



SMILE AND REMEMBER... OR, JUST HAVE FUN!

UNFORTUNATE CHESS QUOTES

At the present day where social media have strong impact on our lives, Christmas and New Year's holidays seem to be a perfect period to have tons of joy and laughter on various chess topics that may be found on different SM channels. Thanks to chess literature, we can relate to similar hilarious statements from over a century ago, too.

By Pete Tamburro

While listening to the latest lamentable comments appearing in the news on chess, it occurred to me that a little historical perspective might be in order. Just think if some of these had the instant internet notoriety that today's have received. Morphy and Tarrasch may very well have quit chess out of embarrassment.

OLD BUT GOLD

“Paulsen shall never win a game of me while he lives.” – Paul Morphy, after sitting through one of Paulsen's seemingly interminable thinking sessions, otherwise known as a chess game. Unfortunately, Morphy lost the very next game. (Source: Reinfeld, *The Human Side of Chess*)

Siegbert Tarrasch made a statement which later severely limited his conversations with Dr. Lasker in their 1908 match. He wouldn't shake hands with Lasker, stating, **“To you Herr Lasker, I have only three words to say: Check and Mate.”** He lost 8-3 with 5 draws.

Along those lines of unfortunate predictive quotes, there is Sammy Reshevsky, “who was asked whether he expected to win the Western Chess Association Championship of 1933.”

He responded with **“Who is there to beat me?”**

Well, Reuben Fine beat him by scoring 12 wins to 1 loss (to Reshevsky), but Reshevsky won 9 games and drew 4 to finish a point behind. (*Fireside Book of Chess*)

At the 1911 Carlsbad tournament Fyodor Duz-Khotimirsky jumped up from his game with Marshall, ran into the next room and burst out with **“Poor Marshall dead.”**

He came back, along with everyone else, to see Marshall's move. He then wailed, **“Oh, Oh, Marshall not dead. I dead.”**

“Why must I lose to this idiot?” – Aron Nimzowitsch, Baden-Baden 1925, jumped onto a table and shouted this memorable line, mostly silently shared by many other chess players after losing. *Wiener Schachzeitung* noted this about Nimzo: “...the kindest and nicest person imaginable, but for all that he should not overreact. It is really not necessary to overturn all the pieces at once, instead of giving his victorious opponent greater pleasure by resigning the game in proper fashion.”

I must admit that a cell phone capturing that image of Nimzo on that table and going viral is just too delicious not to imagine.

MODERN ERA “PEARLS”

Our modern era, the 21st century, is off to a rousing start with these two:

“While it's true that Kasparov is almost as good at playing chess as my iPhone, he is otherwise an idiot.” – Elon Musk, 2022.

Now, that is uncalled for. BTW, what version of the iPhone? Will it fit in my sock?

“Chess is not for women.” – GM Ilya Smirin, live commentator on FIDE Women's Grand Prix 2022-23.

This received a Tone Deaf Award from the chess community, and Smirin may very well hold that title for the rest of the century. Of course, he can't match the immortal title holder.

The all-time champ, though, is none other than the *enfant terrible* of chess history – Robert J. Fischer. You youngsters may be unfamiliar with his *tour de force* in the Ginzberg interview in the June 1962 issue of *Harper's*. It was the motherload of unfortunate quotes:

“They're all weak, all women. They're stupid compared to men. They shouldn't play chess, you know. They're like beginners. They lose every single game against a man. There isn't a woman player in the world I can't give knight-odds to and still beat.”

The lad did grow up. After the second Fischer-Spassky match he turned down five million bucks to play Judit Polgar. Maybe losing that Fischer Random game to her and Sofia gave his delicate ego some pause. At least he didn't jump on their table.

However, Fischer was on a roll in that early interview. He pretty much ensured his not being invited back to class reunions with:

“My two and a half years in Erasmus High I wasted. I didn't like the whole thing. You have to mix with all those stupid kids. The teachers are even stupider than the kids...Half of them are crazy.”

He must have had time, though, to take the Palmistry Science course at Erasmus:

“Palmistry is a definite science; it's not just a bunch of nonsense like astrology.”

Whew, thank God for that!



Our popular U.S. champ, Fabiano Caruana, managed to pick an unfortunate word with which the tournament he won will forever be remembered by: The Disrespect Tournament.

After a key win, he tweeted this PR classic: “**the 2022 Disrespect Championship is just warming up**” and then added to the fun by making public a really odd event: “**The disrespect just reached its peak. Sam decapitated Hans’ king.**”

None of this will make chess more popular. These guys should get consultants to give advice before they make their statements. And maybe they should google a bit before picking names. I invite the reader to google “disrespect tournament” and see what chess gets linked up with.

And, not to be outdone by the champ, Wesley So was quoted with this remark, after losing to Christopher Yoo, referring to the teenagers in the tournament, “**There’s more pressure, they have nothing to lose, they just go all-out for a win... Their focus is 100% on chess, they have no girlfriends or family.**”

One wonders what So’s parents think. One also wonders if he is aware that Hans, the teenager, has a girlfriend?

Then, of course, we have to bring the iPhone guy back with his comment that has my non-chess playing friends asking me how you get moves in your butt.

Elon Musk publicly put forth his theory on anal beads being inserted in one’s anal cavity to explain how Hans theoretically could do it. He eventually withdrew the comment, but the damage had been done.

Of course, this was not in time for Hans Niemann to conjure up an image we could do without. *The Guardian* quoted him as saying: “**If they want me to strip fully naked, I will do it. I don’t care.**”

Oh, I do care. Please no.

I remember my mom, as with many other moms of my childhood, saying, “If you don’t have something nice to say, don’t say it.” Grandmaster Moms – Unite! Save your children from public ridicule! Teach them now!

Reinfeld, in *The Joys of Chess*, pointed to a *New York Daily News* item from 1951:

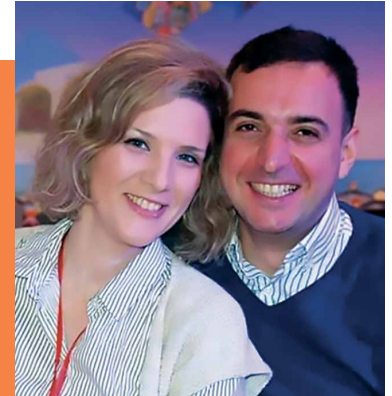
“**Scandal has already smeared baseball, football and basketball. The only sports we can still trust are chess contests and marble tournaments.**” – *New York Daily News*, 1951

So, chess has hit the big time. It just took a while. We can provide scandals right up there with the big boys.

And I have more bad news for the *Daily News*. Marbleblast.com has a report of an online player named Nockess admitting to cheating! And the newspaper will find no refuge with the bass fishermen who were caught using lead weights inside their fish – thankfully less imagery than the bead theory.

Back to the good old days of 1962 when U.S. women’s champion Lisa Lane tugged at the heartstrings of the world by withdrawing from a tournament in England because she was homesick “**and besides that I am in love.**”

Nothing unfortunate about that! ■



Marija & Merab

Gagunashvili Chess Academy offers online chess lessons for children and adults. GM Merab and WIM Marija, founders of the Academy, would like to transfer their rich experience gained as players and trainers to all the chess lovers. Marija teaches children basics of chess in a fun and exciting way, while Merab helps them enrich, develop and apply their knowledge until they win their first titles.

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SOLUTIONS TO CHESS PUZZLES on page 65

01 1.♔xd7 ♕xd7 2.g4 ♖h4 3.♖xf7+ ♗e7
4.♗b4 ♖ae8 5.♗xe7 ♖xe7 6.♖f6 a6 7.♖d1
axb5 8.♗e4+ 1-0

02 1.♖d7+ ♗xd7 2.♖d6+ ♕d8 3.♖f7+
♕c8 4.♖e8+ ♗xe8 5.♖d8 mate.

03 1...♗xf3 2.♖xb7 2...♗xf3 ♖d4 3.♖xb7
♖xf3+ 4.♕g2 ♖b8 5.♖c7 ♖f8 6.h3 ♖g5+ 7.♕h2
h5 8.♖c4 ♖f3+ 9.♕h1 ♖d4+ 10.f3 ♖xf3 11.♖xe4
(11.♖xb8 ♖xb8 12.♖xe4 ♖xb2 13.♖xf3 ♖b1+
14.♕g2 ♖xe4+) 11...♖xb2+.
2...♖d4 3.♖c7 ♖g8 4.♖xg7 ♖xg7 5.♖xa8+
♖f8 0-1

04 1...♖xb2+ 2.♖xb2 ♗xd3+ 3.♖xd3

♖xe1+ 4.♕c2 ♖e8 5.♖d2 ♖f1 6.♖c3 ♖e1 0-1

05 1...♗xf2 2.♖a8+ 2...♗xf2 ♖e2+ 3.♕h2 ♖xf2
4.♖b8+ (4.h4 ♖xg3+ 5.♕h1 ♖xh4+ 6.♗h3
♖xh3 mate.) 4...♕g7 5.e6 ♖g1 mate.
2...♕g7 3.♕h1 ♖e2 4.♕h2 ♖xf1 5.♗xf1 ♖g1
mate.

06 1.♖f6 ♖ed8 1...♗xf2 2.♖xf6 ♖xh6 3.♗xf7+
2.♖af1 ♖8d7 3.♖xd6 ♖xd6 4.♖e7 ♖xh6
5.♗xf7+ ♕h8 6.♖e8+ 1-0

07 1...♖e1+ 2.♕g2 ♖xf2+ 3.♕xf2 b2 0-1

08 1...bxc6 2.♖d2 2.b7 ♖xa2 3.b8♖ ♖a1+
4.♕c2 ♖5a2+ 5.♕d3 ♖xd1+ 6.♕c4 ♖d4+ 7.♕c3

♗xd5+ 8.♕b4 ♖d4+ 9.♕c3 ♖xg4+ 10.♕d3
♖g3+ 11.♕c4 d5+ 12.♕c5 ♖c2+ 13.♕b4 ♖xb3+
14.♕xb3 ♖b2+.

2...♖e4 3.♖d1 ♖e2 4.a3 ♖c5 5.b7 5.♖c1 ♖b5
6.♖xb5 cxb5 7.b7 ♖b2+ 8.♕a1 b4 9.b8♖ ♖b3+
10.♕a2 ♖xa3+ 11.♕b1 b3.
5...♖cc2 6.♖e1 ♖b2+ 7.♖xb2 ♖xb2+ 8.♕c1
♖xb7 0-1

09 1.♖xg7 ♖e5 1...♕xg7 2.♖g3+
2.♖h5 ♗e6 2...♖xd3 3.♗h6+ ♕g8 4.♖e8+ ♖xe8
5.♖f6 mate.

3.♖xe5 dxe5 4.♗a3+ ♕e8 5.♖b5+ 1-0

Brunnemer was NJ OTB champ for 12 consecutive years and once beat Capablanca in a simul.