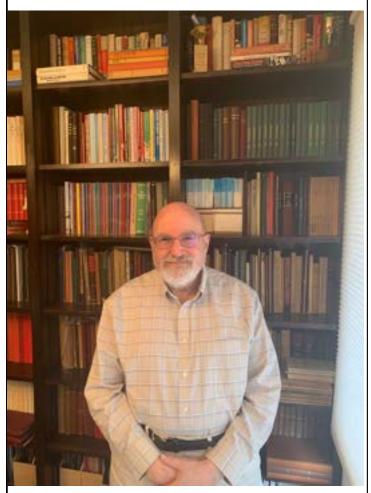
GM Jon Edwards has recently become the World Correspondence Chess Champion! What an amazing feat! Correspondence chess has been a part of my life since 1982 when I first found out about it. Did I ever have aspirations to become the World Champion? I'm sure it crossed my mind at some point... at least, until I lost my first game. Ha, Ha! Unlike me, however, Correspondence GM Jon Edwards had aspirations to become World Champion and was able to accomplish this amazing goal. Jon made three legitimate attempts at the World title and the third time was the charm. Jon was nice enough to allow us to interview him this past November.



#### Please tell us a bit about yourself and your family.

Cheryl and I have lived in Pennington, NJ for more than 30 years. Cheryl teaches English to young learners in China. Our oldest is a screenwriter in Los Angeles. Our youngest is a threat analyst for African affairs at Accenture and the State Department.

You say Cheryl teaches English to young learners in China. Does that mean she travels to China to do this

#### or does she teach Chinese people English in NJ?

She teaches via Zoom from right here in NJ. Strange hours, though.

### Is there anything your oldest has done that we might all have seen on TV or the movies?

Aaron just won the Gold Prize for Sci-Fi Features at the Page Awards for "Adrift." He made the Blood List in 2021. And worked on "David Makes Man"

#### Did you go to college? If so what did you major in? How does it apply to what you do today? What do you do for a living now or what have you done in the past?

I graduated from Princeton University in 1975 in History and Economics. I got my MA and PhD in Ethiopian Economic History from Michigan State University. While I was at MSU, I coordinated Computer Assisted Instruction, and that led to a job as a Senior Technical Editor at BYTE Magazine in 1984. There, I managed the huge Review Department. I left there for Princeton University in 1986, where I served first as AVP for Computing and Information Technology and later as Coordinator of Institutional Communication.

Along the way, I learned useful skills, how to do research, how to communicate well, how to use software tools, and how to make the most of high-performance computing, all useful and frankly necessary skills for the correspondence chess we play today.

# Obviously when getting your PhD in Ethopian Economic History you didn't plan to go work for BYTE. Were you planning to be a college professor?

Yes. But computing offered MUCH more money, and I had a family to support.

#### How does Chess fit in your life? Who taught you?

It has always been there. I started meaningfully in 4<sup>th</sup> grade... I got sick with mono and had to stay in bed for a year. To help me survive the boredom, my father brought me a different chess book every week. The important part: I had plenty of time and I read all the books! My parents then brought in my great Uncle, Joseph Platz, a very strong master who had been taught by Emanuel Lasker. When I was a teen, we moved to Massachusetts where I attended the Fitchburg Chess Club and Stephan Gerzadowicz provided very useful instruction that tempered my youthful aggression with far better positional understanding.

I stopped playing during Graduate School and in fact, Cheryl did not know that I was a chess player when we married! As soon as I left graduate school, I had much more time on my hands and started playing again. When we started a family, I began playing correspondence chess so that I could play and still be a good daddy.

How did your wife feel when she learned you played chess? Did she have concerns about being a "chess widow?"

In retrospect, she took it pretty well. Once we had kids, I was mostly still home, playing correspondence chess.

Joseph Platz was a member of the Manhattan Chess Club. Did you play there growing up?
No

I have read some of Stephen Gerzadowicz's books (he even published one of my games in his book Thinker's Chess) and his quips and quotes made a fun impression on me. Did his writing affect how you have written chess books?

Of course... see The Chess Analyst, chapter 16.

We know you play correspondence but how much over the board chess do you play?

I took up correspondence chess primarily to help me im-

prove my OTB game. I played in most of the major New England tournaments as a youngster and when we lived in NH. But over time, the demands of work at Princeton made that tougher, and by then, I had a heavy correspondence load that filled my time. These days, I play in one OTB event a year, the US Amateur Team East. This year, my teammates of 30 years are naming the team *World Champion on Board Two*.

This just begs the question, If you are the USATE board 2, who is your board 1?

A very cool guy named Derrick Higgins, who flies in yearly from Chicago.

This issue has a theme of art in chess. What springs to mind when you think about Chess Art? (chess sets, art like pictures, paintings and drawings, a combination, an ending, a specific move)

I have assembled what is very likely the largest collection of Chess on Stamps in the world, a collection that spans nearly 200 large albums. One of the sub-themes is *The Art of Chess*. I am happy to provide some lovely scans for you if you would like. It's a separate passion. I have been President of COSSU (The Chess-on-Stamp Study Unit) and editor of its quarterly publication, the Chesstamp Review. I am happy to provide a free issue to any of your readers who requests it.

Here are links to some recent issues of COSSU's Chesstamp Review, my "baby" - Jon Edwards

**NEW: Chesstamp Review #187** 

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W119TNf9mK3qz8KAsuBw5DGUtb9BUUaR/view?usp=sharing

**NEW: Allan Savage's Correspondence Chess Career** 

Contact the Editor if you are interested in purchasing any of Allan Savage's correspondence chess cards.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1t7Th4Xag1rOWqWD9Jx\_yk1HHst7CX9wj/view?usp=sharing

NEW: SSS Bonus... Chesstamp singles sale

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xSf85JLONIJQ4zUp2iJVEEvT RFClj6U/view?usp=sharing

Chesstamp Review #186

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1 3FRoyl5Kl9X18 1juF48rDvxq2Roxl9/view?usp=sharing

Chesstamp Review Article Index (1-186)

(Note the following is a pdf of an Excel Spreadsheet)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bZPH8czYISK3jpIHO7GQsPQAPC 19as1/view?usp=sharing

#### Chesstamp Review #185

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-CMdD91NEdMrtsQ0WhhzxByOyyRX7RyJ/view?usp=sharing

Chesstamp Review #184

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ka\_xFnKEnxp7Z0lb5ys55pGUSVcL1e7K/view?usp=sharing

(Printed back issues are available back to CR 135 at \$4 each, postpaid in US in Canada. Discounts available for orders of 10 issues or more.)

Chesstamp Review #183

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ws3t9Z\_UkJ2WFW02q0zwvUA7uhSD7PG6/view?usp=sharing

Joram Lubianiker's presentation of his Gold Medal Exhibition

(205) Cossu meeting - YouTube

And you can tour the actual exhibit at AAPE 2021.

Chesstamp Review #182:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TbDzavWL1hq0qsGUK-S98SrnQutlqBdy/view?usp=sharing





From Jon's collection named Album 14 France





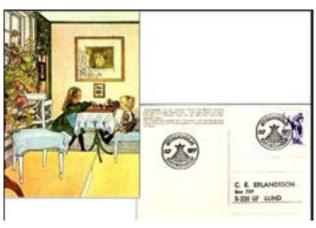


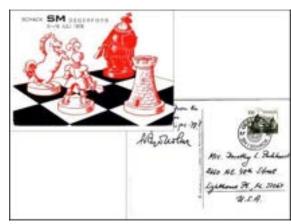






Images from Jon's collection called Album 46 Sweeden.

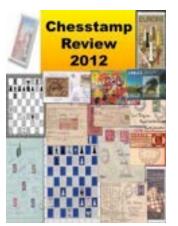




I also ran into two offerings in Amazon, 2011 and 2012 Chess Stamp Review. Were these the only two or were there more?

Just those... but you now have links to all of our recent issues.





Chesstamp Review 2011 -

<u>Kindle edition by Edwards, Jon. Humor & Entertainment Kindle eBooks @ Amazon.com.</u>

We would love some scans. Also is there a website we can link here for anyone who wants to check this out more?

I have not updated the web site in many years... but I just sent you the links I distribute to members. See inset above.

## You have written several books on Chess. What inspires you? What inspires you to write?

It's certainly not for the money! I believe that annotating your own games sharpens your focus. When I retired, I annotated in detail all 480 games in the 1950 Dubrovnik Olympiad. I was forced to confront a wide range of openings and I found that my chess vision was markedly improved. Sadly, I never published that effort, but perhaps someday soon. I also wrote and self-published for the Kindle a series of 44 books that covered my opening repertoire. Those have become extremely useful to distribute as homework for my students.

We really hope you find time to publish the 1950 Dubrovnik Olympiad. Tournament books are a favorite genre for me and many of our readers. How many students do you typically teach? Are your teaching for all levels or more specialized?

I have 11 private students... all by Zoom.

And I teach a large group of youngsters on Wednesdays... a beginner group and an intermediate group. Many years ago I taught chess to a youngster, whose mother is now organizing the sessions. We split the revenue so that she has an enormous incentive to pack the room. And that she does!

this effort, which I think was unique in its scope, at least at that time.

Who is your favorite author? Favorite book? Poetry?

I'm not a fan of poetry. But my favorite chess author is

easy: Cecil Purdy.

#### What has been your greatest success writing? In writing in Chess?

It's hard to define my greatest success among my books. I am proudest of The Chess Analyst which covered the early years of my correspondence chess career leading up to my win in the 10<sup>th</sup> US Championship. ChessBase Complete was the best seller, raising enough in royalties to pay for a college semester bill.

#### What has been your greatest writing challenge?

I am very fond of thematic chess books and

so, I am very proud of Sacking the Citadel which explored the classic bishop sacrifice on h7. That effort required some innovating research to identify all of the games, it involved historical research on chess, and it required a very careful assessment of the extant literature. I wanted to convey that sacrifices could be studied and understood very much like opening theory. My personal hope is that now, in the wake of my correspondence success, chess players will rediscover that book.

#### I do have both The Chess Analyst and Sacking the Citadel. I have read the former and unfortunately have not gotten to the latter yet.

Chapter 5 is the key, my comprehensive taxonomy of the sacrifice.

Yasser Seirawan had a book back in the early 1990s called Take My Rooks. Were you familiar with this book? If so did you take any inspiration from it when writing Sacking the Citadel?

Have read his book, but no, it was not an inspiration for

World Champion (2022)

A few highlights of Jon's chess career:

International Correspondence Grandmaster (GM), 2022 2016 US Amateur East, 1st place tie (OTB).

ICCF 2015 US Invitational GM norm (5 way 1<sup>st</sup> place tie)

Senior International Correspondence Master, 2003

International Correspondence Chess Master, 2000

8<sup>th</sup> North American Invitational Correspondence Chess Championship (1999), 1<sup>st</sup> place

Senior International Master (SIM), 1999 (One GM norm)

10<sup>th</sup> United States Correspondence Championship (1997), 1<sup>st</sup> place

Four time winner of the APCT (American Postal Chess Tournaments) Championship

APCT Game of the Year Award (1996, 1997)

International Master (IM), 1997

United States Correspondence Chess Olympiad team

Chess Life for Kids "You can do it" columnist

American Chess Magazine "Chess Tech"

If Purdy was your favorite author I am sure you knew Robert "Bob" Long who updated and reissued a bunch of Purdy's work. Didn't Bob have you come as a guest speaker to one of his chess festivals?

Yes twice. Once (perhaps twice) about hedgehog formations

What is it about Purdy's writings that draws you in? Clarity!

#### What is your chess library like?

I stopped counting at 5,000 books. The upstairs library contains older material, notably including a nearly

complete run of the British Chess Magazine, Deutsch SchachZeitung, Fernschach, and Chess. I have most tournaments books and biographies back to the 1880s, and everything that I could find about both endgames and correspondence chess.

#### Have you moved more electronic than paper for research?

I have relatively few current books about chess openings and yes, I rely upon database research almost exclusively. Still, when a key game appears in the database research, it is so very important to find the game in its original sources and review the original annotations.

There is also something fulfilling, at least to me, about finding that game or item you're looking for in the hardcopy library. Maybe it comes to me as I am a chemist by trade so research is my favorite part of my work and playing correspondence chess.

If you read about chess what aspect draws you in

#### most? History, openings, endings, biographies, etc?

I have not read every book in my library and indeed, it's a growing collection as much as it is a comprehensive reference library. But I am always reading something. Biographies and tournament books are important, but I still adore endgame studies.

#### Do you have a favorite chess book? If so what is it?

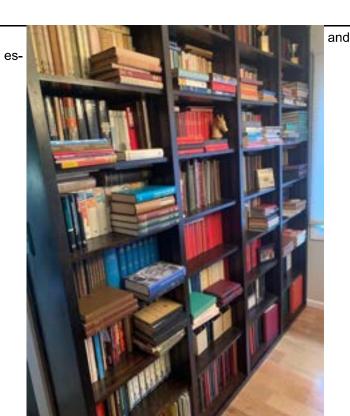
I've long been fond of *Larsen's Selected Games*. It had a substantial impact on my chess early on. I have since embraced the philosophies of Petrosian, but I am hard pressed to think of a specific book that correctly captures the importance of Petrosian.

#### Here are three photos from Jon's library. Is there a book that you read and your understanding of the game was greatly improved?

Not so much a book, but a single game, Joppen-Petrosian, Belgrade 1954. The final sequence of that game changed



my understanding of how to think in a chess game. I have the feeling that Joppen lost that game without any understanding of what he had done wrong. I also suspect that Petrosian saw the final 20 moves without having to devote many neurons to the effort. The key was understanding the importance of maneuvering within a fixed structure,

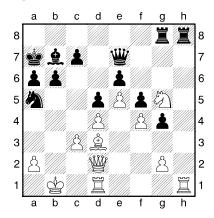


tablishing the correct sequence for exchanges and the repositioning of pieces. I annotated the game in the *Chess Life* cover story, Feb 2018;



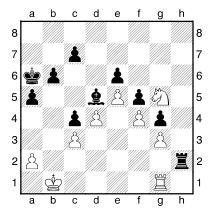
#### Joppen,Egon - Petrosian,Tigran V [C16]

Belgrade (11), 1954



This is the critical position Jon is referring to. Materially black has an additional pawn. White has a better bishop, there is a contest on the h-file with the rooks, and the white knight seems better than the black knight.

Bc6 Attempting to improve the bishop. 29.曾b2 公c4 Getting off the rim and setting sites for e3 and g2. 30.曾b4 曾d7 31.夏×c4 a5! 32.曾b2 not 曾b2 as 요a4! wins. d×c4 33.曾d2 鱼d5 Securing its spot in the pawn chain, looking after e6 and looking toward g2 and h1. 34.臣dg1 曾c6 35.邑×h8 邑×h8 36.g3 曾e8 37.曾b2 曾h5 headed to h2. 38.曾c2 曾h2 39.曾×h2 邑×h2+40.曾b1 曾a6



0-1

## Do you miss the days of the actual postcard or do you prefer server?

Of course not! The postcards were often lost, sometimes damaged, and increasingly expensive. However, as a phi-

latelist, I have assembled an almost complete collection of correspondence chess played on every postal card type. Chess players have always been amazing, finding any way to play the game. The server is accurate, moves are never lost, no cheating is possible, and it's a whole lot less expensive.

You have written a book on ChessBase. Was writing the book just a natural follow-up to your use of the program or did you have to do a lot of research to write the book? How much would you say, using ChessBase, helped you win the World Correspondence Chess Championship?

I worked for ChessBase USA for a couple of years as an author back when the program was on version 4 and positional searches required a separate application, Motif, with its own programming language. By version 13, the program was much easier to use but its manual was hard to digest. I wrote the whole book in ten days during a vacation from work. The application was relatively simple back then, and I knew it very well. ChessBase has since added new features, many of which are very cool additions, notably Livebook, Let's Check, and all the Cloud support. So, I added a supplement to cover the later versions. At work, I used the Office suite from Microsoft all day long. These days, I use ChessBase 12+ a day. It's hard to say that ChessBase gave me an advantage because I suspect that all professional chess players today are using it comprehensively.

## Chessbase seems to be putting out new versions very regularly. Any thoughts about putting out another supplement to cover the latest versions?

Have not heard that Hanon Russel wants another supplement... he has an inventory that governs such requests.

Meanwhile, with my time under such stress, I am far more inclined to write *Chess Analyst*, part 2.

That would be exciting as the original *Chess Analyst* was such an enjoyable book.

#### Do you have a favorite opening? Ending?

I still love the Bishop's Opening and its theory, but it doesn't stand up to correspondence chess scrutiny. I am very partial to rook and bishop of opposite color endgames, and I have found several opening novelties that steer the game in that direction.

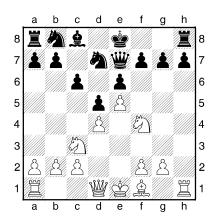
#### Do you have a favorite game you have played?

Among my own games, Edwards-Hayward APCT 1991 has 13 sacrifices! I annotated it in *The Chess Analyst*.

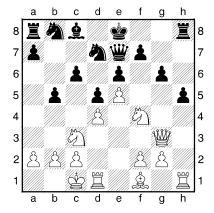
#### Edwards, J (2395) - Hayward,K (2275) [C13]

APCT, 1991

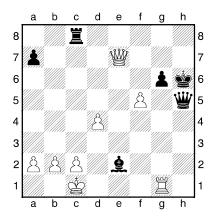
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.公c3 公f6 4.鱼g5 鱼e7 5.e5 公fd7 6.h4 offering the first sacrifice of the game. 鱼×g5 7.h×g5 營×g5 8.公h3 營e7 9.公f4 c6 N



A novelty at the time. 10. #g4 g6 11.0-0-0 h5 12. #g3 b5



13. 鱼×b5 鱼a6 14. 鱼×c6 勾×c6 15. 勾c×d5 e×d5 16. 勾×d5 曾d8 17. e6 曾f8 18. 曾f4 勾f6 19. 公×f6 曾g7 20. 公×h5+ Sacrifice seven 買×h5 21. 曾×f7+ 曾h6 22. g4 曾g5+ 23. f4 曾×g4 24. 閏dg1 鱼e2 25. e7 公×e7 26. 三×h5+ 曾×h5 27. 曾×e7 互c8 28. f5



負g4 29.皆e3+ 皆g5 30.皆×g5+ 皆×g5 31.f×g6 莒c6 32.g7 闰g6 33.c4 闰×g7 34.b3 皆f4 35.皆b2 闰h7 36.皆a3 負f3 37.皆b4 皆e3 38.皆c3 a5 39.罝e1+ 皆f4 40.d5 闰h2 41.a3 負e4 42.皆d4 闰d2+ 43.皆c5 莒d3 44.b4 闰×a3 45.b5 莒c3 

## How many correspondence games would you normally have going on at a time? What did you find was your limit at one time? How many were too few?

Too many? 20, and that can happen. I was in the middle of the Final when the Correspondence Chess Olympiad started. I'm happy to say that our team just clinched a medal and clinched a seed into the next Olympiad Final! Another medal. Yippee!

Too few? Zero. I cannot imagine it!

I was invited to play in the WF33 just two days after the WF32 ended. I postponed my entry, because I truly need a break. World Champions are permitted to enter the Candidates, a really nice perk!

## Take us though the typical process you follow when making a move in correspondence chess.

A good bit of it is quite banal, making certain that I analyze the right position and make the intended move. As for the actual steps during the analysis, that's a bit like asking McDonald's for the recipe for their secret sauce.

## Do you have any internal life rules you always apply to chess and the move making process?

Absolutely. Turn off the TV!

#### At what point in your chess career did you decide to go after the World Championship? How did that decision change your life prior to winning/after winning?

I tried after I won the North American Invitational, but I placed well off the lead in the subsequent Candidates. When I retired in 2010, I tried again, placing second in a semi-final, then second in the Candidates, and of course then first in the WF-32. The pandemic kept us home, but I had something cool to do. This was my goal in retirement. The odds were way against me, but here we are.

#### If you won a physical award for the World Championship do you have a picture you would share with us of you and that award?

Cheryl and I will be traveling to Amsterdam next summer to pick up my engraved silver platter and medal, my GM certificate and medal, and my Olympiad medal (the US just placed in the 23rd Correspondence Chess Olympiad). Our first trip in years!

### What did winning the World Championship mean to you?

It's extremely satisfying, but also life changing. I accomplished a major life goal, and I am really proud of that, but I'm getting, suddenly, receiving multiple requests every

day, tons of e-mails, mostly kind ones, lots of phone calls, and all sorts of invitations. I am still playing in the very strong Kurt Stein Memorial, but it has become tough to block off the time that I need to keep playing. I need to come back to earth and restore a better balance.

It has long been said that there's no money in chess except at the very top. It's pretty clear that for correspondence chess, there's no money at the top either ③

#### What will your chess legacy be?

Kasparov's *My Great Predecessors* hypothesized that every champion brings something new to the game. If that's true in this case, it's an effective marriage of chess with a honed understanding of high-performance computing.

#### Do you have a favorite quote?

I love the scene in *Stardust Memories* when an alien tells Woody Allen: "I love all of your movies, especially the early funny ones."

Thank you for agreeing to this interview. It has been an honor to get to know you a bit better. Congratulations again on the amazing accomplishment! Any final parting words for our audience?

You are most welcome. I think we covered it well.

		TD Fbelley, Ian N. (IA)																					
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#### **World Championship Final 32 has finished**

#### Saturday, 08 October 2022: after over two years of play

#### The World Champion is Edwards, Jon (USA)

Here are two wins and a draw Jon had in the tournament:

## **Edwards, Jon (2525) - Michálek, Miroslav (2480) [B90]** WC32/final ICCF, 20.06.2020

1.e4 c5 2.包f3 d6 3.d4 c×d4 4.包×d4 包f6 5.包c3 a6 6.鱼e3 e5 7.包b3 鱼e6 8.f3 h5 9.包d5 鱼×d5 10.e×d5 包bd7 11.營d2 g6 12.鱼e2 鱼g7 13.0-0 b6 14.h3 0-0 15.a4 營c7 16.營h2 莒fe8 17.g3 莒ec8 18.c4 包c5 19.包×c5 b×c5 20.莒ab1 莒ab8 21.b3 營e7 22.營g2 莒b7 23.鱼d1 莒e8 24.g4 h×g4 25.h×g4 營d7 26.營e2 莒eb8 27.罝e1 e4 28.f4 包h7 29.g5 f5 30.營d2 營c7 31.罝h1 營f7 32.ቯ×h7 1-0

#### Edwards, Jon (2525) - Bock, Steffen (2562) [C47]

WC32/final ICCF, 20.06.2020

1.e4 e5 2.公c3 公f6 3.g3 d5 4.e×d5 公xd5 5.且g2 公xc3 6.b×c3 요c5 7.公f3 公c6 8.0-0 0-0 9.且e1 h6 10.d3 且e8 11.且e3 且b6 12.公d2 且a5 13.c4 皆f6 14.公e4 皆g6 15.且d2 且g4 16.f3 且xd2 17.曾xd2 且f5 18.且ab1 b6

19.公c3 莒ad8 20.公b5 莒e7 21.曾f2 莒de8 22.h3 曾f6 23.a4 曾h8 24.c5 g5 25.曾h2 莒g8 26.f4 g×f4 27.g×f4 b×c5 28.f×e5 莒×e5 29.曾h1 1-0

#### Edwards, Jon (2525) - Akdag, Murat (2574) [C42]

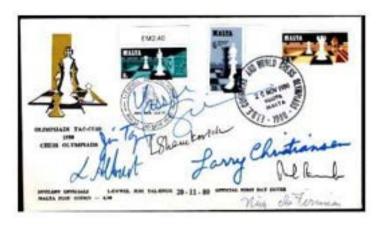
WC32/final ICCF, 20.06.2020

1.e4 e5 2.ሷf3 ሷf6 3.ሷ×e5 d6 4.ሷf3 ሷ×e4 5.d4 d5 6.ቯd3 ቯd6 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 c6 9.ਊc2 ሷa6 10.a3 ቯg4 11.ሷe5 ቯ×e5 12.d×e5 ሷac5 13.f3 ሷ×d3 14.ਊ×d3 ሷc5 15.ਊd4 ሷb3 16.ਊ×g4 ሷ×a1 17.ቯh6 g6 18.ሷc3 ሷb3 19.ቯ×f8 ਊ×f8 20.c×d5 c×d5 21.ਊh1 ਊe7 22.f4 ਊe6 23.ਊg3 ਊc6 24.f5 ቯf8 25.ਊh4 ਊc4 26.ቯf4 ਊc7 27.f×g6 h×g6 28.ਊf6 ਊc6 29.ਊg5 ቯe8 30.ቯf6 ቯe6 31.ቯ×e6 資×e6 32.ਊd8+ ਊg7 33.ਊ×d5 ਊf5 34.h3 ਊf1+ 35.ਊh2 ਊf4+ 36.g3 ਊe3 37.ਊe4 ਊf2+ 38.ਊg2 ਊf5 39.e6 ਊ×e6 40.ਊ×b7 ਊe3 41.ਊe4 ਊf2+ 42.ਊg2 ਊd4 43.ਊe2 ሷd2 44.h4 ၌c4 45.a4 ၌e5 46.ਊh3 f5 47.a5 ਊh7 48.a6 ਊg1 49.ਊg2 ਊe1 50.ሷe2 ਊa1 51.ਊb7+ ਊh6 52.b4 ၌g4 53.ਊf3 ½-½





Images above from Album 32 Mali. Images below from Album 33 Malta.









#### **Books by Jon Edwards:**

The Chess Analyst, Thinkers' Press 1998 ChessBase Complete ChessBase Complete Supplement

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Mastering Mate: 1,111 One Move mates

Mastering Mate: 1,111 Mates in Two, three, four or more

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Trompowski with 2...c5

Chess Stories

Introduction to King Pawn Openings

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The French MacCutcheon

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The French Classical

The French Winawer