exd4 ♟f5!? 14.♞f3 and Black's queenside is suddenly looking very drafty!

12...♞b4 13.♞xb4 ♟xb4 14.♟xe4 dxe4 15.♟d4 ♞g8 16.♟h4 ♞d7? Too slow for such an open position. 16...♟c6! The knight on d4 needed to be evicted, when after, for example, 17.♞ad1 ♟xd4 18.exd4 f5 19.d5 ♞g6 Black has great counterchances.

17.♞ab1! Yoo evaluated the ensuing position very accurately to be in White's favor.

17...e5 18.♟f5 ♟d3



19.c6! Damaging Black's queenside structure is far more important than holding on to the extra pawn.

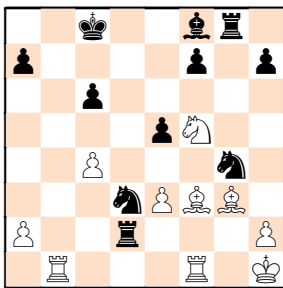
19...bxc6 20.♟h1 ♟c5 21.f3? Yoo's instinct was correct – Black's e4 pawn



needs to be eliminated so as to make way for White's light-squared bishop to do some damage. His execution, on the other hand, was a bit off the mark.

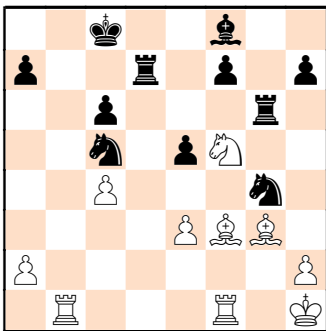
21.♖b2! White has the luxury of first controlling the second rank and doubling on the b-file, and only then breaking up the central mass. 21...♙g6 22.♖fb1 ♕d6 23.f3±.

21...exf3 22.♗xf3 ♖g6?! Also a perfectly fine move, and only inferior due to the fact that Mishra missed a better opportunity. 22...♗d2! 23.♗g3 ♖d3!



Black's threat of mate forces White to give up the bishop, which is not an ideal turn of events. 24.♗xg4 (24.♗xc6? Greed never pays. 24...♖xh2+! For the aesthetics! 25.♗g1 ♖xa2-+) 24...♖xg4 25.♖h4! Another only move, opening up White's rook to target the f7 pawn. Even so, Black still has a small but nagging superiority. 25...♗e7! 26.♖f3 ♖xa2 27.♖e1 ♖xe1 28.♖xf7! ♖f3! 29.♖xf3 ♗d7± Thanks to the outside passed a-pawn, White will have a hard fight on his hands, though there is every likelihood that the position can be held.

23.♗g3



23...♗d6?? Difficult to understand. The e5 pawn was small fry compared to the

one on c6. More importantly, the bishop on d6 blocks the black rook's access to the second rank, rendering Black completely and utterly passive! 23...f6! 24.♗xc6 ♗d2 would have provided Black with active chances.

24.♗xc6 ♗d8 25.♗d5 To beat off White's monstrous pair of bishops Black will have to give up several pawns, and with them the game. It was not terribly difficult to mop up from here.

25...♖h6 25...♗f8 26.♖b5! ♖b6 27.♖xb6 axb6 28.h3!+-

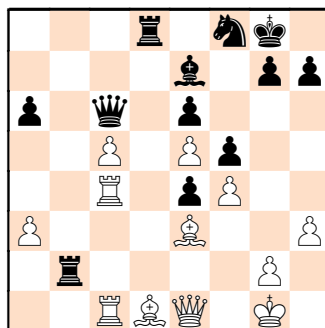
26.♖xd6+ ♗dxd6 27.♗xe5 ♖b6 28.♖xb6 axb6 29.♗xf7 ♖xf7 30.♖xf7 ♖e4 31.♖f4 ♖d2 32.♗c3 ♗d6 33.♗b4 ♗d3 34.♗g2 ♖b1 35.♗f2 ♖c3 36.♗d4 ♖d1+ 37.♗e2 ♖xd4 38.exd4 ♖b2 39.c5 bxc5 40.dxc5 ♗d7 41.♗c3 ♖c4 42.♗d3 ♖a3 43.♗b4 ♖b5 44.a4 ♖c7 45.♗a5 ♖e6 46.♗b6 ♗c6 47.♗c4 ♖f4 48.a5 ♖d5 49.♗d4 ♖b4 50.♗e4 ♗b5 51.h4 ♖c6 52.h5 ♖b4 53.h6 ♖a2 54.♗f5 ♖c3 55.♗e5 ♖e2 56.♗f6

**Black resigned**

GM Andrew Hong started off well with 3½/4, but fell back after suffering a tough loss to Yoo. Out of the opening Hong had good chances to get a better position, but after several missed opportunities on White's part, the game steered toward the following critical position which turned out to have a major impact on the rest of the tournament.

Andrew Hong	2504
Christopher Yoo	2550

U.S. Junior Championship, Saint Louis 2022



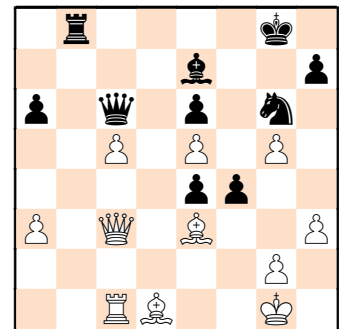
29...g5! A very bold and correct decision!

Yoo knew that if he gave White the time to consolidate his central grip, the pressure would become inexorable. His solution is radical but necessary.

30.♗c3?! And already it bears fruit! Hong must have been feeling quite unsettled after such a massive surprise in an apparently tranquil position. 30.g3 My first thought as White would be to keep the pawn chain together, but Black has already successfully loosened the base, and will have good counterplay after 30...gxf4 31.gxf4 ♖g6 32.♗c3 ♖a2.

30...♖bb8 31.fxg5 ♗d3 32.♗e1 ♖g6 Black's play is flowing very naturally and energetically.

33.♖4c3 ♖xc3 34.♗xc3 f4

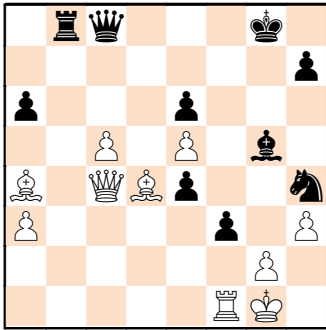


35.♗d4?? The d4 square looks like a very poor spot for the bishop. Its sight is hindered in both directions! After this White is lost.

Correct was 35.♗f2!, when after 35...♗xg5 36.h4! is a nice point, but very difficult to foresee. Then, after 36...♖xh4 37.♗xh4! ♗xh4 38.♗c4, Black's attack has been entirely nixed, and now it is his own king that is beginning to look a bit vulnerable. And if 38...♗d5 39.♗xd5 exd5 40.♗g4 ♗d8! 41.♗d1 ♗c7=

35...♗xg5 36.♗c4 f3 37.♗a4 ♗c8 38.♖f1 38.♗d1!+ e3! 39.gxf3 ♗h8 Black's attack will soon prove decisive.

38...♖h4?? A major oversight that could have cost Yoo a well-deserved win. 38...♖f4! 39.gxf3 ♗f8!+- Once the queen joins the attack it's all over but the crying.



**39.gxf3?** An understandable reflex with only seconds to ponder, but now Black wins an exchange by force. 39.♔f2! fxe2 40.♕d1 With the knight on f4 there would be no point to this operation, but with the steed on h4 it is impossible for Black to make headway. 40...♗b2 41.♔c2! ♖f3+ 42.♔xg2 ♖d2 43.♗xd2 ♔xd2 44.c6∞.

**39...♖xf3+ 40.♔g2 ♖d2** White resigned on move 59.

While this loss must have been a hard pill to swallow, Hong kept himself in the running by winning a very pretty miniature against Brandon Jacobson in round 7, cutting the distance to only half a point. In the end his efforts fell just short, though not due to any lack of fighting spirit! Hong will certainly be a name to watch in next year's event.

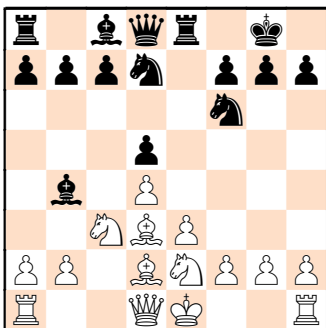
**E48**

Brandon Jacobson	2544
Andrew Hong	2504

U.S. Junior Championship, Saint Louis 2022

**1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♖c3 ♔b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♔d3 d5 6.cxd5** Not very difficult for Black to handle, in my opinion, but neither are the alternatives against a well-prepared opponent.

**6...exd5 7.♖ge2 ♗e8 8.♔d2 ♖bd7**



▲ Andrew Hong

Photo by Lennart Ootes

**9.♗c2?!** White should try to discourage the ...c5 break, if at all possible. 9.0-0

**A) 9...c5?** Here Black should refrain from the central break in favor of simple development. 10.a3 ♔a5 11.dxc5 ♖xc5 12.♔b5! The point. By attacking the rook on e8 White gains critical time to favorably position his pieces, so as to put pressure on the IQP after 12...♖cd7 13.♖f4 ♗e5 14.♖ce2±.

**B) 9...♔d6 10.♗c1 a6!?** has been popular, allowing Black's c-pawn to remain flexible in case of f2-f3, preventing any ♖b5 trickery and also preparing to seize space on the queenside. 11.♖g3! b5 12.♖ce2 was N.Short 2686 - A.Brkc 2599, Reykjavik 2015, where I think Black would have done well to prevent the knight's invasion on f5, just in case. 12...g6↔.

**9...c5!** Well timed. White can pick up either the bishop pair or a superior pawn structure, but in no case a better game.

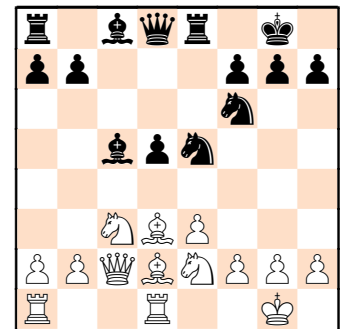
**10.dxc5 10.a3 ♔xc3 11.♗xc3 ♖e4 12.♗c2 cxd4 13.♖xd4 ♖e5↔** is not a great improvement on the game continuation from White's viewpoint,

though it does seem markedly less likely that he will be brutally mated.

**10...♔xc5 11.0-0 ♖e5** The critical position of the game, which I was not expecting to be the case while observing it in real time! White has several ways to maintain a playable position, but what Brandon played is not one of them.

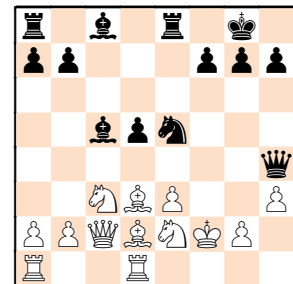
**12.♗fd1??** Yes, two question marks, and yes, after this error White should lose by force. It was hard to imagine a brilliant attack coming from such humble beginnings!

After 12.h3!? ♔e6 13.♗fd1 a6 14.♖f4 ♗c8 15.♗ac1 ♖d7 the position is very balanced, but this is surely an improvement over the game for White.



**12...♖fg4!** A very sudden opportunity which was well-spotted by Andrew! White is simply unable to deal with the threats.

**13.♔e1 13.h3** This variation is the most illustrative of what Hong had in mind. 13...♖xf2! 14.♖xf2 ♗h4+



Black's attack just can't be parried. A few examples:



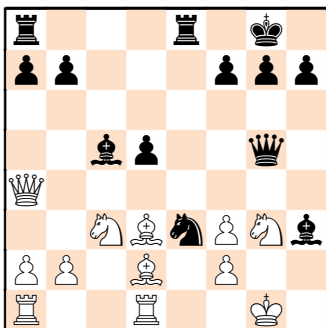
**A) 15.♖g3 ♜f4+!** A nice point. White loses his extra piece, thanks to the pin.  
**B) 15.♔g1?! ♜f3+!! 16.gxf3 ♜xe3 17.♜e4!? ♜b6 18.♜c5 ♜xf3-+.**  
**C) 15.♔f1 ♜xh3! 16.♜xh7+ ♔h8** White actually manages to retain his extra material for the time being, but with such a weak king any fantasies won't last long. 17.♜f5 ♜xf5 18.♜xf5 ♜g4! 19.g3 ♜h3+ 20.♔e1 d4-+.  
**D) 15.g3!? ♜h5!** Winning, thanks to Black's mating threats. 16.♜d4!? (16.♜xh7+ ♔h8 17.♜h1!? ♜f3+ 18.♔g1 ♜c4 19.♜f1 ♜h5 leaves White unable to deal with the dual threats against e3 and h7.) 16...♜xd4 17.♜e2 ♜g4! 18.hxg4 ♜h2+ 19.♔f1 ♜h3+ 20.♔f2 ♜xe3+! Blow after blow, the hits just keep coming. I wonder if Hong had seen all of this during his fifteen-minute think! 21.♜xe3 ♜xg4+ 22.♜xg4 ♜h2+ 23.♔f1 ♜xc2-+.

13.g3 may have been Brandon's best shot, though I'm sure Hong would have been able to work his way through the complications, after which he would have ended up a piece ahead. 13...♜f6 14.♜f4 g5! 15.♜xh7+ ♔h8 16.♜cxd5 ♜h6 17.h3 gxf4 18.♜xf4 ♜xh7 19.♜xc5 ♜f5!-+ The final accurate point, not allowing White any chance to recover and make use of his powerful dark-squared bishop. Black has a winning attack, along with his extra piece.

**13...♜h4 14.h3 ♜f3+!** The point. White has to accept the "gift horse," but contrary to the cliché this is nothing to celebrate!

**15.gxf3 ♜xe3!** Another very generous offer, but this time one that can't be accepted.

**16.♜a4 ♜g5+ 17.♜g3 ♜xh3 18.♜d2**



**18...♜f6!** The "scorpion's sting at the end of the combination," as Fischer referred to it. This had to be seen all the way back at move 12, but now White has no defense.

**19.♜xh7+** On 19.♜e2 ♜xd1 20.♜xd1, Black has the deadly kill 20...♜xf2+!, which works great thanks to 21.♔xf2 ♜b6+!, a case in point of Black's 18<sup>th</sup> move.

**19...♔h8 20.♜f5** Trying to block the threats, but it is too late for that. 20.♜d3 ♜c4 might not be the most accurate way to convert, but it is very simple. Then, 21.♜e1!? is the only way to prevent ...♜xf3, but it is no more than a temporary salve on a gruesome wound. 21...♜xf2+! 22.♔h2 ♜xe1 23.♜xe1 ♜xe1 24.♜xe1 ♜h6-+.

**20...♜xf5 21.♜xd5 ♜g6**  
**White resigned**

A nice finish to a sudden and very inspired attack. This result was also very significant for the standings, as Yoo had been running away with the tournament up to this point. In this round, however,

▼ Brandon Jacobson Photo by Lennart Ootes



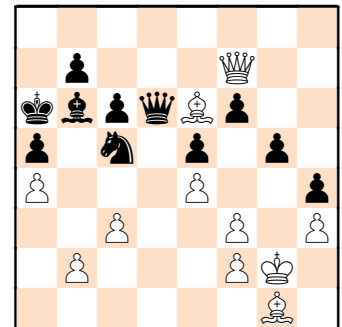
he unexpectedly lost to Brodsky, allowing Hong to stay within a half point of the lead heading into the critical final two rounds.

Abhimanyu Mishra has been on a tear lately, adding fifty points to his FIDE rating after already having become the youngest player ever to achieve GM status. He surely has a long and successful career ahead of him. At the U.S. Junior he began with a promising 3/4 before getting a bit bogged down and losing two important matchups in the later rounds, eventually finishing in third place. I'm sure this is not what he wanted, but for a debut he certainly could have done worse!

This very plucky win against top seed Awonder Liang allowed him to pick up his first win and goes to show the dangers of complacency. Even with an extra half hour and a dominating position, the game isn't over until it's over.

Abhimanyu Mishra	2553
Awonder Liang	2625

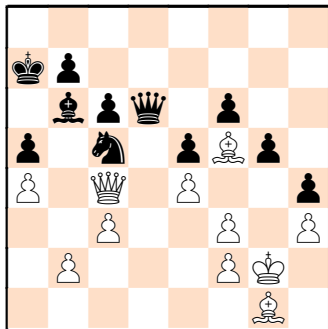
U.S. Junior Championship, Saint Louis 2022



Awonder has been much better and pressing a serious time advantage for many moves, and here he finally gets the opportunity he was looking for.

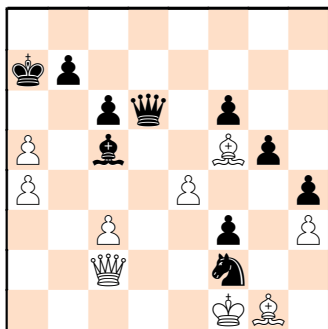
**59.♜c8?** It was necessary for White to stay put with 59.♜c4+ ♔a7 60.b3, after which it is not clear if Black would be able to break through. I suspect it is a fortress, despite the indignity of having the bishop on g1.

**59...♜c7! 60.♜c4+ ♔a7 61.♜f5 ♜d6**



62.f4!? The only chance for the g1 bishop to ever see the light of day.

62...exf4 63.b4 ♖d3 64.bxa5 f3+! 65.♔f1 ♕c5 66.♚b3 ♜xf2 67.♚c2



The preceding moves could not have gone better for Awonder, but here, with 28 minutes on the clock, he commits a cardinal sin that cost him the game, and swings the evaluation from an incredible -65 to +8!!

67...♚g3?? Played after three seconds of "hesitation." Rerouting his knight to g3 was one last thing for Black to achieve, therefore 67...♜h1!! was the way to go and swiftly end White's misery.

68.♚xf2! And just like that, the bishop on g1, which saw not a glimmer of light moments before, ends up deciding the outcome in White's favor. **Black resigned** after 17 more agonizing moves, perhaps still trying to understand how things had taken such a turn for the worse.

Despite the fact that Yoo's fast start left the majority of the field with little to play for, this fact didn't stop the rest of the players from waging highly aggressive fighting games. Life is too short for

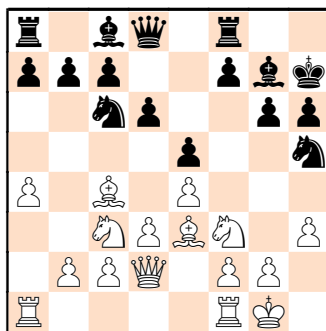


▲ Awonder Liang Photo by Lennart Ootes

fourteen-move draws in the Berlin! A seemingly unimportant halved point from the second round between IMs David Brodsky and Carissa Yip provided a veritable thicket of complications and, naturally, some large and not-so-large errors. Who could foresee such a mess coming from the quiet, unassuming Italian game? It can be easy to write off such games as being low quality, but in fact there is much more to be gained from these brawls than any effortless win.

David Brodsky	2496
Carissa Yip	2416

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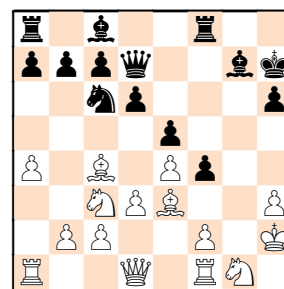


11.g4!? 11.♚d1 would be another, possibly less loose way to prevent

...f5, but probably no better than the game move. 11...♖d4 12.♗xd4 exd4 13.♜e2 c5=.

11...f5?? The intent behind this wild sacrifice was interesting, but definitely not correct. 11...♜f6 12.♗h1 ♜g8∞.

12.gxh5 f4 13.hxg6+ ♜xg6 14.♗h2 ♗h7 15.♚e2?? An easy error to make. The queen may seem well placed on e2, but later on it will become clear that ...f3 coming with tempo is of no small importance! 15.♚d1! ♚d7 16.♜g1



Now White has enough time to consolidate and will win easily. The point lies in 16...f3 17.♜b1! ♖d4 18.♜d2, when Black is missing one tempo to play ...♜e2, as could have happened in the game.

▼ Detail from playing hall Photo by Crystal Fuller



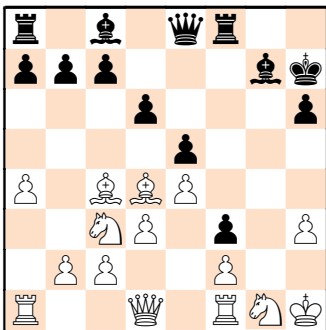


▲ Carissa Yip

Photo by Crystal Fuller

15...♔d7 16.♘g1 f3 17.♔d1 ♘d4!  
18.♖h1 Not forced, but it's hard to find a better move. 18.♘b1?? runs into 18...♘e2 winning, whereas after 18.a5!? ♗h8! Black's plan to make progress involves putting the queen on g7 and threatening mate, thus forcing White to cast his extra piece to the wind. 19.♗xd4 exd4 20.♘ce2 fxe2 21.♗xe2 ♖f4.

18...♗e8 19.♗xd4



19...♗h5?? The obvious continuation of the attack, but now White has a miraculous defense.  
19...exd4 20.♘xf3 dxc3 21.bxc3 ♗xh3 22.♖g1 ♖f4! Perhaps this rook lift is what Carissa missed. Due to the threat of ...♗g4, Black is dominating.

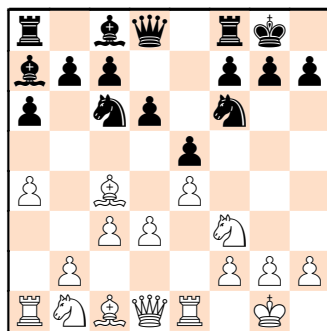
20.♖h2 exd4 21.♘ce2 fxe2 22.♗xe2 ♗e5+ 23.f4! ♗xf4+ 24.♖h1 ♗h4 25.♗f2 The game is very unclear and,

after further complications, a **draw** was agreed on move 41.

One player who I certainly expected to see contending for the title was GM Brandon Jacobson, who has been steadily improving following the pandemic-induced pause. After a strong start Brandon blundered badly against Awonder Liang and unfortunately never seemed to recover. His round three victory over Carissa Yip was his first, and a nice example of how to take advantage of White's careless move order in the opening.

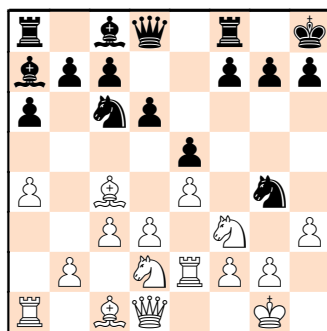
Carissa Yip	2416
Brandon Jacobson	2544

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9.♘bd2? A well-known move order mistake, as Brandon proceeds to demonstrate convincingly. 9.h3 h6 and only now 10.♘bd2 is the main line, with much theoretical debate among the top players.

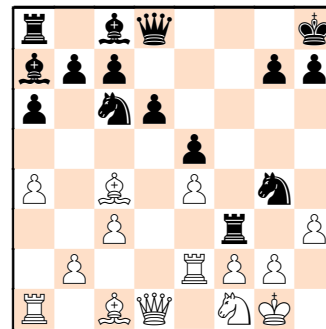
9...♘g4! 10.♗e2 ♖h8 11.h3



11...f5! A very alert mini-combo that forces White to display some accuracy to hold the balance.  
12.♘f1? 12.exf5!? ♘h6 13.b4 ♗xf5

14.b5 ♘a5! With accurate play White can apparently hold, but his position is definitely under pressure. P.Zaas 2360 - K.Holroyd 2514, ICCF email 2017.

12...fxe4 13.dxe4 ♗xf3!



14.hxg4?! The sacrifice ought to have been accepted, though White still has a tough slog ahead of him after 14.gxf3 ♘f6 15.♘g3 ♗xh3! T.Abergel 2411 - L.Travadon 2452, Paris 2022.

14...♗f8 15.♘e3 ♗h4 16.f3 ♘e7 Black has a big initiative which he later converted to a win on move 37.

**White resigned**

Christopher Yoo's winning score of 7/9 was easily the most impressive in recent years and worth a whopping 17 rating points. It will be interesting to see if he can maintain his momentum in the 2023 U.S. Championship, certainly a much higher level of competition than he has experienced up to this point.

The U.S. Junior Championship is always an event that chess devotees eagerly look forward to following and not only because it's always a fierce competition. More importantly, it's an exciting yearly glimpse into the future of where U.S. chess is headed. New talent is always on abundant display, and there are always surprises. Who knows what lies around the corner?

