

The Chess Journalist

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CHESS JOURNALISTS OF AMERICA



Jim Hollingsworth and the US Chess Meritorious Service Award.
August 15, 2024. Photo by Jeff French (*Texas Knights*, *The Check is in the Mail*, & *The Chess Correspondent*).

Jim passed away unexpectedly on September 19, 2024.

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The Chess Journalists of America:

President: Joshua M. Anderson (joshuamiltonanderson@gmail.com)

Vice-President: Jon Edwards (jedwards.chess@gmail.com)

Secretary: Rachel Schechter (rachelaschechter@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Mark Capron (mcapron243@mchsi.com)

Editor: Mark Capron (mcapron243@mchsi.com)

Assistant Editor: Rachel Schechter (rachelaschechter@gmail.com)

Proofreaders: Rex Gray, Diane Dahl, Gio Espinosa, Rachel Schechter, Joshua Anderson

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Hello From the Editor

Wow! This one was a bit of a struggle as you probably can tell since its about 20 days late. You can read a bit more about the delay in the awards article, but that was not the only thing holding it up. Busy schedule for me contributed as well. The good news is you are now reading it! Enjoy.

Thanks to all the CJA award judges and Joshua Anderson for their hard work this season. Results can be found starting on page six.

Unfortunately we lost one of our own, Jim Hollingsworth passed away in September. Jim was an active Judge, organizer, artist and overall nice guy. He will be missed. Read a bit more about him on page four.

We are back with chess collector and amateur chess historian Chris Baker from New Zealand where he does a bit more detective work to solve another crosstable that Jeremy Gaige had asked for help on.

World ICCF Champion Jon Edwards sends in a humorous piece about the infamous “whooha!”. Actually hearing him tell the story in person at the US Open was something not be missed. It’s a shame all the body language and facial expressions can’t be incorporated into the written story,

I reviewed the fantastic new book by Verendel Publishing: *GIDEON STÅHLBERG: An Epoch in Swedish Chess Volume 1 The Musketeer Years 1908-1939* by Peter Holmgren.

The **GACPPP** is a project to catalog all the periodicals produced in the US and then convert them into pdfs for historical and preservation purposes. See [Great American Chess Periodical Preservation Project - Chess Journalists of America \(chessjournalism.org\)](http://www.chessjournalism.org) and page 12 for more information.

You have probably heard of Chess Boxing, but have you heard of Chess Wrestling? “The Queens’ Corner” features the creator of Chess Wrestling, Sofia Doroshenko. Rachel does a nice interview where we get to meet and learn more about Sofia.

There is another interesting knight’s tour that celebrates Christmas by Awani Kumar.

Tony Sullivan is back with a couple of cartoons. Consider pur-

chasing his book [Chess Peace: Cartoons](#).

Dr. Anthony Saily provides a short review of [Forgotten Talents](#) by Javier Cordero Fernandez. I recently purchased this and look forward to reading it.

[Chess in Small Doses](#) is a blog by [Nick Vasquez, MD](#). He is allowing us to reprint one of his blogs. If you find it as interesting as I did consider subscribing. I have also enjoyed his follow—ups to this article. This is the third Blog featured in *The Chess Journalist* over the past year or so.

There is a nice article about the first World Chess Championship among computer programs by Dmitry Chizhov.

Ed Tassinari returns with a historical article about the Atlantic 30-30.

Ken Milutin, fresh off his 2024 honorable mention award, gives us a first hand account of his experience playing in the 2024 John T. Irwin National Tournament of Senior State Champions in Norfolk, VA.

Oddities and Peculiarities (and Obscurities) features Andy McFarland and how he saved a chess players life one day.

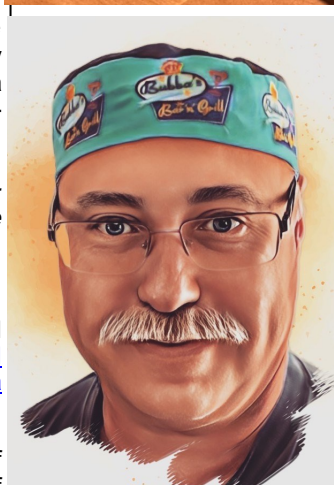
Rachel provides us with yet another life lesson in this issue’s “Chess Keys.”



I was doing some cleaning and ran into this mug. I believe they were given out by the USCF when you purchased X amount back in the day. That baseball next to it happens to be from a grand slam I hit when in high school. How many of you still have this mug?

Thanks to Diane Dahl, Rex Gray, Gio Espinosa, and Rachel Schechter for their excellent proof-reading and suggestions.

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I have some pretty cool plans for the next few issues.

Please consider sending in an article or idea for an upcoming issue. More authors are always welcome and make the issues better!!

Please send your comments, suggestions, or even better, send me a story or idea for the next issue: mcapron243@mchsi.com

—Mark Capron

"You can't get wise with sleep still in your eyes no matter what your dream might be."
— Neil Peart

James “Jim” Hollingsworth
June 12, 1955—September 19, 2024

On September 19, 2024 James Mason Hollingsworth, Major, U.S. Army (retired), Master of Health Administration, and Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic and Web Design, passed away unexpectedly at his home in North Richland Hills, Texas.

By Joshua Anderson

I am greatly saddened to tell our readers that James “Jim” Hollingsworth has passed away. Jim had been involved in the CJA since 2016. In that time he helped the CJA with the awards (not just judging but helping find judges and get Texas to enter more entries), the Distinguished Chess Journalists awards, provided both art and articles to *The Chess Journalist* (including 2021 Best Photo that he allowed us to print after he won), and was active in helping us decide on categories for the awards and promote the CJA.

I had the pleasure of finally meeting Jim at the 2024 US Open in Norfolk, Virginia, where he was awarded the Meritorious Award by US Chess.



Photo by Beth Hollingsworth.

When we update his judge’s profile (we do this for active judges and those who have passed away) it will read as follows:

“He served two terms as the Chair of the US Chess Military Chess Committee (2020-2022) and one term as the Vice President of the Texas Chess Association (TCA) (2020-2022). In 2024, US Chess awarded him the Meritorious Service Award for his 45 years of dedicated service to Chess. Jim was a life member of US Chess and TCA. He created websites in his home and organized and directed chess tournaments.”

Please see the remembrance piece soon to appear with US Chess and readers may also read more from Oklahoma Chess - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/16vo0vxZcja8ybtDyXyX3WrBVtlqFjhhH/view>.

In August Jim sent me this background information along with the fact that he won the Meritorious Service award at the US Open. Here is the biographical information he submitted verbatim. I am sure there was a lot, lot more to Jim’s life.
—Mark Capron

Jim Hollingsworth’s philosophy is to design epic championship events from the chess player’s perspective. He has five stacks of *Chess Life* in his home (one for each decade). He claims he read every issue. He learned chess at age 13 when his cousin taught him to play during Thanksgiving vacation. He credits friends in Oklahoma, Texas, and the military for keeping his passion alive. In 1978, he directed his first tournament at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In 1988, he achieved an expert rating while serving in Korea (“Once an expert, always an expert!” L. Evans).

Selection committees chose him for the All-Army Chess Championship seven times; mission requirements kept him out of two. He earned a spot on the Army Chess Team in 1989. He co-founded RRSO (Red River Shoot Out), the annual team match between Oklahoma and Texas’s most fanatical chess players. He organized and fundraised for two Texas Armed Forces Open Chess Championships (2017 and 2018), two Texas Women’s Chess Championships (2018 and 2019), and the 62nd US Armed Forces Open Chess Championship (USAFOCC) in Grapevine, Texas (2021), which with seventy-one players, became the third-largest USAFOCC in history.

Jim frequently contributes to the *Texas Knights* magazine. He won two Chess Journalists of America (CJA) awards: Best General Chess Website (2016) and Best Chess Photo (2021). He has been a CJA judge since 2017. He served two terms as the Chair of the US Chess Military Chess Committee (2020-2022) and one term as the Vice President of the Texas Chess Association (TCA) (2020-2022). He is a life member of US Chess and TCA. He creates chess websites, and his hobbies include making cartoons, writing chess articles, and photography.

US Chess Presents Jim Hollingsworth with the Meritorious Service Medal

In an awards ceremony at the 2024 US Open, US Chess President Randy Bauer announced Jim Hollingsworth had been presented with the Meritorious Service Award.

Hollingsworth has been organizing and directing tournaments since 1979. Some highlights include co-founding the RRSO (Red River Shoot Out), the annual team match between Oklahoma and Texas; two Texas Armed Forces Open Chess Championships (2017 and 2018); two Texas Women's Chess Championships (2018 and 2019); and the 62nd US Armed Forces Open Chess Championship (USAFOCC) in Grapevine, Texas (2021). He's been a volunteer and officer in numerous nonprofits and was the Texas Chess Association Vice President (2020-2022). He was chosen for the All-Army Chess Championship seven times.

Hollingsworth has won two CJA awards: Best General Chess Website (2016) and Best Single Chess Photo (2021). He is a CJA judge and assists with CJA's Distinguished Chess Journalists program. He frequently contributed to the *Texas Knights* and *The Chess Journalist* magazines.

Major Jim Hollingsworth is proud to have served in the US Army. He retired in 2012 after a long career (1978-2012). His awards include Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal (4th award), Army Achievement Medal (3rd award), The Global War on Terrorism Medals in addition to many other medals. In addition, during his time as a Field Artillery officer he was awarded the Distinguished Ancient Order of Saint Barber.



Photo by Joshua Anderson

State of the Awards 2023-2024

By Joshua Anderson

Apologies for the delay in this article, which caused the delay in the magazine. While some of these delays were health-related (hiatal hernia), others, such as finding a more permanent, though expensive, home for my chess club, were not only time-sensitive but highly stressful. Other events didn't speed things up, such as the explanation and detailed discussion of the American Chess Archive. The American Chess Archive, primarily the magazine program at the *Chess and Education* conference in St. Louis back in October, will be incredibly beneficial to the work and promotion of the CJA organization and had to take a priority.

This year, the organization had a new first, a new scoring website designed to make the coordinating judges' job easier, but we had a few more difficulties than usual. This wasn't an entirely unexpected event, but it made me glad that next year many judges will have experience in using the website. The web company was able to improve the process based on our comments. Anyone with any additional comments should feel free to contact me. Additionally, the many problems with editing entries once submitted have improved and should run smoother next year. Anytime you have new systems, there are bound to be bumps in the road. While there indeed were, I believe things should significantly improve for next year. Even with improvements, we will continue to allow judges to send results to me and I will enter them. We have several older judges, and I will not be "pushing them out the door" because they are uncomfortable with a computer system.

Book categories also have been problematic. We increasingly have trouble getting books promptly from European publishers (submitting books written by American authors) on time. This doesn't exactly have a great solution at this point. The publishing houses clearly would like us to go to PDF. The judges are not very interested in PDFs. The explanations vary from judges quite bluntly just saying, "look, I do this rather large category because I get to keep the books" to people who are more inclined to say that things like production value and other similar things matter. Someone might note that the production value of one New in Chess book is not substantively different from the production value of another New in Chess book. If you have 25 of them, the 26th is probably not that different from a production value standpoint, but New In Chess is not the only publisher.

One solution to address this would be to simply let the book category start earlier in the year. We could still kick things off in May. But try to have the books sent out to everybody by May 15th as opposed to June 15th. This earlier start would give the judges a bit more time to judge this category and make it more likely for books to arrive in time.

There is also a question, because this category is so large, about if we want to allow the judges to sort of discuss those entries in some anonymous way. For example, you would just type what you thought of this or that feature of a particular book? And someone could say, "didn't notice this" or, "OHH, this isn't really a problem," or "Wow I hadn't noticed that... good catch!" You can see that in the book categories this is a possibility. This will not happen in other categories where you don't have that excuse about that amount of material, but again there is some leeway,

maybe in the book category case as there is a tremendous amount of material.

Finally, there has been much discussion on the category of "Best Magazine." This is a category that I notoriously do not like. And, I will add, I was not the one who put it in. For those of you wondering how that's possible, the category was put in during the year in which I was having a lot of heart problems. Jennifer Valens was kind enough to be coordinating judge and she introduced several new categories.

Before she had put the Best Magazine category in, there had been multiple national magazines, and not a us versus them feel. Now, with only two national magazines each only print the awards that they've won. I'm OK with that because I think on the positive side the awards are advertised. Really interested people will go and check them out on the CJA website where all results are included. The negative side is the us versus them feel with only two magazines in the category.

I think this category (Best Magazine) has a lot of other real problems as well. The following paragraphs are taken in part from an e-mail discussion that I had with a very knowledgeable person in the field.

As you know, I am in charge of the categories for the CJA Awards. As you might remember, there was one year I took off when I was having particularly bad health issues, and Jennifer Vallens took over. During her year, she added a few categories, including Best Magazine. It is a popular category with judges; they get physical copies of both magazines, and the judges tend to be people who like chess magazines. It is the one that requires the most work as we have to get them the magazines. It is also the one that is the most contentious - by far.

The argument for getting rid of this category goes something like this:

Categories should have entries on the same footing, with the same medium, and with the same goal. In this case, these two national magazines do not. *Chess Life* is responsible for benefiting the entire populace that it serves, 100,000 members or about that. *American Chess Magazine* has no members that it must serve (it has a couple thousand people who buy the magazine.) Due to its responsibilities to those 100,000 members, *Chess Life* must include things that are a staunch detriment to winning the awards. TLAs come to mind as they are a tremendous waste of space regarding judgeable material, but they are essential to the membership. On top of this, *ACM* has the freedom to lose as much money as the owners are willing to lose on it. *Chess Life* does not have that luxury.

Further, the CJA judges and the population of US Chess are incredibly different. In US Chess, my rating is in the top 10%. In the CJA I might be in the bottom 10%. While we are trying to reach out to younger individuals (youth awards, etc.), we are predominantly strong chess players who are old white men and US Chess, while still primarily male, skews to young beginners who

are probably Asian/Indian. So, the group asked to judge *Chess Life* is not the group that the magazine is written for, which is a bit unfair. (There is probably an argument that the people who get *Chess Life* are still old white men, but I don't have the demographic info.)

Finally, it has become more challenging to find judges for this category. I have a rule that if I am 95% certain I know how a judge will judge a certain category, I don't ask that judge to judge that particular category. The reason is because then I am just deciding what I like best and having judges back up my opinion. Whether pro-ACM or pro-*Chess Life*, most have made it clear by this point, especially as most can and have interacted with at least one of the two editors, that they strongly prefer magazine x or y.

Feel free to write to me with your own thoughts on the awards.

Without further ado, here are the complete results!!

Top 3

This group of categories have remained the same now for several years - naming the best journalist, the best story, and the best column, three key components of journalism.

Chess Journalist of the Year - J. J. Lang

This year J. J. Lang and Zoey Tang were both extremely active writers. Lang, who has a bit more experience, won comfortably.

Best Story of the Year - [A King Emerges from the Mayhem](#) by John Burke

This year the best story was for a piece on Ling becoming World Champion. Michael Tisserand's piece on Jude Acers won an honorable mention. J.J. Lang's article on Ling becoming World Champion, "[The 17th](#)" missed an honorable mention by a single point.

Best Column of the Year - [Magnificent 3](#) by Šarūnas Šulskis and [Endgame Column](#) by Alex Fishbein

This category routinely has very close scores. Just a year or two ago, Andy Soltis and Alex Fishbein tied. This year, Fishbein and Sulskis tied for first.

Books

The book category has evolved over the years as we balance the needs of the judges and publishers. It may continue to evolve as we need help with European booksellers being able to get things to the judges so they have enough time to do the judging.

Best Book of the Year Overall

Winner: [Emanuel Lasker: A Chess Biography with 1,832 Games](#) by Hans Renette
Honorable Mention: [Chess Warrior: The Life and Games of Géza Maróczy](#) by Laszlo Jakobetz

This category, a wish from the publishers, allows them to easily advertise book X as essentially CJA "Book of the Year." In this

case, two books of historic nature dominated the field. Only two points separated Renette and Jakobetz and neither book got less than a 2nd place vote.

Best Instructional Book

Winner: [Dream Moves](#) by Miron Sher
Honorable Mention: [Perpetual Chess Improvement](#) by Ben Johnson

Again, these two books scored in the top two in each category, with Sher who recently passed away just edging out Johnson, 21-19

Best Book Other

Winner: [Emanuel Lasker: A Chess Biography with 1,832 Games](#) by Hans Renette

Again, Renette and Jakobetz dominated the field. One judge switched his first and second place votes, allowing Lasker to win first place without an Honorable Mention. The score was 23-17.

Visual Arts

Best Single Chess Photo

Winner: [Hands Across the Chessboard](#) by Justin Johnson, Photographer
Honorable Mention: [3 Kids](#) by Justin Johnson, Photographer

For the first time ever, a photographer won the category and an honorable mention. This was accomplished by Justin Johnson of *Northwest Chess*.

Best Cartoon

Winner: [9 Types](#) by Alice Chovanec
Honorable Mention: [Chess Adventures with Alice and Abhi](#) by Alice Chovanec

Chovanec's work, which did not include any pictures of her mom, highlighted the nine types of chess players and the nine types of chess parents. Chovanec scored three first places, while Chess Adventures had one first place vote.

Best Art

Winner: [Chess Warrior](#) by Sofia Polgar, printed by Russell Enterprises

Polgar's work scored 14 points out of a possible 25. The other five entries split the points quite evenly keeping anyone from being awarded an honorable mention.

Best Photojournalism

Winner: [Being Jude Acres: A Day in the Life of a Legend](#) by Michael Tisserand, photos by James Cullen

This work scored well for both story and photography, in this case scoring 22 out of a possible 25.

Best Chess Magazine Cover

Winner: [Chess Life - April, 2024](#)

Chess Life's sole entry scored well with 18 out of 25. *American Chess Magazine* split many other votes, so knocked themselves out of contention for the award.

Print Articles

This set of categories had almost 100 entries by itself. When I started with the awards, the entire program didn't have 100 entries.

Best Overall Magazine

Winner: American Chess Magazine

Please see notes in the beginning of article for more about this contest.

Best Review

Winner: [Streamers and the King's Pawn, Part I](#) by John Watson

Historically this is a battle between Carsten Hansen and John Watson, who have a very different way of reviewing books. Hansen's has many short reviews in one column while Watson reviews one or two books in depth. Watson changes things up a little by reviewing two Chessable courses rather than two books this time and it paid off as first place in the category.

Best Historical Article

Winner: [A Pleasant Diversion: Neil McKelvie](#) by Joshua Anderson

Honorable Mention: [Lost Super Tournament of 1929](#) by Thomas Shupe

This piece, edited by John Hartmann, stemmed from a phone call US Chess received from McKelvie mentioning several unpublished games he had with famous players. Thanks to Hartmann's editing, we were able to put together a strong, short profile of the player and show off his games. Shupe started writing for *American Chess Magazine* after his online work won an award in a previous CJA Awards competition. This piece nicely highlights one of the many "forgotten" events of the 1920s.

Best Feature Article

Winner: [What Your Engine Is Trying to Tell You](#) by Larry Kaufmann

This entry looks at how chess engines provide information to players beyond simply providing various moves scored 21 out of 25 and won first place votes from three judges.

Single Article of Local Interest

Winner: [The Great Berkley Chess Raid](#) by Michael Fitzgerald

This entry, with a great title, won four first place votes and easily won first place.

Best Analysis

Winner: [The Magnificent 3](#) in *American Chess Magazine* #38 by Sarunas Sulskis

Honorable Mention: [Control the Catalan](#) by Jesper Thybo

As usual this was a close competition with all five entries scoring well. Sulskis scored 15 of 25 and all entries scored at least eight points.

Best Tournament Report – National/International

Winner: [A New Wave is Coming](#) by Zoey Tang

Honorable Mention: [In the Arena](#) by Gregory Kaidanov

Honorable Mention: [C You in St. Louis](#) by Carissa Yip

Chess Journalist of the Year runner-up Zoey Tang won this category, edging out two honorable mentions. With 13 entries, an average score would be less than five points. Tang more than doubled that with ten points and each honorable mention scored eight points.

Best Tournament Report – State/Local

Winner: [The Mednis Memorial](#) by John Hartmann

Honorable Mention: [It's all about the Benjamins \(and Klempners\)](#) by Joel Benjamin

Chess Life editor John Hartmann wrote about this Omaha event. He scored 19 out of 25, just besting Benjamin who scored 17.

Best Personal Narrative

Winner: [Achieving My Aim](#) by Arthur Guo

This article chronicles Guo becoming a GM. Guo's article was consistently liked by all of the judges - scoring first or second place in every case.

Best Interview

Winner: [On the Wings of Success: Lev Aronion](#) by Dusan Kronic

Honorable Mention: [Will it Become Fair Enough: Ken Regan](#) by Dusan Kronic

Honorable Mention: [An Advanced Beginner: Maurice Ashley](#) by Steve Sheinkin

As with most years this was a closely contested competition. Kronic's winning piece had 13 points and his honorable mention piece received 12 points. Sheinkin's honorable mention piece had 11 points and just outside of scoring an honorable mention was [So You Want to Be a Champion](#) by Josip Asik with 10 points (An honorable mention is awarded if a piece scores at least 80% of the top score.)

Best Regular Newspaper Column

Winner: [Washington Times Chess Column](#) by David Sands

Again, this column won for Sands, who has won it most of the years I have run the awards. For the last few years Sands has won this column unopposed. Normally when a category only gets one entry we remove the category after a couple of years. How-

ever, this category is such a historic one (around since the beginning of the awards) that I would really like to keep it.

Best Instructive Lesson

Winner: [Analyzing Your Games](#) by Tatev Abrahamyan
Honorable Mention: [You Thought You Knew the Philidor Position](#) by Alexander Fishbein
Honorable Mention: [Start Strong, Finish Stronger](#) by Alexander Fishbein

This category had ten entries so as we would expect there were close low scores. Abrahamyan scored ten points, Fishbein scored nine and eight respectively.

Best Humorous Contribution

Winner: [Ding Lasso](#) by Mike Klein with Kinga Polak

Klein, a three-time Chess Journalist of the Year, writes about how Ding Liren watched Ted Lasso and the corollaries that stem from that viewing.

Online and Social Media

Best Humorous Contribution

Winner: [Elements of Chesstrology](#) by Robert Basalla
Honorable Mention: [Things Not to Do at a Chess Tournament](#) by Laurel and Jack Aronian

Basalla's article bested the Aronian's video by a single point, 18 – 17.

Best Feature Article

Winner: [In the Limelight: Jon Crumiller](#) - by Jon Crumiller (interviewed by Mark Capron)

There were a large number of entries in this category (eight). Crumiller scored 13, with Linville at ten for his piece [Bob Dylan, The Avid Chess Player, Has Also Made Nobel Prize-Winning Music](#), just missing an honorable mention, and no other entry breaking double digits.

Best Chess Website

Winner: [World Chess Hall of Fame](#)

The World Chess Hall of Fame won this category, which this year excluded most of the large national or business entries.

Best Interview

Winner: [Exclusive Interview with Boris Spassky Jr.](#) by World Chess Hall of Fame

This entry from WCHOF dominated the category, scoring double the other entries.

Best Twitch Channel

Winner: [Highlight: FABI, ROSEN, BOK IN THE SATURDAY](#)

[NIGHT BLITZ | GM Akobian and NM Caleb Denby - Twitch](#) - Saint Louis Chess Club

Twitch, like many of our technical categories, had a light year of entries. It was won by the Saint Louis Chess Club, whose twitch feed is filled with all sorts of fun and serious work and analysis of good players.

Best Coverage by Mainstream Publication

Winner: [Chess Kids Huddle at New Canaan Library for Day of Games Under Eye of Award-Winning St. Luke's Player](#) by Mollie Hersh (ChessIn1Day)

New Canaan's St. Luke's school chess club hosts community board party was the winner of this category, designed to help promote mainstream publications writing articles about chess. Inevitably we get fewer than we would like, but as we are so swamped with the task of running the awards, we never have time to broaden our search for these types of articles. In the past these entries have sometimes even brought us active members or judges.

Winner: [Colorado Chess](#)

Honorable Mention: [Puddletown Chess – Elevate your Chess](#) by Zoey Tang

Tang finished second with an Honorable Mention to Colorado Chess. There were several other entries as well. Every entry aside from Colorado Chess was some version of a young start up from a junior chess player. Colorado Chess, a state that does not have their scholastic players automatically join their state organization, did nothing wrong, but a category with one state organization and a bunch of youth sites is probably a category that could use some rethinking.

Best Historical Article

Winner: [IM Jeremy Silman, 1954 – 2023](#) by John Donaldson for US Chess

Honorable Mention: [FM Orest Popovich, 1933 – 2024](#) by Anthony Saidy for US Chess

The question of how to handle obituary pieces is quite difficult. Both US Chess and the CJA chose to put them in Best Historical article. US Chess's were more successful with Donaldson's piece on Silman just edging Saidy's piece on Popovich.

Best Blog

Winner: [Chess.com](#) blog by Ray Linville

Linville scored 23 out of 25 to secure the victory.

Best Non-Instructive Chess Video

Winner: [An Interview with the Four Leaders of the National Middle School Championship](#) by US Chess

Honorable Mention: [2023 Champion Showdown: Chess 9LX Ultimate Moves](#) by Saint Louis Chess Club

This category often causes a little confusion, but I think it is finally coming into its own. Certainly, US Chess did well with this video

of the four women running the National Middle School Championships. Dan Lucas conducted the interview. While these four women do not provide instruction on how to run national events, they do great in explaining their role in the event.

Best Tournament Report – National/International

Winner: [2024 Casablanca Chess Day 1: Carlsen Reignites Kasparov's Sicilian To Take Lead - Chess.com](#) and [Carlsen Wins Casablanca Chess, Climbs Kasparov's Everest - Chess.com](#) by Vanessa West

Honorable Mention: [2023 U.S. Senior Women's Championship | US Chess.org](#) by US Chess Staff

Vanessa West used to write many articles for US Chess, this time she is writing for chess.com and she edges out her former employers 17 to 14.

Best Tournament Report - State/Local

Winner: [Chess Girls Rock" Combines Competition With Camaraderie in Virginia | US Chess.org](#) by JJ Lang

Winner: [Three Norms Earned in New York Over Presidents' Day Weekend | US Chess.org](#) by JJ Lang

Honorable Mention: [Empowering Girls through Chess: FEMchess Hosts Successful All-Girls Scholastic Tournament | US Chess.org](#) by Allyson Wong

Two entries, two wins in this category for the new Chess Journalist of the Year. Allyson Wong was just a point away from making it three winners; all would have had 15 points.

Best Podcast

Winner: [February 2024 Webinar: Chess During the School Day – Part 1 - YouTube](#) by Laurel Aronian

This is a podcast that was filmed. According to some this means it is not technically a podcast. However, no judge mentioned this until there was just a couple days left. I had not seen it as we had about 80% of our entries come in at the last minute. Whether it is technically a podcast or not, it was well received.

Best Instructional Lesson

Winner: [Fabi Finally Beats Magnus After 8 Years! | Monday Masters' - GM Yasser Seirawan](#) by Saint Louis Chess Club

Honorable Mention: [Chess - Calculation of Multiple Choices](#) by Dan Heisman

The top two entries were a close contest, 20 to 18, with Saint Louis Chess Club, besting Dan Heisman's lesson.

Best Documentary

Winner: [Chess Legacy Garry Kasparov Ep. 1 \(Chess History Documentary\)](#) by Adam Whitaker

Whitaker, who makes about a documentary a year, won with a work on Garry Kasparov.

Best Club Newsletter

Winner: [Denver Chess Club | News](#) Denver Chess Club

Wikle of Colorado Chess submitted the club newsletter for the Denver Chess Club. [Denver Chess Club | News](#) is the type that lists the stories rather than in article format. While this is trickier for judging, it works fine for sharing the covered events.

Best Analysis

Winner: [Gukesh, Tan Win FIDE Candidates Tournaments on Dramatic Final Day | US Chess.org](#) by JJ Lang

Honorable Mention: [Candidates 2024: Six Decisive Games in 11th Round Set Up Thrilling Home Stretch | US Chess.org](#) by Tatev Abrahamyan

Honorable Mention: [Candidates 2024: Women's Section Takes Center Stage in Round Six | US Chess.org](#) by Robert Shlyakhtenko

These five entries were well received, with the three US Chess Pieces being judged especially closely. Lang's won with 15 points, while Tatev Abrahamyan's and Robert Shlyakhtenko's both scored 13 points.

Best Personal Narrative

Winner: [Reflections on a Roller Coaster of a U.S. Women's Championship](#) by Carissa Yip

Honorable Mention: [Well There You Go](#) by Ken Milutin

Yip's tale of battling the top US women, topped Milutin's "smaller," more personal tale from our first-time author.

Best Instagram Feed

Winner: [World Chess Hall of Fame](#)

The World Chess Hall of Fame shows off their creative and lively Instagram account with a win in the category.

Best Twitter Feed

Winner: [Saint Louis Chess Club](#)

This was one of several categories that usually has several entries and only had one this year. In this case, a regular winner, Dan Heisman, chose not to enter. This isn't to say that Saint Louis Chess Club did not do a fine job, but rather to highlight that we were light in a few of this type of column this year.

Best Weekly Video Program

Winner: [Saint Louis Chess Club](#)

This well-received program from the Saint Louis Chess Club is a fun look at blitz.

Best Educational Lesson

Winner: [Attacks & Defenses | Beginner Breakdown - GM Alex Yermolinsky](#) Saint Louis Chess Club - GM Yermolinsky

GM Alex Yermolinsky guest lectured at the Saint Louis Chess Club and gave this lesson on Attacks & Defenses. He scored a

mix of mostly fives and threes to score a total of 20 points.

Best Tournament Match Coverage

Winner: [Saint Louis Chess Club](#)

The Saint Louis Chess Club video coverage defeated the print coverage by US Chess of the Women's World Championship. This is the sort of situation that causes me to wonder about finding a way to better separate video and print. As best I could tell, and I do feel I have some knowledge about these things, the work of US Chess was quite good, but simply cannot compare to the video work of Saint Louis Chess Club.

Best Online Review

Winner: [Re-engineering the Classics](#) by Miguel Ararat in *Florida Chess*

Honorable Mention: [Theoretical Rook Endgames and Conceptual Rook Endgames](#) comparative review by GM Jon Edwards

Miguel Ararat's review in *Florida Chess*, just edged out Vice-President Jon Edwards' review in *The Chess Journalist*, 16 to 15. All other entries, four in total, scored as well.

Junior

The Junior Category (for those under 21) had 16 entries over three categories. Most of them were in the category of Best Print Article. There is also a noted repetitiveness of authors, caused by a few of the younger up and coming players liking to write, but sadly not that many of them, it would seem.

Best Print Article by a Junior

Winner: [C You in St. Louis](#) by Carissa Yip

Despite ten entries in this category, Miss Yip dominated the field, almost as strongly as she dominated the 2024 Women's Championship. In this case, Yip scored 18 points, including three first places and one second place.

Best Personal Narrative by a Junior

Winner: [Achieving My Aim](#) by Arthur Guo

This *Chess Life* article explored Guo achieving the FIDE Grandmaster title. His three first place votes led him to a total of 20 points and an easy first place finish.

Best Online Article by a Junior

Winner: [Oceans Apart, Same Chessboard: World Cup Kicks off in Baku](#) by Davis Zong, Jr.

Senior at the time of writing, now a Yale freshman, Zong won with a perfect score for his extensive article on the 2023 World Cup.

Cramer Awards

The state awards are always an interesting combination of repeat entries and new states. This year, there was a small decrease in

total entries, but many of our regulars competed heavily.

Best Overall State Website

Winner: <https://texaschess.org/> - Chris Wood, Webmaster

This website bested two others. Texas has a great site, but hopefully we will get other states like Iowa, Oklahoma, and North California to join again soon.

Best State Magazine Print

Winner: [Northwest Chess](#) - Jeff Roland, editor

Northwest Chess, covering Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, once again won this category with a perfect score. Jeff Roland is the editor and has been for more than 10 years. See Mark Capron's interview with him in [The Chess Journalist \(October 2022\)](#). [Texas Knights](#) came in second.

Best State Magazine Online

Winner: [Northwest Chess](#) - Jeff Roland, editor

Northwest Chess also won this category, with [Colorado Chess Informant](#) coming in second.

Best State Championship Report

Winner: [Washington State Championship](#) by Josh Sinanan

This category had the most entries of all the Cramer Awards—five. Sinanan's article was an expansive report with games, narrative, and even artwork by an illustrator. Laurel Aronian's piece on the [New York State Championship](#) was second, with Scott Varagona's piece on the [70th Alabama State Championship](#) a close third.

Best Personal Narrative

Winner: ["ARGH!"](#) by Scott Varagona

This entry was also from *Alabama Chess Antics* and was well liked by the judges.

Best Photograph

Winner: [Hands Across the Chessboard](#) by Justin Johnson, Photographer

This entry along with Best Picture won in several categories.

Best State Tournament Coverage

Winner: [Washington State Championship](#) by Josh Sinanan

This category was won by a first-time entrant, and a first-time judge, Josh Sinanan. He provided text, charts, and detailed information about the event.

Best State Facebook Page

Winner: [Texas Chess Association](#) - Deborah Shafer, Webmaster

In this first-time category, suggested by the late Jim Hollingsworth, Texas Chess Association's Deborah Shafer just edged out Alexander Lumelsky, who runs Connecticut's Facebook page.

Best State Magazine Photo

Winner: [Hands Across the Chessboard](#) by Justin Johnson, photographer

This photo, first published by *Northwest Chess* was also chosen as Best Single Chess Photo.

Finally, much thanks to Vasishta Tumuluri, John Hilbert, Dan Heisman, Peter Minear, Al Lawrence, Eric Johnson, David Sands, Matt Bengtson, Andy Soltis, John Donaldson, Mark Capron, Howard Goldowsky, Jim Hollingsworth, Mike Klein, Daniel Lucas, Rebecka Ratcliffe, Dov Gorman, Anand Mishra (just 3), Melinda Matthews, Anthony Gold, Eric Holcomb, Jeffrey Roland, Shawn Wang, Ralph Dubisch, Ray Linville, Scott Varagona, Matt Traynor, Jon Edwards, Emily Allred, Leteef Street, Chris Torres, Rachel Schechter, Robert Irons, Grayson Rorrer, Evan Rabin, Laurel Aronian, Ram Singh, Robert Shlyakhtenko, River Travis Lawson, Julie Rorrer, Patrick Tejada, Frances Chovenac, Neil Brennan, Eugene Salomon, JJ Lang, Arjun Kochar, Nikhi Murugan, Jon Crumiller, Jack Aronian, Kenneth Calitri, Bette Marshall, Ken Milutin, Nikki Khmelnitsky, Josh Sinanan, Rex Gray, Louis Pratt, James Hodina, and Patrico Robayo who judged this year.



I have come to the conclusion that buying books and reading them are actually two entirely different hobbies. —Anonymous

If, for example, we consider books as medicine, we understand that it is good to have many at home rather than a few: when you want to feel better, then you go to the 'medicine closet' and choose a book. Not a random one, but the right book for that moment. That's why you should always have a nutrition choice!

Those who buy only one book, read only that one and then get rid of it. They simply apply the consumer mentality to books, that is, they consider them a consumer product, a good. Those who love books know that a book is anything but a commodity. —Umberto Eco

What is the Great American Chess Periodical Preservation Project (GACPPP)?

What follows is a brief synopsis of the full report on the project written by ICCF World Champion Jon Edwards, CJA President Joshua Anderson and CJA Treasurer/Editor Mark Capron. — Editor

1. To identify and catalog all American chess publications. It is in our collective interest that this list be comprehensive, so we ask readers for their suggestions and to inform us of any errors in, omissions from, or improvements to our list. If anything, the goal today is much more challenging to reach than ever. Many of these publications are extremely obscure and are becoming very difficult to locate. We are therefore reaching out now to all collectors of chess periodical literature and ask that they contribute seriously to this project.
2. To identify the owners of runs, or in the case of rare publications, the owners of individual issues, especially owners willing to scan or allow the scanning of those items in their collections. When back issues are identified, we ask that owners consider loaning them for scanning, especially if they are unable themselves to scan the material according to the standards we have set.
3. To establish a set of best practices that will permit the preservation and sharing of this material in a consistent and easy-to-use format. We have reached out to content experts who have helped us to design, in theory at least, how we will set up a folder structure to host these magazines. All scanned documents will be saved within this structure in pdf format at 300 dpi or better, and will have Optical Character Recognition (OCR) done so they will be word searchable. Best practices will assist those interested in helping the project, primarily chess collectors and officials at state organizations who want to see more publicity for their state's magazine and will be able to use these best practices to contribute their scans to this shared collection.
4. To encourage copyright holders of this material to permit the sharing of the scanned images of their publications. Periodicals that are now out-of-copyright can be shared without such permission. We expect many publications that remain in copyright to have owners or their heirs who would happily assist in these preservation efforts. For those states and journals already sharing back issues and making them available, our contribution will be to encourage the use of best practices in scanning, identifying, and bringing all the material into a single archive. That single archive will likely require ongoing financial support. In that regard, we will be seeking financial contributions to enable and to sustain the project.
5. To enter into ChessBase all of the games contained within the American chess periodicals, essentially a game database of all the magazines. Sadly, American chess games are underrepresented in massive game databases because there has been no coordinated effort to capture American chess. Compared to their European counterparts, American chess players are not required to submit their games to obtain rating credit.

We also want to emphasize that this effort transcends our organization. We are ready and willing to partner with state organizations, periodical editors, and others who share these goals.

Finally, we note in passing that this ambitious effort deserves a more memorable name. All suggestions are welcome!

[Great American Chess Periodical Preservation Project - Chess Journalists of America \(chessjournalism.org\)](#)

The Chess Journalists of America (CJA) is a 501c3 organization created to help promote and encourage chess writing and communication in its myriad of forms.

Miscellaneous Pictures



The CJA Dinner at the US Open in Norfolk, VA. (L) Joshua Anderson, Mark Capron, Jon Edwards, Mark Taylor, Melinda Matthews (R) Al Lawrence, Mary Lawrence, Dan Lucas, Rebecka Ratcliffe, JJ Lang



Photos by Joshua Anderson from the World Corporate Chess Championship in New York.



The 3x3 Method How to find a move. [Chess in Small Doses](#). July 12, 2024
by [Nick Vasquez, MD](#)

Reprinted with permission from the author Nick Vasquez. Nick's excellent blog can be found on the substack platform here: [Chess in Small Doses](#) –ed.

Welcome back to [Chess in Small Doses](#). Today we're going to talk about one of the hardest things to do in chess, finding a good move. In his book [How to Choose a Chess Move](#), GM Andy Soltis said as you get better it actually gets harder to find a good move. You have more things to consider in positions than before. I have found this to be true myself. In reviewing my games with my coach, it's clear I may be thinking many things when I choose a chess move but I'm probably not thinking enough... or at least in the right way. Now I believe I have hit upon a "simplified" process that can be used to find the way forward in almost any position. I call it the **3x3 Method**.

What was that?	Any plan?	Is it a mistake?
Tactical Themes	Wide not deep	Have options
Line by line	Any alternatives?	Is it safe?

The essence of any good thought process will help you do at least 3 things. It will allow you to: #1) understand what changed with the last move; #2) see the possible moves in the position for you and; #3) help you calculate what the consequence of any move will be. While that is straightforward, I find I need to break these concepts down into something more digestible and easier to recall. The 3x3 Method is my best attempt at a thought process that not only preserves the best practices highlighted by others, but also works to address common amateur mistakes. (I'm not saying you'll play like a grandmaster, but you'll play more consistently.)

The Structure

A brief comment here about the colors and structure of the method. **The colored boxes are the essential steps any thought process must have.** We must consider what our opponent's move does and how it changes the board. We must look widely for potential useful moves and consider each one. Lastly, we must ensure that we've done a blunder check to make sure our move is safe. These three color coded boxes for the 3 things we must do before every move if we are to play strong chess.

The other boxes are habits and best practices that amateurs often miss. Things like asking if the last move was a mistake or consistently looking for tactical themes in every position. Also things like calculating each line separately and then considering alternative moves your opponent might have. Let me try to walk you through the method.

Step 1: What was that?

The first step is fundamental to playing better chess. Simply, what kind of move did our opponent just play? **Does it attack, defend, or is it neutral?** Neutral moves are basically repositioning a piece to a different square, like developing or maneuvering. If we are to play strong chess we need to understand all the things our opponent's last move does. What does it attack? What does it un-defend or uncover? This step seems simple enough that we can often just do it without thinking, but that's where the danger comes in. Do not just assume we know what the move does, but instead become intentional about identifying what kind of move it was and how it changed the position.

One extra step you can take is to ask **what's their plan?** As players get better, every move has an intention behind it. If you can see the plan behind the move, you can better anticipate what is to come next and account for it. You don't have to go very deep. It's just enough to understand what the move enables. Things like "they're going to attack on the kingside" or "they want to create an outpost" or "they want to get the bishop pair". Just try to see if there is a plan or intent behind the move.

If you can't see one then ask **is it a mistake?** Amateurs like myself often give their opponents the "benefit of the doubt" when they make a move and assume it's safe. However, they make mistakes too. Does the move uncover something? Does it restrict another piece's mobility? Every move does positive and negative things. It's worth it to habitually look to see if they made a mistake. We may find an opportunity we might otherwise miss.

Step 2: Wide not deep

Once we've identified the opponent's move, now we can shift our focus to our move. One common flaw in amateur (meaning below Expert level or <UCSF 2000) play is that we often hyper-focus on one area at the expense of the other areas of the board. The best practice to begin to find a good move is to look **wide, not deep**. This is simply looking at all the one-move options you have in a position. IM Hendricks said something similar in [Move First. Think Later](#), to look for moves first, then plans, and then judge the results. Looking wide is just searching the position for potentially useful moves that you don't initially see. There's no point in calculating yet, we're just taking inventory of moves we *might* play here. Just take a tour of the pieces starting with the King and moving down (Queen, then Rooks, then Minors, then pawns). Look at the whole board before you settle on moves to compare.

If you want to improve on this search, you can look for the **tactical themes** in the position. Things like loose pieces, checks, X-rays, forks, pins & skewers, etc... Just again we're trying to notice and become aware of all that's going

on in the position. If there's a pin, can we attack it? If there's an X-ray, can we do a discovery? If there is a loose or hanging piece, can we attack or take it? The tactical themes of a position will help show you which moves are potentially useful. Making it a consistent habit to notice tactical themes in our training will mean we don't really have to force ourselves to look, we'll be doing it intuitively.

When we've finished looking wide, the best practice is to have at least 2 (or possibly more) moves to compare. We call these candidate moves but [GM Aagaard](#) likes to call them "**options**". I like this term better, because it really clarifies what we're doing when we play better chess. My biggest mistakes have come when I only consider one move or one piece in a position. We will play better if we consistently compare move A against move B. There may only be one good move in a position, but often we have more options than we think. The best practice for players is to look widely for moves to compare. Only then can we begin to calculate (although if you're like me your brain has already started doing that).

Step 3: Is it safe?

The most critical question to ask before moving is the overly simplistic "**is it safe?**" You would think this should be obvious for our brains, that we would recognize safe moves from unsafe moves. However amateurs are vulnerable to seeing only one line in a position, usually the one that works best for us. Our opponents are highly motivated to not play that line however. My old coach would ask things like "why doesn't this work" to find his opponent's best replies. Asking "is it safe" begins our search for the opponent's best move. It makes us look at what our opponent might be able to do that maybe we missed. Can the piece be captured? Did we miss a check? Is there a tactic we missed that is now possible after our proposed move? "Is it safe" is a simple question that changes our mental framework, allowing us to anticipate our opponent's strongest response.

Of course to get to our move we would do well to compare our options. Many people will do that automatically, but if we want to be more intentional we need to go **line by line**. IM Andras Toth has a [fantastic video](#) about calculating that helps here. The process of looking at one line at a time and evaluating the resulting position (better for us or worse for us) is how we take complex positions and simplify them. No need to go back and wonder about a move, just go down one line at a time. The minimum depth is 1 1/2 moves (our move, their move, our move). If there's lots of forcing moves try to keep going until it's a quiet position. If we find a forced mate, no need to keep going just double check to make sure it's forced and then play it. If we find a losing line then we can discard that line and move on to the next. Please watch [Toth's video](#) for further explanation, it's worth the time.

Once you've gotten to what you think, is the right line ask if the opponent has **any alternatives**? Maybe they don't need to capture back, or maybe they will push that pawn. We are playing humans and humans can do surprising things. They may see the board very differently than we do. Again, we do not need to go deep only wide. Looking for one move alternatives to the line we've chosen can save us from nasty surprises. It's very easy to fall in love with a line, only to find the opponent disagrees.

Once we know our move is safe we can confidently play it. It's the best practice to calculate a line and evaluate the resulting position. We will play better if we consider all our opponents alternative moves in response instead of assuming they see the board like we do.

Conclusion

The 3x3 Method is a simplified process involving three steps.

- Step 1: What was that?
- Step 2: Wide not deep
- Step 3: Is it safe?

Each step has some best practices to account for common amateur errors. In Step 1 we should look for any plans. If we can't see one, maybe they made a mistake? In Step 2, we need to look widely for our options. Moves that fit the tactical themes in the position will be the strongest. Giving ourselves options will allow us to find moves we may have initially missed. In Step 3 calculate each line one by one and come to an evaluation. Choose the best line but then consider all the opponents alternative replies to our move.

Thank you for reading! This may seem a lot, and no one really has to do any of this when they play. However, I've found that when I don't do these steps I will either lose games or fail to win the "won" position I had. Please leave a comment and tell me what you think. Share if you liked it!

P.S... The Backstory

Prior to starting my serious work on chess, I was a blitz and rapid player. My only thought process was "**see move, make move.**" I just didn't really understand what people did when they played longer games. One day I read Dan Heisman's [The Improving Chess Thinker](#) and he talked about "[real chess](#)" where you identify your opponent's threats before you move. Seemed simple enough to me. Then I'd play chess and miss stuff. Fast forward to getting lessons and doing the Steps Method, my coach suggested I play in the Lichess 4545 league and play OTB. In those games I began to practice a very simple thought process called "**Their move/my move/their move.**" That is about as simple as "real chess" gets.

- What does their move do?
- What can I do?
- What will they do if I go there?

I won 3/4 games in my first tournament but it was also the start of something unfortunately I have continued. I won my first two games by thinking through each move but then I reverted to old habits of "see move, make move" in the last 2 games. I lost my next game and would have lost my last game had my opponent not blundered his Queen (FYI that kid I think is over USCF 2000 now).

So it has gone since then. Sometimes I can keep up the habit, other times I just play chess and get surprised. That I suppose is normal but I am focused on controlling what I can control. I am focused on the process of improvement. **It is clear to me now that I will not ever progress to where I want to go until I make a consistent habit of thinking through each move and doublechecking as I go.**

Coming up with the 3x3 Method required two things. First, I needed to look critically at the best practices from my training. Secondly I needed to look at where I went wrong the most often. I worked recently with a coach to help identify what those common errors were. I also went back to the Steps Method material to look at their ideas. Though they don't publish it the workbooks per se, there is a three part framework in the Steps Method to finding a move.

1. Orient to the position
2. Generate candidate moves
3. Calculate the lines

My coach at the time had a far more involved diagram of what to do for each step. I found it overwhelming however. Later, I stumbled across CM Axel Chua's course on [Calculation](#) and appreciated his focus on tactical themes. There was a lot of overlap between my old coach's process and the calculation course. They both focus on noticing the tactical themes and forcing moves in a position and then try to fit moves to the position.

That seemed straightforward and logical, but being amateur (and human) I would make mistakes. Sometimes I would miss critical alternative moves my opponents had in a position. Other times I would hyper-focus on one area of the board and neglect the other sides. These represent common blind spots for many amateurs. **So I started to expand the old "their move/my move/their move" to include questions designed to account for these common errors.** Doing so allowed me to arrive at the 3x3 Method. It's an intentional thought process that goes from their move, to my move, and back again to their possible responses. It asks questions along the way to widen my view of the board and think differently.

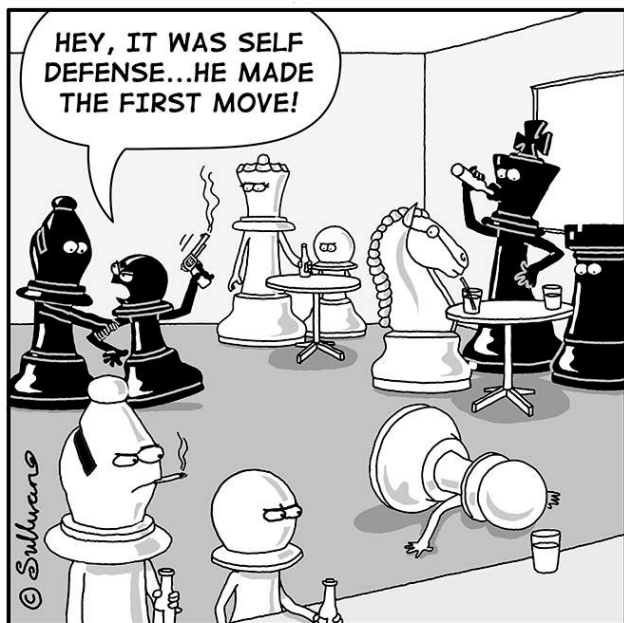


To be clear, I could put a lot more steps in here but I wanted to keep it simplified and light enough that amateurs could conceivably use it. Of course I am USCF 1550 roughly so take my advice with a grain of salt. It's just my opinion but I hope you find it useful.

Thank you for subscribing to [Chess in Small Doses](#). My name is Nick Vasquez and I'm an ER doc, a Dad, a husband, and I play chess. Chess became very important to me just before the pandemic began. Thanks to the [Chess Steps](#), a coach ([NM Han Schut](#)), and a lot of hard work I gained > 200 points in two years and landed on [Pertpetual Chess](#) as an Adult Improver in July 2022. [Chess in Small Doses](#) is about my continuing journey and what I'm learning along the way.

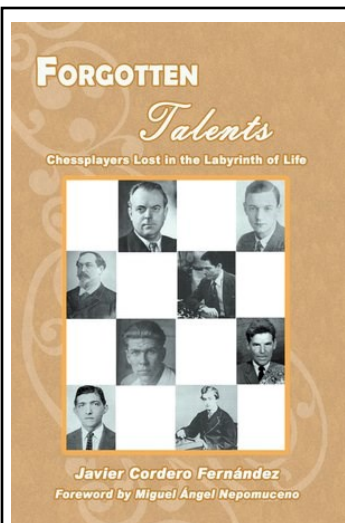
CHESS PEACE

by Tony Sullivan



CHESS PEACE

by Tony Sullivan



[Forgotten Talents](#)

by Javier Cordero Fernandez

Reviewed by Dr. Anthony Saidy

An excellently researched historical study of 23 lesser-known stars from past two centuries. I just read the 2024 English paperback version with 198 games and 288 pages from Russell Enterprises (\$24.95). It deepened my knowledge, and made me wish to computer-check various brilliancies. All European players incl. Soviets, but for two Latins. Most have individual books dedicated to them.

Some found gainful employment. A few were sidelined by mental illness. Longevity is not impressive. Many were erratic or inconsistent. Few had proper help. You can see the list at Cordero's website <[historiadelaajedrezspanol.es](#)> (and you don't need to type a tilde).

I faced two of these players OTB and scored a plus, thanks to Peruvian-Italian Esteban Canal's swigging during our game from a flask with amber liquid. I asked, "Maestro, que es eso?" He replied, "Leche." He had a bad bishop and did not come close to inflicting a Canal mate.

THE INTRIGUING IRWIN

(observations and notes from a career B-A player)

By Ken Milutin

I was honored and pleased to be the first ever representative from the State of Delaware to participate in this year's John T. Irwin 7th National Tournament of Senior State Champions in Norfolk, VA. As opening day approached, the excitement and nervousness had manifested quite a bit. Let's face it ... a field containing GM's, Masters and Experts had to be quite confident playing against a B player from Delaware.

DAY 1: I had plenty of time to enjoy day one as a friend was driving me to Norfolk. It was a picture-perfect day and what a way to start by travelling across the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Arriving at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel at 10:30 AM, I was too early for even an early check-in, however I decided to give it a shot anyway. I spoke with the most charming young lady at the front desk, and to my pleasant surprise, they not only had a room ready for me, but offered me a complimentary room upgrade (top floor with concierge!) What a great way to kick things off. After a quick unpacking, I decided to orient myself with the hotel, playing hall etc. After looking around the hotel, I then decided to have a quick, early lunch next door at Guy Fieri's Smokehouse (very good). At 12:45 PM I checked in for the Irwin and received my state flag and medallion. I finally got to meet the man who made this happen for me, Mike Mulford. Mike is a cheery fellow and was quite busy so we decided that we would chat further later during the event. 1:30 found me attending the opening ceremony and having the group photo taken.



Photo Courtesy Caroline King / US Chess

I am the 6th person "up" all the way to the left, wearing a blue shirt and sporting gray hair ... forget that ... almost all of us are sporting gray hair. After the photo shoot, I took a long walk and found a sandwich shop and picked up dinner to go. Back to the room I went, ate, relaxed, and then on to the 7:00 PM first round! I was paired as white in round one against the representative from Colorado, Brian Wall. With a rating of 2201, it loomed at me like it was in large font and in bold!! What a way to start the event! I opted for a d4 opening since I knew my typically aggressive e4 set of openings probably would not cut the mustard ... none-the-less I found myself in trouble by move 13 or so. After winning a pawn and coming at me with what seemed like three knights, four bishops and five rooks, I was able to "last" until move 32 when I decided not to resign and allow him the well-deserved checkmate. Instead of my opponent moving on and not giving me another thought, he chatted with me after the game regarding chess and several other subjects and introduced me to another friend of his (very pleasant fellow from WV named James Fuller ... not in the Irwin but there for the Open). I was very entertained as I watched the two of them play some speed chess. Both were extremely good at speed! We ran into each other and chatted several times during the event. I want to thank Brian for being so gracious and friendly, allowing me to calm my nerves and look forward to my next round. I was finally off to bed close to midnight.

DAY 2: Friends of mine from DE had arrived the day before so their son could participate in one of the Open side events. Wyatt is a very good and enthusiastic junior who is going to make some waves in chess someday. His parents are very supportive of his chess interests and are an absolute pleasure to be around (as is Wyatt). His kind, friendly demeanor and love of chess strike you immediately. I was looking forward to spending some time with Wyatt the next day. After having a good night's sleep, I headed down for breakfast at the hotel around 7:15. I was joined by Mike Mulford and I am extremely glad we were able to take this time to get to know each other. During one of our conversations, it came up that some folks believe that "chess is not a social game!" I can only say, and I am sure that most of you would agree, that I have met many great folks through chess. I am in my 60's and have some 50+ year friendships that started through chess. It is a very social game! At noon, round 2 began and this turned out to be a marathon 76 move game, full of twists and turns. Most of the twists and turns were due to a draw offer "*Faux Pas*" made by me. My opponent arrived just a little late to the game and I had started the clock (as we were instructed).

After sitting down and shaking hands, playing black, I defended with one of my favorite defenses, the Dutch. My opponent, from RI, played solidly, but I knew the Dutch quite well and felt extremely comfortable with my position out of the opening and well into the middlegame, even believing that I had a small advantage at one point. By the time we reached move 33, it was looking pretty even and I was strongly considering if it was the correct time to offer a draw. Here is where the *Faux Pas* began. I got up and tracked down a floor TD (I have to fully disclose that I had never previously participated in an event where FIDE rules were in effect, and I wanted to make sure that I offered a draw properly). The TD stated that the sequence should go like this: Offer the draw, write your move down then make it on the board. I did think this was very odd, so I asked the TD to please repeat the sequence again, which was done and then I asked the TD to please observe as I made the draw offer. The TD came to the board, watched the sequence and during the sequence whispered that he had informed me incorrectly. My opponent was slightly annoyed, and I was slightly flustered, but no harm was done as my opponent declined and we played on. No big deal and the TD was very apologetic. About 10-12 moves later, I made another draw offer (in the correct sequence), which was again declined. A note here that my opponent was rated 2026, well above my rating of 1755. If the rating situation were reversed, I probably would have declined as well since a tricky B+B vs B+N ending was looming. In another 10-12 moves, I thought it would be a good time to offer another draw ... we were both down to around two minutes each on the clock and the position on the board was not getting any clearer. I was not harassing my opponent or doing anything that I thought was out of bounds ... until ... on the third draw offer, I made my move, punched the clock, recorded the move and waited probably 15-20 seconds before I offered the draw. My opponent was not happy. He believed (incorrectly) that I was distracting him intentionally. He asked to stop the clock and made his case to a TD (there were two or three nearby since we were the last game to finish). The TD asked him for the sequence of events and then asked me for my version, which I confirmed was identical to my opponent's version. I was incorrect of course in that I did not offer the draw immediately after moving. My opponent was awarded with two extra minutes on the clock. The extra time found me blundering away what was probably a draw (and my opponent agreed). After the game, I apologized again to my opponent. And again, when we ran into each other just before I left. He did tell me that even though it isn't an official rule, offering a draw a second and then a third time, even if numerous moves are in between, is frowned upon (in speaking with the TD afterwards, they said that as long as I am not "pestering" my opponent with draw offers on almost every move, I can offer whenever inclined to do so.) At any rate it was an unfortunate incident and one that I regret, however, it did not diminish our game and my opponent's extremely good play. He did say later that he ac-

cepted my apology and now didn't believe I was intentionally trying to distract him, which made me feel better. Afterwards, I had a rushed "2 hot dog" dinner at the hotel, a quick freshen up in the room, then off to the 7:00 PM start of round three. Round three had me paired against the representative from ID, an extremely pleasant and cordial opponent for sure. Having white, I opened with d4 and was able to get my first win. My opponent resigned on the 23rd move, having to accept my queen sacrifice with a smothered mate coming next move. Even though my opponent was the lowest rated participant in the Irwin, this game was an attacking adventure with tactics and fireworks from both sides starting right out of the opening! I cannot say that this was an easy win by any stretch! After the game and again a time or two during the event, we ran into each other and discussed a myriad of subjects, including how we both ended up being invited to participate. A new friend was made.

DAY 3: I woke up early and went for a nice walk and had breakfast at D'Egg, which was a few blocks from the hotel. Round 4 at noon had me paired against the 2000 rated representative from IN. Having black, I was back in my comfort zone with a Dutch defense. I was a little tied up out of the opening, but some exchanges allowed me to untangle, and we agreed on a draw on move 29. Once again, a very pleasant fellow who took some time on a couple of occasions to chat after our game. So, I stood at 1.5 out of 4 with 2 games to play. Later that afternoon, I met up with Wyatt and his parents. We picked up some matching t-shirts and I treated him to a sweatshirt, and we spent some quality time together. He asked me to "watch" his next game. I told him that if it were allowed, I would be there! I ventured down to Wyatt's playing room, and I could not enter, but the good news was that there were several glass doors lining the front of the room. I was able to grab one spot with a clear look at Wyatt's contest. The smile on his face when he saw me was priceless! I had a very casual dinner at the hotel and then prepared for my 7:00 PM, Round 5 contest. This turned out to be a tactical game and I was totally outplayed by my 2000 rated opponent from MI. Having black (yes, two back-to-back blacks but that's okay), I played my favorite Dutch again but somehow allowed an early unfavorable exchange. It was an early resignation from me, but I was totally outplayed. Once again, a very nice, lengthy chat ensued after the game. We of course talked about chess, but the conversation steered into several other subjects as well. What a great bunch of folks here at The Irwin!

DAY 4: Up early, I packed and was ready to go. I had breakfast at the Concierge Lounge on the 10th floor (this was part of my complimentary upgrade!), then off to my round 6, 10:00 AM final game ... and what a GAME!! My cordial, gracious opponent from AR and I got into one heck of an attacking game. We had similar ratings and were both probably thinking the same thing, lets go all out and

see how the pieces fall. We weren't in line for any prizes so throwing all caution to the wind, off we went (*see game score below). Castling on opposite sides (I had white and castled on the kingside), he smashed through my king's protection while I blasted away at the protection around his king on the queenside. When the dust had settled, I was basically one move ahead in my attack and he resigned on move 31. Probably my best and most entertaining game of the tournament! So, I finished with 2.5 out of 6. Not bad by my estimation, considering the overall strength of the tournament and the strength of my opponents. I was quite happy with the result. It looked like there were 53 participants (one appeared to be a no-show). I went in ranked 45th out of 53 and finished tied for 32-40 (last in that group based on pre-tournament rating). Again, I was pleased since there were several higher rated folks who scored less and I was the lowest rated with 2.5 points! I then made a quick trip to the chess store, made a few purchases for myself and a couple of friends, and finally was able to meet Shawn Sullivan from House of Staunton. I then attended the closing ceremonies, and afterwards was introduced to Dan Lucas. I then said some "so-longs" to the great group of folks and new friends that I met. Mike Mulford was the last person I said goodbye to. Mike was hands-down the sole reason that I was here and able to participate in this amazing event! As an added surprise, Mike asked me if I had any interest in being on the Senior Committee! I of course was honored and pleased to even be considered! He nominated me and I am now a member of the committee! My friend picked me up from the hotel at 6:40 PM for the 3.5-hour ride home, which was pleasant and uneventful!

Milutin, Ken (DE) - Elkins, Steve (AR)

John T. Irwin 7th National Tournament of Senior State Champions Norfolk, VA (6), 30.07.2024

1.d4 e5 2.dxe5 d6 3.e4 c6 4.f3 g4 5.e2 d7 6.0-0 0-0 7.e3 b8 8.c3 f3 9.f3 e5 10.d2 f6 11.h3 f3+ 12.f3 h5 13.a4 e7 14.a5 a6 15.b4 dg8 16.f1 c6 17.c4 g5 18.e2 h4 19.b5 cxb5 20.cxb5 g4 21.bxa6 gxh3 22.f7+ xb7 23.axb7 xg2+ 24.f1 h5 25.a6 c7 26.c1+ d7 27.c6+ e6 28.d5+ f6 29.d4+ g6 30.fxh8 h2 31.fxh5+ 1-0 An imperfect game with errors on both sides, but it was an enjoyable, sporting game.

Lastly: A quick run-down of the folks I met:

1. Mike Mulford	Simply A heartfelt and sincere THANK YOU!	
2. Brain Wall	First Round Opponent	Thank you for spending some extra time looking over our game and introducing me to "James" from WV!
3. Michael Carey	Second Round Opponent	Sorry again for my <i>Faux Pas Mike....a great game by a great player!</i>
4. Marcella "Maya" Whitecloud	Third Round Opponent	Thank you for the chats and game!
5. Jay Carr	Fourth Round Opponent	Thank you for an exciting (and tough) draw! Very nice to have met you and to now be friends on FB!
6. Faris Gabbara	Fifth Round Opponent	Sorry I couldn't have given you a better game, with my favorite defense no less! Nice meeting and talking to you!
7. Steve Elkins	Sixth Round Opponent	What an entertaining game! I know it could have gone either way. You were very gracious in defeat and if we had played 10 games, we probably would have split 5-5!
8. James Fuller from WV	I enjoyed watching your speed/blitz games with Brain!	
9 Shawn Sullivan	Great to finally have met you!	
10. Dan Lucas	Great to have met you as well! Thanks for chatting with me!	
11. Wyatt Stout and his parents	Friends of mine from DE	Watch for Wyatt's name in the future. If he stays with chess, he will go far! Wyatt's parents really support his chess endeavors and couldn't be nicer!
12. Last, but not least	The lovely young lady at the Reception Desk at the hotel, who for some reason, allowed me to check in early and gave me the complimentary upgraded room on the 10th floor! I wish I had gotten your name so I could pass it on to your manager. You really set the tone for my entire stay and experience. THANK YOU!	

And some folks say "Chess is not a social game! ... I THINK NOT!!

Atlantic 30-30

By Ed Tassinari

I was 22, a senior at Saint Lawrence University in upstate New York, when I played in my first USCF-rated tournament at Clarkson College in Potsdam, New York in April 1967. My Dad had taught me chess when I was 4; he had learned chess through *Chess Review's* "Chess for The Wounded" program while recovering from a serious World War II combat injury. He never was a United States Chess Federation (USCF) member, but was a strong club player in Westchester County (N.Y.) chess circles in the early 1950's. The thousands of skittles games we played formed the basis for most of my chess experience until I entered college. In the college event, I scored +3 -1 =1 and won the unrated prize of \$10. The winner in a field of 33 was Canadian master Leslie Witt (5-0). Another Canadian master, Ivan Theodorovitch, and three others tied at 4-1. In the second round, I lost to Ron Lohrman, an expert who would win the U.S. Amateur Championship later that year. In the first round, Lohrman had drawn with a 14-year-old named Ken Rogoff who would become a grandmaster before leaving chess to earn a Ph.D. in economics. Eventually, Rogoff became chief economist for the International Monetary Fund and a Harvard professor. In this tournament he would only score 2-3, but in the September 1967 issue of *Chess Life* his rating was 2044. His rise in chess was rapid.

In July 1967, I played in the Atlantic 30-30, an unrated event held at the Manhattan Chess Club. I can't recall the prize fund, but as was typical of New York City chess at the time, it featured a powerful field including IM James Sherwin who finished third in the 1957-8 and 1958-9 U.S. Championships behind Fischer and Reshevsky and had wins over every leading American player of his time; masters Larry Gilden, Asa Hoffmann, Norman Weinstein, Dr. Ariel Mengarini; veterans of the chess wars like Paul Brandts and E. Schuyler Jackson; a scruffy-looking Jackie Beers, a 17-year-old master (buddy of Bobby Fischer), who was establishing himself as a chess force to be reckoned with and a gamesman of skill in poker and board games such as Scrabble. One of the first things I can recall when I entered the playing hall was Walter Browne giving a speed chess simul against five or six players for a quarter a game with the upper hand in each instance.

When the smoke cleared after eight rounds (four games each day over a weekend), Gilden had won with 6.5-1.5 (losing to Sherwin in a time scramble that was followed by many participants including me). Evidently there was no love lost between these players, given a brief, testy exchange between them when the game ended. Hoffmann, Mengarini and tournament director Bill Goichberg (indefatigable chess promoter, tournament director and later USCF president) tied for second with 6, Beers 5.5, Weinstein, Sherwin and Jeff Satenstein (another strong young player) had 5. Browne, for some reason a no-show for round one, would lose to Mengarini (a game that appears in the doctor's fascinating, little-known book, *Predic-*

ament in Two Dimensions, Thinkers Press – 1980) and got into a heated dispute with his final round opponent Vinnie Livermore over a touch-move issue. As the rhetoric escalated, Goichberg calmly got up from his game, walked over to Browne-Livermore and said, "You're both forfeited." As I recall, Livermore took the verdict without rancor, but Browne was livid, saying among other things, "I'm going to get you, Goichberg!" Then, some players suddenly remembered that the trophies that were to be awarded to the winner and class prize winners were on a table outside the playing hall. Some left their games and ran out to see, if Walter would wreak havoc on the hardware. Fortunately, he did not. He left the tournament, furious. Needless to say, this event was not mentioned in Browne's account of his career, *The Stress of Chess...And its Infinite Finesse* (New in Chess 2012).

I entered the tournament officially unrated by the USCF because my provisional rating (1918) had not been in the most recent listings. The event was not a game 30, but 30 moves in 30 minutes with another time control at every 30-move interval and so forth. I scored 4-4 (+3 -3 =2) drawing one expert on the black side of a Goering Gambit as he spent more time reading a New York City tabloid and let me off the hook after a misplayed opening on my part and losing to Jackson in 18 moves and 15 minutes (the less said about that game the better). But in round two, I defeated Vinnie Livermore on the white side of a King's gambit. At the time he was rated 1500, but within two years he had an expert's rating and had defeated Sal Matera, who would become an International Master, Marshall Chess Club champion, U.S. Junior champion and U.S. Championship participant. Vinnie, played by Laurence Fishbourne in "Searching for Bobby Fischer", became one of the strongest Washington Square Park, chess hustlers who befriends young Josh Waitzkin and teaches him some valuable lessons before being superseded by the chess teacher and pedagogue Bruce Pandolfini. There is quite a lot online regarding the chess hustling scene back in the day, including many reminiscences about Vinnie Livermore. His chess strength is less clear but according to GM Roman Dzindzichashvili, who for a brief time reigned as the Kingpin of Washington Square Park, he was about 2300-2400 strength.

As far as I know, no chess database contains games from the Atlantic 30-30, so I've included my game versus Vinnie Livermore.

Tassinari, Ed - Livermore, Vinnie

Atlantic 30-30 New York (2), 07.1967

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.Nc3 c6 5.d3 g5 6.Nf3 Rg8 7.0-0 Qb6+ 8.d4 d6 9.e5 g4 10.exf6 gxf3 11.Re1+ Be6 12.Bxf4 d5 13.Bxd5 Rxc2+ 14.Kh1 Qxb2 15.Qxf3 Rg6 16.Bxe6 fxe6 17.f7+ Kd7 18.Rab1 Qxc2 19.Rxb7+ Kd8 20.Bxb8 Qd2 21.Rd1 Qh6 22.Qxc6 1-0

50 Years of Kaissa's Victory in the First World Chess Championship among Computer Programs

By Dmitry Chizhov

2024 marks 50 years since a Soviet chess program, Kaissa, won the first World Chess Championship among computer programs. In honor of this event we spoke to Vladimir Lvovich Arlazarov, Kaissa's creator, about the phenomenon of computer chess, Soviet artificial intelligence, and the grand triumph.

First steps on the way to victory

In the Moscow chess museum, an inconspicuous case, upholstered in blue velvet, is on display in one of the showcases. Inside is a gold medal: a chess king on the background of a globe. You don't pay attention to it at once - the pieces and boards of all sizes and designs insistently "pull away" your gaze. And yet this medal is almost the most significant exhibit of the entire museum collection. And how it came here is a whole story.



Medal for the first place at the WCCC'74. Source: Smart Engines

It was won by the Soviet chess program, Kaissa, at the World Chess Championship among computer programs - in fact, the world's first international cybersport event. The team of its creators, including Vladimir Arlazarov, wrote the name of this fictional chess goddess into history along with their own. And it all began, as usual, rather prosaically.

Interest in computer chess arose chaotically in the 60s among many people. Mikhail Botvinnik was in charge of creating the theoretical basis for writing a chess program, but the practical work was carried out at the Institute of Theoretical and Experimental Physics (ITEP). It was led by Vladimir Arlazarov and Georgy Adelson-Velsky, and the process was supervised by Alexander Kronrod. Scientists were interested in chess as it was suited for testing, practicing and evaluating algorithms of heuristic programming - this is what artificial intelligence was called in the USSR before John McCarthy's term appeared. "On

a small square, arranged with figures, the main factors of human thinking activity - analysis and synthesis, logic and psychology, theory and practice - are concentrated to a greater or lesser extent," wrote the press at the time. Scientists had to create the program in their spare time; no money was allocated for experiments. And the institute management was not very enthusiastic - after all, ITEP belonged to the nuclear industry. Nevertheless, the first successes on the checkered battlefield were not long in coming.

In 1967, a chess program of ITEP scientists, written for the Soviet M-20 machine, beat a Stanford University [program](#) made under McCarthy's direction. It was a bid with a claim. The match itself was not fast: it took days to exchange moves, and the necessary calculations were made at night. And there was no competitiveness in it either. However, the result - a 3:1 Soviet victory - confirmed that a certain milestone on the way to training artificial intelligence had been overcome. The results became known all over the world and were widely discussed among programmers and chess players.



Soviet M-20 machine. [Source](#)

No rabbit

The following year, because of the political scandal around the "letter of the 99" signed by A. Kronrod, a group of scientists of the ITEP mathematical laboratory was forced to change its place of activity and move to the Institute of Control Sciences RAS. Work on the program continued by 1971 on the English computer ICL 4-70. In general, it was thought that Kaissa could have achieved the highest performance, i.e., playing at the level of the CMC chess game, on an American IBM, but, as David Levy regretfully noted, "there are no IBM machines in the Soviet Union".

However, the British computer also enabled some progress: the program that played against Stanford was rewritten and refined, and soon it was ready for new matches. This time against a crowd.



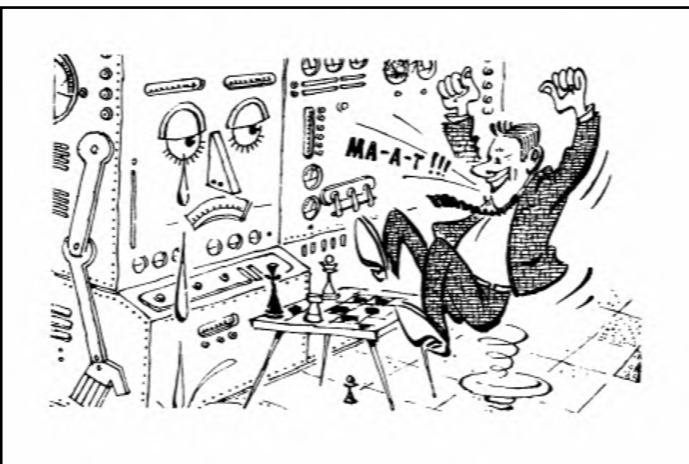
Institute of Control Sciences RAS, 1970s. Source: pastvu

The first ever simultaneous chess match with a computer took place against the readers of the Sverdlovsk newspaper "Uralsky Rabochiy". It consisted of two games, lasted about four months, and the choice of the readers' move was determined by a majority vote. In the game commentary, printed in the magazine "Chess in the USSR", among other things, one can find curious comments that shed light on the level of the then existing relations between man and robot:

"Machines seem to have human weaknesses, too. Like a man, it can be greedy. The automaton is unwilling to part with a captured pawn, besides threatening..."

Or

"A natural move. But made by a machine, it deserves an exclamation point. The move speaks of the great capabilities of the electronic chess player. It turns out that the machine is able to correctly assess the position..."



Caricature in the magazine "Chess in the USSR".

Another battle took place with the readers of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* newspaper in 1972. It was conducted according to the same principles as the previous one. For the sake of clarity, the program was briefly and modestly named Kaissa. Though defeated, Kaissa still tried to show feasible resistance, which was highly appreciated by both domestic and foreign observers.

"Obviously, the combined force of the readership of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* produces rather strong chess and so it is reasonable to assume that Kaissa is also no rabbit", - [summarized](#) Scottish chess player David Levy.



Soviet scientists and chess players test the program. Source: Smart Engines

Kaissa in wonderland

After a successful public debut, testing of Kaissa continued. An additional incentive was the invitation of the team of creators, represented by G. Adelson-Velsky, V. Arlazarov, M. Donskoy and A. Bitman, to the first ever world championship in Stockholm.

Chess programs had been put against each other before - the International Association for Computing Machinery held similar tournaments in North America. Their popularity only grew from year to year, so a global championship seemed to be the right thing to do. At one of the meetings within the framework of the North American Championship in 1973, David Levy, Ben Mittmat and Monty Newborn decided to organize the world championship in Sweden. In August of the next year, the International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) World Computer Congress was to be held there.

13 programs from 8 countries (USSR, USA, Canada, Great Britain, Norway, Switzerland, Austria and Hungary) took part in the first WCCC in 1974. Teams were represented in Stockholm by one of the authors of the programs (this honorable mission went to the youngest of the Kaissa team scientists, Mikhail Donskoy). Those who could not somehow deliver a program to the championship

maintained telephone communication with their colleagues. The tournament was held according to the Swiss-system, so the large number of competitors did not cause any difficulties.

However, some of them - for example, Kaissa and the American program Chess 4.0 - did not meet in the championship. That, however, was corrected immediately after the end of the official part of the event.



Mikhail Donskoy (right) at the first World Computer Chess Championship. Source: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Computer_Chess_Championship)

Kaissa was thoroughly prepared for the championship: it "knew" 10,000 openings and had a complex position evaluation function. And it was so complex that even the creators could not list all the abilities of their program at a glance.

Kaissa used the alpha-beta pruning algorithm. The underlying principle of the analysis was that a move that would be the best in other similar positions was considered by the program as the most reliable and favorable. Based on this rule, the program selected the ten best moves for each position and, consequently, gave them priority when calculating the next move. This innovation allowed to significantly reduce the time of the game.

In addition, Kaissa was able to bluff, memorize and disregard obviously meaningless positions, and use the time of the opponent's move to calculate its own.

Fatality to Ostrich

WCCC'74 turned out to be full of surprises. For example, it was believed that the Hungarian PAPA would defeat all opponents. However, due to last minute changes, it lost to one of the weakest British programs. In addition, serious hopes were pinned on American programs Chess 4.0 and Ostrich, which managed to take only third and sixth places. Donskoy himself recalled the terrible noise in the hall where the championship was held: the participants were actively talking among themselves, and observers were loudly commenting on the players' moves.



Vladimir Arlazarov works with Kaissa at the World Computer Program Chess Championship. Source: Chessprogramming.org

Kaissa safely played with foreign programs and came out victorious from all four games. In the last battle her opponent was Ostrich, named so for his "fearful" manner of play. And although the fight was tough, Kaissa won. And became the world champion! The award, a 110-gram gold medal produced especially for the event, was presented to Mikhail Donskoy by its creator, the famous British media magnate Robert Maxwell.

"Richard Nixon was so disappointed by Ostrich's numerous missed wins, that he resigned the US Presidency a few minutes after this last game ended and his resignation speech was relayed to the spectators" sardonically said David Levy, who was referee at the championship.

As for the reaction of the creators of Kaissa, the scientific contact itself was much more important for them. After all, Kaissa was born out of the purest scientific interest - without any admixture of politics.

Over the years, the field of computer chess began to commercialize, the technology changed and ceased to be openly published and discussed. The scientists who created the Kaissa cooled to chess rather quickly. One of them, Vladimir Arlazarov, continues to work with artificial intelligence at Smart Engines today.

The legacy of Kaissa and modern AI

The unprecedented success of Kaissa at the 1974 World Championship had far-reaching implications for both the development of AI and the scientific community. Despite

Continued on Page 28

How Sweet It Was

Jon Edwards

ICCF GM and the 32nd World Correspondence Chess Champion

I suspect that I will not long be remembered for my humor, but there sure have been some funny moments in my correspondence chess career. This game probably ranks near the top.

Some context is required. This game was played in the 11th US Correspondence Chess Championship from 1995-1998. I would wind up being the defending US Champion, eventually winning the 10th USCCC which started in 1993 and ended finally in 1997. My opponent here was Michael Colucci, who lived then and still in Ewing, NJ, the next town over from me, which of course meant that this game proceeded through the mail at a very rapid pace.

Michael had obtained his entry in the 11th USCCC by placing first in the prestigious Golden Knights. Just before our US11 game commenced, Michael and I met at a local club where, sadly, I gingerly explained to him that the Golden Knights was not the US Championship as he then believed (US Chess had so advertised the event). It was, rather, the club championship of the USCF, but it provided him with the real cool prize, an entry into the real US Championship run by the ICCF-US.

I fully acknowledge that there was real competition between and among the four postal chess outfits, USCF, CCLA, Nost, and my APCT, for whom I wrote the column "Win, Lose, or Draw." When I won this game, I wrote it up for my Nov-Dec, 1996 column, but I first assembled a funny version, which I emailed to my chess friends.

Unknown to me, one of these friends (I still do not know who) copied the head of the APCT, Helen Warren, who published the funny version in the APCT News Bulletin without my knowledge. Now that the damage is done, I submit the funny version of the column (which was originally titled "How Sweet it is") here with a short addendum, because what happened after publication is very much part of the story.

Before I proceed, a further brief note of explanation. Correspondence players scrupulously do not share news of their games while they are in motion, but we are a friendly lot. We send each other emails all the time about strange things that happen. In one of my games, an opponent made a horrible, game-ending error (although he played on and on), but he started signing each postal card with "What a whooha!"

None of my friends knew what a whooha was, but from that moment on, the word took on the meaning of a move or position that was so bad that it bordered on being funny.

I have placed in bold the comments that I added privately for my friends, so that those of you who do not much care about playing through the game can skip to the "funny parts."

One final note before we begin. Younger readers may not understand the somewhat subtle reference to Fischer's *60 Memorable Games*, in which he commented that Robert Byrne's resignation in the 1963-64 US Championship was a bitter disappointment, because he had hoped that the game score would include the amazing line that Fischer had correctly calculated.

Now on to the original column:

Jon Edwards – Michael Colucci
US11 CCC, 1995

While I am sitting here waiting for the 10th US Championship finally to end, I thought that I might just as well bring you the first result from the US11! The fact that I have a result to report is news enough, since the competition started just last December, but the real news is that I defeated the current USCF Golden Knights champion in just 24 moves.

I know Michael Colucci pretty well. He actually lives just one town over, and he occasionally drops by the local chess club. He's a nice guy, so I won't gloat...much. Still, our club president and fellow APCTer, Ned Walthall, reminds me that the USCF left me off their list of the top 50 correspondence players a few years back, and that their coverage of the APCT and the other clubs has, up until very recently been pretty pathetic, and that until three years ago when the correspondence chess community protested, they disingenuously referred to their own Golden Knights competition as the US Open Championship. Add in the way that they tried to cover up their atrocious, third-place, sub-0.500 performance in the National Team Championship by adding in their forfeit wins against the TCC and you get a sense of why many correspondence players have found it hard to take seriously the USCF's commitment towards correspondence chess.

So, I have taken a bit of revenge upon them. By submitting my wins from the US 10th, (that's right Virginia, not my one loss and three draws!) I now have a US Chess correspondence rating of 2691 (not yet including this last win!), the highest rating on their last correspondence chess rating list! It really looks nice on my Chess Life label! Of course, because the rating is

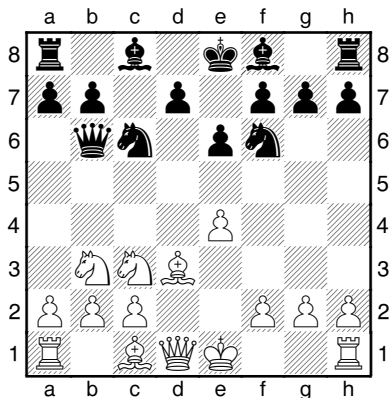
provisional, I still haven't made their list of masters or get invited to their Absolute. Not that I would accept the invitation anyway. Enough! Please forgive such obnoxious partisan zeal, such jingoistic pride, such curmudgeonly cantankerousness, such APCT ardor. Here's the game.

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♚b6!?

I let his second move go by without a comment even though my feelings about ...♞c6 in the Sicilian are well known. Of course, there are perfectly reasonable systems after ...♞c6, and I was actually looking forward to playing the Velimirovic Attack against the Sozin. But Black's fourth move is quite a shock. I suppose that it's an acceptable weapon for OTB play, but it just seems to me to be a poor choice in so important an event and against a booked-up opponent. True enough, white must retreat the ♞d4, but black will almost certainly have to waste time later with ...♚b6-c7. In fact, I think that white's best strategy is not to try to gain a tempo early or late with ♞e3. After all, black's natural counter involves ...a6 and ...b5. So, if I just ignore the queen and pursue straight-forward development, he'll have to move the queen anyway. Now I suppose that he can make an argument about my misplaced ♞b3. We'll have to keep an eye on that too, eh?

5.♞b3 ♜f6 6.♞c3 e6 7.♞d3

Most of you are tired of hearing me write about move-pairs by now, so I will keep down the excessive noise. Suffice it to say you'll see them all through here if you give it a look.



For this game, the real issue has more to do with simple development. White's strategy is now already completely clear. White's attack will be on the kingside, so I'd like to be able to develop the rooks on e1 and f1. I'll almost certainly play f4 with the idea of e5 or f5. The queen can swing to the kingside with ♚e1-g3 (or h4) or with ♚f3-g3 (or h3). As is so often the case, the key is white's dark-squared bishop. If I place it on ♞e3 in order to kick the queen off the a7-g1 diagonal, perhaps as a preparatory move to castling kingside, I wind up blocking the natural ♞a1-e1-e3-g3 plan. Given the optimal placement of the rooks, I will castle

kingside. Of course, with the black queen on b6, I'll first need to tuck my king into the corner. But that's a prudent idea anyway.

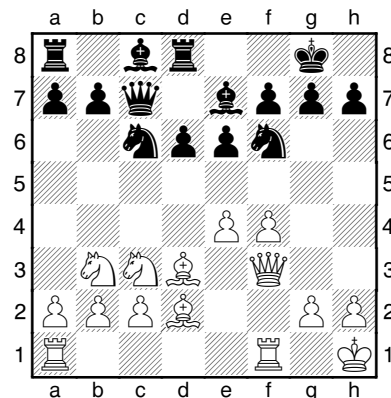
7...♞b4!? 8.♞d2 ♞e7?!

A very strange sequence. The bishop is misplaced on b4 in most of these lines. I personally prefer it on e7. It's clear, however, that black really wanted me to waste time playing ♞d2 before placing the bishop on e7 where it belongs. All this would be fine were it not for the fact that my queen bishop is ideally placed on d2. In other words, he wasted a tempo to force me to make the best move. As I so often do, I looked for all games with this pawn structure and found an amazing Velimirovic game in which he completed a very similar development with ♞d2, giving the move two exclamation points. I'm not sure that the move deserves such praise, but I felt pretty comfortable with the idea that I was being forced to insert a move about which Velimirovic thought so highly. In a sense, of course, black is laying down a gauntlet. Is my bishop really badly placed on d2? Won't I have to waste time moving it e3? After this sequence, the evaluation of the position depends very much upon how well three pieces perform: the white ♞b3 and ♞d2, and the black ♚b6.

9.0-0 d6 10.♞h1 0-0 11.f4 ♞d8?!

I understand all of these moves except for black's 11th. I'm preparing my kingside action as outlined above. There's simply no reason to change my plans here. But what does ...♞d8 do? Down so much time on the queenside, he can't seriously contemplate the ...d5 break. And after my next move, the weakness of the f7-square comes rather sharply into focus. Here's what I wrote in my notebook: "Let's add his ♞d8 to the list of critical pieces to watch. If my chess senses are correct, it won't get a chance to move again."

12.♟f3 ♚c7



What a whooha! One of those pieces we were keeping our eyes on has admitted defeat. He retreats his queen without my having to waste time going after it.

13.♖ae1 a6 14.a3 ♗d7?

Another sequence in which one move makes no sense. a3 and a6 are natural preparatory moves. Black would like to be able to play ...b5. White wants to prevent counterplay with ...♗b4 and ...b5-b4. But how to explain ...♗d7? He plays ...♗d8 and then blocks the rook's support of ...d5? Does he really expect to have time to develop effectively with ...♗d7-c6? My Uncle Joe explained how certain positions have a definite odor to them. After so many inaccuracies by black, white must be winning. I'm pretty well developed... so it must be clobbering time.

15.♜h3 e5 16.f5 ♗d4

I thought that his last, best defensive chance was 15...g6. The ...e5 f5 move pair seals in white's light squared bishop, but it also seals half of black's forces from defending the kingside. His 16th move is an act of desperation.

17.♗xd4 exd4

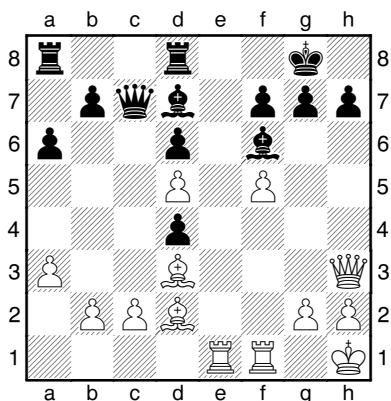
Well, we were keeping an eye on my ♗b3. It sure re-entered the game with a bang. As a result of this capture, black must defend an impossible middlegame knowing that, if he's lucky somehow to escape to survive the upcoming storm, he'll lose the endgame.

18.♗d5!

If Velimirovic can give ♗d2 a couple of exclamation points, this move deserves at least one. But don't feel bad if you favor ♗e2. Of course it wins, only a little bit more slowly.

JRE: Perhaps the true joke is on me. Modern neural nets prefer ♗e2!

18...♗xd5 19.exd5 ♗f6



I thought that he might try ...♗f8, but the only realistic hope is to freeze white's f-pawn. If you're playing along, stop right here. It's white to move and win. And it's kinda pretty.

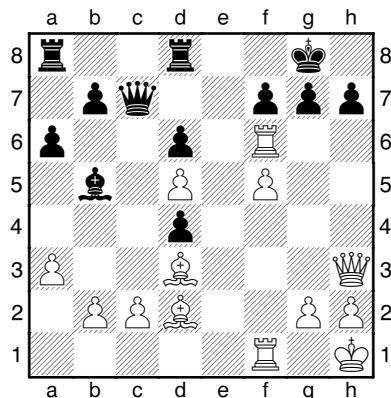
20.♖e6

Rook "sac" number 1. I thought that Michael might show off his tactical ability by resigning here. This maneuver is pretty but quite thematic. Obviously, the rook is immune because white's attack after ...fxe6 is simply crushing starting with the threat of ♖xf6.

20...♗b5

20...fxe6 21.fxe6 with the obvious ♜h7+ threat 21...h6 22.♗xh6 and that ♗d2 does its thing.

21.♖xf6



Rook "sac" number 2. Obviously, he would like to trade off my light-squared bishop in order to defend his h7-square. The second rook sac is much harder to ignore, because the rook just captured a piece. But he really can't take it.

21...♗xd3

21...gxf6 22.♗h6 The bishop again! 22...♜h8 Otherwise ♜g3-g7. 23.♜h4 ♜e7 24.♖e1+-

22.♜xd3

Rook "sac" number 3.

22...♜e7

There's nothing better. 22...♖dc8 23.♜xd4!; 22...gxf6 23.♜g3+ ♜h8 24.♜h4 ♜e7 25.♖e1

23.♖h6

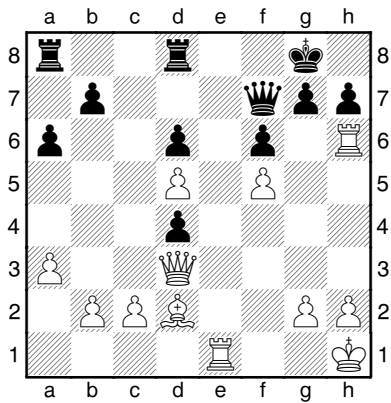
Rook "sac" number 4. And speaking of rooks, whatever did that ...Rd8 accomplish?

23...f6

Right around here, I started hoping that he would play on and on. 24 ♖h4 wins of course, as do all rook retreats, but ♖e1 is a brutally accurate move. Apart from the fact that it leaves the ♖h6 *en prise* for one more move, I gain control over the e-file (with the devastating threat of ♖e6!).

I expected him to permit a prettier finish with 23...g×h6 24.f6 ♖f8 (24...♗e5 25.♗f5+-) 25.♗f3 with the unstoppable idea of ♗g3-g7.

24.♗e1 ♗f7



Of course, he can go for 24...♗×e1+ 25.♗×e1 g×h6 26.♗×d4, but this winds up being a trade of ♗+♗ for two rooks in a position in which I am already up a bishop and with all the play. And he'll have a slew of weak pawns.

25.♗h4

with Rook to e6 next.

His resignation here was a bitter disappointment. I had hoped for my first endgame against a player from the USCF.

1-0

As you might imagine, the story does not end there.

I had no idea that Helen Warren had published the fun version when, about a week after the issue came out, I sat down across the board from Michael Colucci at a match between my Pennington team and his Ewing team.

As we reached out to shake hands at the beginning of the game, Michael asked: "What's a whooha?"

Needless to say, I was way too embarrassed to focus up on the game and Michael won handily.

Permit me finally to apologize to Michael publicly and in print, something I should have done years ago. My issue at the time was not in any way with him, but rather with the administration of US Chess's correspondence chess. It is worth mentioning, that US Chess soon thereafter improved that administration, they ended their practice of calling the Golden Knights the US Open Championship, and they brought on Alex Dunne, whose columns were an utter delight and the first place to which I went in every issue of *Chess Life*. Miss you Alex!

With the **World Championship** set to be played in a few days here is a reminder of past World Champions: 1.Wilhelm Steinitz: 1886-1894 2.Emanuel Lasker 1894-1921 3.José Raúl Capablanca 1921-1927 4.Alexander Alekhine 1927-1935, 1937-1946 5.Max Euwe 1935-1937 6.Mikhail Botvinnik 1948-1957, 1958-1960, 1961-1963 7.Vasily Smyslov 1957-1958 8.Mikhail Tal 1960-1961 9.Tigran Petrosian 1963-1969 10.Boris Spassky 1969-1972 11.Robert Fischer 1972-1975 12.Anatoly Karpov 1975-1985 13.Garry Kasparov 1985-2000 14.Vladimir Kramnik 2000-2007 15.Viswanathan Anand 2007-2013 16.Magnus Carlsen 2013-2023 17.Ding Liren 2023-Present

Continued From Page 24

the fact that modern chess programs are far superior to Kaissa in terms of their capabilities and algorithms, its contribution to the progress in this field remains invaluable. Nowadays the practical results of research from those years are all around us.

As Vladimir Arlazarov notes, chess programs were one of the first areas where complex algorithms and methods of artificial intelligence were tested. Later they found application in non-game-related spheres. Today these technologies are all around us in everyday life and travel, work and entertainment, in countless different places and situations. These are modern OCR-systems for recognizing and authenticating personal and business documents, scanning QRs, deciphering bank forms and tax forms.

Vladimir Lvovich Arlazarov is currently the Chief research officer at [Smart Engines](#), a leading IT company. He continues to build intelligent systems using the legacy of Kaissa. Today chess has certainly ceased to interest scientists and can hardly tell something new about human thinking. But the story of the victory at the first ever World Chess Championship among computer programs, which shook the world, still reminds us about endless horizons of science and future discoveries that simplify our lives today.

ChessKeys

The Sad Bishop

By Rachel A. Schechter

"Why is the bishop so sad?" asked Elinor, my youngest, private student at five when I arrived at her residence for the lesson.

We were setting up the board and I recollected how the previous evening my own bishops were just plain *bad*—cost me the tie break. I shook it off—win, lose and learn—and smiled at Elinor. Originally from France (though her ancestors have had a lovely home here in Minnesota for decades) she's adorable, enthusiastic, strong-willed, sassy, and intelligent. She wanted to be an engineer like her dad and ergo started chess lessons at age four. And though she wasn't a chess prodigy, she spoke French and English, and was embarking upon Chinese. Plus, she liked math/chess puzzles. Feisty, fearless, and usually very funny, today *she* looked on-the-verge-of-tears-sad as she rolled a white bishop between her hands.

"I don't know," I said, looking closely at another bishop. "Why do you think it's sad, honey?"

"Because it had a *very bad dream*—a nightmare—about a *very bad bunny!*" she said crossly. "A *very bad bunny!*"

I looked through the glass doors to the yard where we frequently threw carrots to a delightful fluffle of rabbits. Kids, night terrors, all quite normal. She'd been with me for over a year, but this was the first time she'd ever shown fear or sadness. Both parents seemed great; mother a CEO for an entertainment firm, dad an environmental engineer, mega-cute little brother, nanny, gorgeous house on a lake, good health, the whole nine yards. I put my arm around her slim shoulders.

"What happened in the dream, Elinor? Tell Miss Rachel."

She snuggled against me:

"I was playing chess with my little brother Michel," she said anxiously. "We were in the back yard, we were both bishops, and everything was good." I nodded. Her little brother Michel was nearly three years old. "All of a sudden, a huge, big bunny with big teeth attacked me. Michel ran away but I tripped, and the bunny caught me. It was *terrible!*" She turned her tiny face into my neck. "He kept biting me and biting me—my hair, my face, my clothes. I was crying and bleeding." I hugged her. "Then my mom came and chased the bunny away. She carried me inside the house and sang to me and told me everything would be alright."

"That's right," I said soothingly. "What did your mom do then?"

"Well, she gave me a nice warm, bubble bath, and when I got out, she made me a nice new, bishop costume. Very colorful and happy. Then she kissed me and combed my hair and made me a smiling bishop hat. So, Michel and I could play chess again."

"That's so good!" I said, hugging her shoulders. Then I looked to the yard and drew a deep breath. "What about the bunny?" I

asked quietly.

"Oh," said Elinor, "the bunny is gone. My dad took that bunny and its family to a rabbit farm, so they could live with other bunnies and be happy."

I patted her head:

"That was a frightening nightmare you had, honey, but it wasn't real."

"It felt real," small voice.

"I know," I said. "Nightmares feel real. That's why I always sleep with a nightlight on in my bedroom. Then, if I have a bad dream and I wake up afraid, the light is on, and I feel better."

Elinor's big, blue eyes grew bigger:

"You sleep with a *nightlight*, Miss Rachel?!"

"Every night," I said, nodding. "Every night."

She ran to the stairs and called up to her nanny:

"Miss Rachel sleeps with a nightlight. Can I sleep with a nightlight too?"

"Yes, yes, of course, Elinor..." came the reply.

Elinor was smiling, semblance of her usual self—with that *je ne sais quoi* twinkle in her eyes—I felt warm around my heart.

"That's a good idea, Miss Rachel."

I picked up the four bishops:

"Remember," I said, "**the key is light.**" If you have fears or bad dreams in the dark, just turn on the light. That's the key." She nodded. "Now—what should we do about these bishops to make *them* look happy?"

Elinor thought for a minute:

"Turn them upside down? Then they'd look like they were smiling."

"Let's try it."

Naturally, they tipped over.

"Hmm," I said, "That doesn't work. Let's think of something else. Remember, *chess players solve problems, we don't create them.*"

Elinor thought hard:

"We could paint smiles on their faces—?"

"Okay, get your paints—we'll try it."

It was one of those ideas that sounds good in theory, but doesn't translate. The paints—even though they were from acrylic pens—were a bit messy and the smiles covered half the bishops' faces.

"That looks yucky," said Elinor.

"Very yucky," I agreed, looking at the chess board. "But there must be an answer to this problem. Let's clear all the pieces from the chess board and place the four bishops on their starting squares, okay?"

We cleared the board and set the bishops on c1, f1, c8, and f8.

"Now what?" asked Elinor.

I looked at the board, paced, sat down, looked back at the board.

"Alright, let's put smiles on the bishops' starting squares." Elinor liked that idea and spent some time making the smiley faces in a host of sparkling colors. The board was write-on cardboard, so it lent itself well to the project.

"That's very good," I nodded, "very creative. Now, how do the bishops move?"

I placed some pennies appropriately. "I forget how they move. Would you please show me, Elinor?"

It seemed Elinor might have forgotten as well; but a skill set—those sets, those moments teachers live for—clicked in—and little by little, bishop by bishop, she captured the pennies.

"Voilà!" I clapped my hands, "*C'est magnifique!*"

"And they're *happy!*" Elinor jumped up.

"How do you know that?" I laughed.

Elinor threw the bishops into the air:

"*Because they get to keep all the pennies!*"

We both laughed—collecting the bishops and their pennies. For the rest of our time, that afternoon, Elinor put smiley faces on ALL the remaining 60 chess squares. I helped her choose the colors.

"There," she said, upon finishing. "Now they're ALL happy. They're all lit up! ALL the chess pieces and all the squares."

"I like it," I said, taking a picture, "But how will we remember the starting squares for the bishops?"

Elinor frowned and yawned. We were closing in on an hour; it had been a difficult, yet rewarding lesson.

"I—I don't know," she said.

"Let me think..." I said, pacing, sitting, pacing, sitting. Then I snapped my fingers. "I know!"

"What? What is it?" asked Elinor.

"Well, what letter does b-b-b-bishop start with?"

"B!" said Elinor happily.

"That's right, so where should we put the letter B?"

"On the bishops' squares," Elinor said, suddenly excited, pulling out an unused color of acrylic paint. "On the Bs. All four Bs." And she proceeded to do just that. Large capital Bs.

I leaned back in my chair. Success rarely came easy with children, but when it did, it sure was sweet.

"And how do they have to move?" I asked.

"Always on the zigzag," said Elinor, "or else...or else..."

"Or else, what?" I asked.

She looked at me dead serious.

"Or else they get sad."

"That's right," I said, nodding, tears welling up, "always on the zigzag."

I heard movement upstairs, voices, laughter.

"Hey, I think your parents are home, let's go say hello."

Elinor took off for the stairs, then returned.

"What's wrong?" I asked, packing up.

Elinor turned on every light—there were at least six—even though it was bright afternoon.

"Never forget **the light**, Miss Rachel. **That's the key**. Then they'll never be sad or afraid." Then she scampered upstairs.

I smiled, shrugging off those dark 'bad bishops' that cost me the tiebreak. I mounted the stairs, greeting her parents—everyone smiling, laughing, silly faces. Elinor hugged me. No longer too sad or frightened. Ah, to be five again. I patted her head. With this petite, *princesse française*...I was.

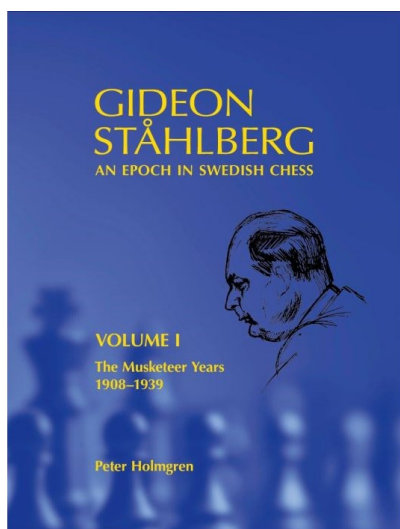


GIDEON STÅHLBERG: An Epoch in Swedish Chess

Volume 1 The Musketeer Years 1908-1939

By Peter Holmgren

Reviewed by Mark Capron



Verendel Publishing has done it again with another fantastic book. This time they chronicle Swedish Chess from the years 1908—1939 with emphasis (biography) on the first Swedish Grandmaster, Gideon Ståhlberg.

My first impression when I opened the package was wow! What a big book! It contains 582 pages. The size is a bit larger than A4 paper for comparison. It weighs in at almost five lbs.

According to some of the historical rating websites Ståhlberg would have been ranked around the 10th or 11th best player in the world at his peak.

Ståhlberg played all over Europe and into Asia and finally across the ocean to South America during the years of the book, 1908-1939. The rest of his life will be covered in a forthcoming volume.

Sweden had a few epochs of chess. One was during Gideon Ståhlberg's time. One was later with Ulf Andersson, and one was prior to the 20th century with the "dark ages" where chess was only played in clubs and bars.

The Musketeer Years is a reference to several Swedish masters that all came to be world class players. As stated in the introduction "Had all of them performed at their highest level at the same time, the national team could very well have been the strongest in the world." The main Musketeers were Erik Lundin, Gösta Stoltz, and Ståhlberg.

The book tells us that Gideon was born on January 26, 1908 in Angered, Sweden to Alfred and Augusta (Johansson) Ståhlberg. Gideon was the third child of four (sister Anita, brothers White and Anton). Gideon's brother White showed him how to play chess at age 11. Gideon's first love though was throwing the javelin, but he ended up damaging his elbow. He then opted for Chess during the long healing process. Gideon was still active in sports throughout his life playing tennis, swimming, and competing at table tennis.

Although I was only cursorily familiar with Ståhlberg before reading the book it is a potpourri of famous chess players who came into Ståhlberg's life. Some names you'll encounter Milner-Barry, Lasker, Capablanca, Keres, Spielman, Alekhine, Marshall, Flohr, Koltanowski, Menchik, Botvinnik, Tartakower, Euwe, Grob, Bogoljubow, Maroczy, Petrovs, Najdorf, Fine, and many more.

At a simul in Lorensberg on December 21, 1924 Ståhlberg played Rudolf Spielmann. "It was both a strange and wonderful feeling to meet a grandmaster for the first time. Spielman, the last romantic, played White in all the games, preferably using gambits. In my ignorance, I deviated from the theoretical lines and was subject to a violent attack that put me in danger of losing. In despair I set a rather simple trap that Spielman didn't discover. He made a natural move and was outright mated." p11.

Ståhlberg's first real tournament outside of club events was the 9th Swedish Congress in Trollhättan 1925. He shared second place with 6.5 out of 9 in the category II tournament.

A note on the format of the crosstables. They are not set up with the winner at the top and in final ranking order. They are left in the order of the draw. This is fine, but did take a minute to get used to. Personal preference would be to have put them in final ranking order.

In the 10th Swedish Congress held in Karlstad, Ståhlberg wanted to enter the Category I section, but hadn't qualified. He had to wait and see if a cancellation came. When the cancellation came he made the most of it by tying for first with Erik Bernflyckt. They had a playoff game, but it ended in a draw. About a month later they played another game to break the tie. Ståhlberg ended up winning the affair, and with it, the master title. He became Sweden's twentieth master.

A very nice feature of the book is that there are insets throughout highlighting various people in Ståhlberg's life. They are set apart by being in blue. The author mentioned that this feature set the publication time back more than a year. I think they were well worth it!

The book advertises it includes all known games of Ståhlberg. Several games in the book have the final result and some wording surrounding the game, but no actual moves are provided. It is assumed that the actual score to these games could not be unearthed.

In April 1930 Ståhlberg played Efim Bogoljubow in a four game match. Ståhlberg started badly by getting beat in the first two games handily. The third game was better, but he still lost. By the fourth game he had Bogoljubow fighting for the draw though.

On October 4, 1930 Ståhlberg made his first real chess journalism contribution in *Ny Tid*. In the piece he wrote, about the Swedish chess press, he was quite outspoken and drew the ire of several in the form of rebuttal articles published in *Tidskrift för Schack*. Ironically in 1931 he became the games editor for *Tidskrift för Schack*.

The book has some humor here and there. An example was a comment by Stoltz published in *Kuriren*: "A nice week in Uddevala. It was lucky that the heat came only the last day. Now I'm only

waiting for Prague, to see fat Berndtsson sweat.” p126.

In January 1932 Ståhlberg became the editor-in-chief of *Tidskrift för Schack*, thus allowing him to move to Stockholm. In March, he also became the chess editor of *Hvar 8 Dag* providing another source of income.

In January 1933 Ståhlberg played another match versus Spielmann. This was considered Ståhlberg's first important international individual success. He won 5-3 exacting revenge from his previous defeat.

In February of 1934 an eight game match with Nimzowitch was played. Ståhlberg won 5-3. “Thus, the match was decided, as I led 4.5—2.5 when the final game began. Nimzowitsch took his defeat like a man, congratulated me, and very politely said he hoped I didn't mind him trying to reduce my lead by playing for a win. I responded almost as politely, that of course it was his right. As black, in the euphoria of victory, I moved quickly and efficiently causing Nimzowitsch to end up with a disadvantage despite his significant efforts. After about twenty moves, he was also in time trouble, with only about fifteen minutes left. At this point Erik Olsson announced by phone that players and officials were invited to a closing party at the well-known Valand restaurant in Gothenburg, starting immediately after the game. Suddenly, Nimzowitsch made a surprising and original draw offer. ‘I'm worse,’ said the honest and sincere grandmaster, ‘and perhaps it's not correct to offer a draw, but I wanted to know if you're playing for a win.’ I have never liked beating an already beaten opponent, and I immediately accepted the draw offer, but I understand that at least one intended spectator took offense. He was buying an entrance ticket at that very moment!” p213.

Ståhlberg was awarded the grandmaster title for winning the Bad Niendorf tournament in 1934. Ståhlberg went undefeated in the tournament and won by half a point over Kurt Richter. Ståhlberg was now Sweden's first grandmaster!

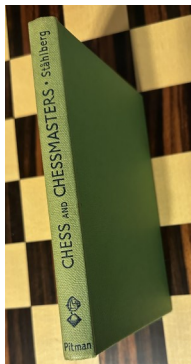
Simul tours were very common back then. A pity they aren't as popular these days. Ståhlberg embarked on a mammoth simul tour covering 24 locations in Sweden. November 10, 1935 he started in the far southern town of Lund and then up to the northern town of Kalix and many stops at the towns in between. He ended on December 11, 1935 in Luleå hosted by Skurholmens SK. He scored 446 wins, 83 loses and 153 draws. A total of 682 games in the tour! Ståhlberg completed many such simul tours around various European countries, though, usually not quite as long!

In many places the author includes reprints of Ståhlberg's writings. These are written in a light blue font to call attention to them. Ståhlberg could be hard on his subjects, but in many cases they were hard right back at him. Sometimes the war of words reminds one of the Steinitz—Zukertort feuds.

Another funny story from the Sixth Olympiad was as follows: “On the first night, Alekhine entered accompanied by a Siamese cat, Chess, a fine beast. I hear I am to play against Mickey Mouse [*Mikénas (auth.)*], he said, so I have brought somebody who can deal with him.” p309. “Every day, Alekhine's wife could be seen among the audience carrying her husband's cat. It was tied with a long lace and often free to run around risking its life in the crowd. The cat's meow was the only sound tolerated in the play-

ing hall. When Sweden faced France the cat happened to be lost. This made the Alekhine couple very upset and with the Swedes suspected of kidnapping, it was generally believed that Alekhine wouldn't play. In the end he did, the cat was found, Sweden won 3.5—1.5 and everybody was happy.” p315.

In the 1936 Olympiad Ståhlberg suffered from an infection in his jaw which occasionally gave him a sleepless night. After one of these sleepless nights he requested to take the round off. This was denied by the team captain Lundin on the basis that he would be playing the old and peaceful Maróczy and as a bonus Lundin offered to provide a cognac if the pain got worse. After the cognac was provided Ståhlberg was falling asleep at the board and was startled by Maróczy giving him a gentle nudge, saying: “Ich biete Remis an!” (*I offer a draw!-ed.*) p387.



Ståhlberg published his first book in May of 1937. *Schack och schackmästare*. The second edition was reprinted in English by Harry Golombek in 1955 and titled *Chess and Chessmasters* by G. Bell and Sons.

Ståhlberg's 1938 match vs Paul Keres ended at 4-4. This was probably his best result prior to the war.

In an interview by Bjørn Nielsen on how difficult it was to meet Alekhine Ståhlberg commented: “Alekhine is indeed very difficult to meet—not just because of his playing strength and the complications he creates, but because he is very nervous and constantly moving. He rises, he sits, he rises, stands behind his chair, behind the opponent's, takes a couple of steps away, returns etc. It is annoying and consumes time, even if one does what one can to stay focused. ... Ståhlberg smiles at the thought of a 'lion in a cage'.” p495.

In 1939 Ståhlberg traveled to Buenos Aires for the Eighth Olympiad. He travelled on the ship *S/S Piriápolis*. Less than a year later this ship was bombed by a German aircraft during the evacuation of British troops from Dunkirk.

The book ended after the Olympiad with Ståhlberg still in Buenos Aires. He asked to have some money wired and informed back home that he would be staying a few more weeks to play in another tournament.

Ståhlberg was not only a chessplayer, but he excelled at Bridge as well. He played almost anytime he could. “To further note how famous Ståhlberg had become in bridge circles, a note in *Dagens Nyheter* summarizing all sorts of records during the year is worth mentioning. It describes the most exciting bridge hand that curiously enough happened to be played by two chess masters, Stoltz and Ståhlberg. When sorting his cards, Stoltz could count ace, king queen, knight, ten, nine, eight and two of hearts together with the ace of clubs in his hand while Ståhlberg held the other two aces. The article does not mention what bid was played but that the two of hearts became decisive. A slam in hearts must be a good guess.” p257.

“Around 300 bridge players, each paying SEK5, sat down around Sweden on April 27 (1939 –ed) to play the deals prepared by Culbertson for the 7th World Bridge Olympic.” “...Ståhlberg was

the only Swede as South to solve all deals flawlessly. For this he received an honorary citation. Especially one deal, the eleventh, could only be solved by him and Gösta Kinnander out of 150 pairs. Ståhlberg was very proud of this and when he, by coincidence, met Putte Kock one day in the summer of 1958, he recalled the deal that made Kock include it in a book. Unfortunately, Ståhlberg's partner had a bad day which is why they missed out on the North/South victory, which instead went to Nils and Gösta Kinnander. pp509-510.

Ståhlberg and Alekhine played bridge between rounds at many tournaments using various partners each.

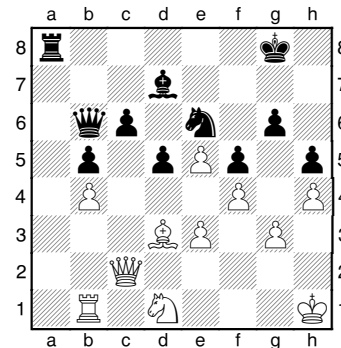
The text has many footnotes throughout. This reader would have preferred those notes to be right on same page or at least at the end of each chapter, but they were at the end of the book as a separate appendix.

The book features many games both annotated and not. An example of the annotation can be found in the following game:

Ståhlberg, Gideon—Bogoljubow, Efim [D36] Match/Nation GER-SWE 15–17 (4Players4R) Sopot (6), 12.09.1935
[Notes by Gideon Ståhlberg]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c6 3.Nc3 d5 4.Nf3 e6 5.Bg5 Nbd7 The later very popular continuation 5...dxc4 was at this time considered incorrect. With the text move Bogoljubow aims at the Cambridge Springs Variation (6.e3 Qa5). (GS) In the Zurich tournament 1934 I tried 5. ... dxc4 against Flohr, but after the lively skirmish 6.e4! b5 7.e5 h6 8.Bh4 g5 9.Nxg5! Nd5! 10.Nf3 Qa5 11.Qd2 b4 12.Nxd5 cxd5 13.Be2 c3 14.bxc3 bxc3 15.Qc2 Bd7 16.a4 Nc6 17.0–0 Rc8 18.Rfc1 White's advantage was apparent. (TfS) **6.cxd5** This move has become popular over the last decade, but in the 1930s it was little used. (GS) I considered it tactically preferable to avoid the Cambridge Springs Variation, of which Bogoljubow is one of the leading connoisseurs. (TfS) **6...exd5 7.e3 Be7 8.Qc2 Nf8** A maneuver introduced by Sämisch, which I have later tried with success myself. (GS) Bogoljubow chooses a somewhat time-consuming method of development, which he has employed successfully before. (TfS) **9.Bd3 Ne6 10.Bh4 a6** This move is not necessary. (GS) **11.0–0 g6 12.Ne5 Nd7 13.Bxe7 Qxe7 14.f4 f5** The white position now undeniably appears superior, with the outpost on e5 and lead in development. But how to exploit these advantages? Black has a solid position without weak points. The strategy White chooses in the following turns out to be faulty. The best may be to give up the lead in development by exchanging on d7 and directing the other knight to e5 by way of b1, d2, and f3. **15.Rab1 0–0 16.b4 Nxe5!** The beginning of a powerful counter offensive on the queen's side. (GS) With some powerful moves, Black forestalls White's offense and instead seizes the initiative for himself. (TfS) **17.dxe5 a5 18.a3 axb4 19.axb4 b5!** Very well played! Black leads the queen to a7 and then has the better play, thanks to the control of the a-file and the pressure against e3. (GS) Bogoljubow has maneuvered excellently and set me a hard task. My position is indeed unenviable, with the "cheerless" pawn on e3, the threatening breakthrough d5–d4, and the important a-file in enemy hands! (TfS) **20.Qb3 Qa7 21.Nd1 Bd7 22.Rf2 Qb6 23.g3 Nc7 24.Kh1 Ra6 25.Ra2** Otherwise the doubled black rooks on the a-file will become unpleasant for White. (GS) I have barely consolidated the position and prevented the threatening doubling of rooks, but still the black play is preferable. (TfS) **25...Rxa2 26.Qxa2 Ra8**

27.Qc2 Ne6 28.h4! Now the time has come to resort to tactical means. With the text move I want to lure Bogoljubow into an unnecessary and dangerous "cautionary measure." (TfS) **28...h5?**



Bogoljubow has laid out the game in his best style, but the pawn move alarmingly weakens the position of the black king. (GS) Bogoljubow has consumed the greater part of his time for consideration and therefore decides to preclude the threat h4–h5 once and for all. (TfS) **29.g4!** An unpleasant surprise for Bogoljubow! (GS) **29...hxg4 30.h5** This was exactly what Bogoljubow wanted to prevent! The struggle now becomes extremely exciting. (TfS) **30...Qd8** After long consideration. For the following fifteen moves Bogoljubow had only a few minutes. (TfS) **31.Kg2! Ng7** With the fine tactical point 31...Qh4 32.Nf2! Qxh5? 33.Rh1! (GS, TfS) **32.hxg6 Qe8 33.Nc3 Qxg6 34.Ne2 Qf7 35.Nd4** Now White's positional advantage compensates for the sacrificed pawn. (GS) **35...Qf8 36.e6!** The best attacking continuation! (GS) The attack must be conducted energetically, so that Black gets no room to breathe. (TfS) **36...Bxe6 37.Nxe6 Nxe6 38.Bxf5 Qf6 39.Rh1 Ra7!** And the best defense! (GS) Despite his heavy time trouble Bogoljubow defends himself excellently. (TfS) **40.Kg3(?)** A trap, which the time-troubled Bogoljubow falls into. Objectively 40.Rh5! was stronger (40. ... Ng7 41.Rg5). (GS) **40...Ng7 41.Bxg4 Ra3 42.Qh7+ Kf7 43.Kf3!** A trap. By the way there is no better move. (TfS) **43...d4?** The decisive mistake! (GS) Bogoljubow had no time to find the drawing move 43. ... Qc3! The continuation might have been 44.Re1! (what else?) Qxe1 45.Bh5+ and the black king cannot escape the drawing checks. On the text move I had my winning line ready. (TfS) **44.Rh6 Rxe3+ 45.Kg2 Qxf4 46.Bh5+ Resigns.** A varied struggle and for me a welcome revenge for the needless defeat against Bogoljubow in Stockholm 1930. (GS) An interesting struggle, which in a splendid way shows the strategical and tactical elements of chess. (TfS) **1–0** pp322-3. (The GS are the notes from Ståhlberg's book *I kamp med världseliten* and TfS are his notes from *Tidskrift för schack—ed.*)

The book was a joy to read not only due to the extensive content, but due to the high production quality that Verendel Publishing is becoming known for: hardback availability, excellent paper quality, strong binding, clear printing, and excellent cover designs. The games and annotations were enjoyable. I liked the fact that contemporary annotations were used as it gives a better understanding of the times. Some of the bridge stories were highlights to this reviewer. It was fun to hear how this chess player or that chess player were good or not so good at bridge and why. The amount of history found in the book was exceptional. There were a few times it did feel as though it was fact after fact after fact. All the miscellaneous stories and anecdotes helped offset potential

pitfall. A few language translation errors could be found, but nothing that detracted from the story. The plethora of famous players who played against Ståhlberg was amazing showing that chess was certainly alive and well during the early 1900's. Peter Holmgren did an fantastic job researching and writing this book over the past decade and it shows. The historical detail, games, stories, anecdotes, etc. make this book highly recommendable. I would give it 4.5 out of 5.0 stars.

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About the author

Peter Doggers is one of the most well-known and respected journalists in the chess world. An internationally ranked chess player, he is the director of news and events at the market leader in online chess, Chess.com. Doggers has played chess for more than thirty-five years and has covered it for nearly twenty. He has interviewed dozens of grandmasters, played basketball with Magnus Carlsen and interviewed Garry Kasparov at Bobby Fischer's grave. Doggers lives in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

For media inquiries and interview requests, please contact peter@chess.com.

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Supplement 2 (after the Interview) from Chris Paul Baker, (A Tribute to Jeremy Gaige)

By Chris Paul Baker



I have been able to find or impute the results of all the games in this tournament, except for one (the last-round game Luckis-Disleris). See partial crosstable below.

Kaunas, 17-26 March 1934

	1	2	3	4	Total (out of 6)	
1. SPIELMANN, Rudolf	X	1/2	1/2	1	1 1/2	4
2. VISTANECKIS, Isakas	1/2	X	1	0	1	4
3. LUCKIS, Markas	1/2	0	0	1	1	?
4. DISLERIS, Simon	0	1/2	0	0	?	?

Sources of use that I found:

- [1] 'Wiener Schach-Zeitung' Nr. 10/11, 1934 (May/June 1934 issue), page 163 Link: <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=sze&datum=1934&page=243&size=45>
- [2] 'Rytas', 19 March 1934, page 7
- [3] 'Lietuvos aidas', 20 March 1934, page 5
- [4] 'Rytas', 24 March 1934, page 9
- [5] 'Lietuvos aidas', 26 March 1934, page 8

[The Lithuanian newspaper website (epaveldas.lt) is faulty and won't do links.]

The last four sources are Lithuanian newspapers. Neither of these newspapers (or any other Lithuanian newspapers or magazines as far as I can see) gives a final report on the tournament (apart from 'Rytas' on 9 June 1934 quoting what is in Source 1).

Analysis, Part 1

In Source 1, Spielmann mentions this tournament as part of his Baltic tour. I translate this part as: "*Right at the beginning [in the Lithuanian part of the tour], I got in a double-round, four player tournament. I scored only two wins with four draws and had to be satisfied with the division of first prize with Vistaneckis. It struck me that Vistaneckis and Luckis are excellent connoisseurs and that even against the weaker Disleris, winning is not such a simple matter. As the latter scored a draw against me in the second cycle, I was overtaken by Vistaneckis.*"

This shows that Spielmann and Vistaneckis were 1-2= with 4/6.

Mikenas in his book "35 Metai Prie Sachmatu Lentos" (35 years at the chessboard) (1961) on page 76 also only mentions Spielmann and Vistaneckis coming 1-2= with 4/6.

Analysis, Part 2

Sources 2 and 3 give a start date to the tournament of 17 March 1934. And that in Round one, Spielmann beat Disleris; and Vistaneckis beat Luckis.

Analysis, Part 3

Source 4 says that after his first round win over Disleris, Spielmann had three draws in a row, first with Vistaneckis, then with Luckis, then in his second game with Disleris [this latter confirmed by Spielmann, above]. This matches his 2.5 points given in the progress scores.

The rest of the progress scores (clearly after Round four) have an error in the number of adjournments—one of Vistaneckis, Luckis or Disleris must have two adjournments. However, there is sufficient information from Source 5 to determine the game results from this part of the tournament, so these progress scores are not needed.

Analysis, Part 4

From Source 5; plus analysis:

(1) The last round was to start at 7pm on 26 March 1934. There was one adjourned game (Vistaneckis-Disleris) in the progress scores given before this round. This was likely played off on the morning of 26 March 1934. So it is likely that the tournament finished on 26 March 1934.

[Gaige said in 'Checklist' that the tournament was in April 1934. This looks wrong.]

(2) The last round has the pairings Spielmann-Vistaneckis and Luckis-Disleris. Source 4 says Spielmann played Vistaneckis in Round two, so it looks like the last two rounds in the second cycle were switched from the order of the last two rounds of the first cycle.

(3) As Spielmann had 3.5 points before the last round and ended up on 4, he must have drawn with Vistaneckis in the last round.

(4) As Vistaneckis had only 2.5 in the progress scores and drew with Spielmann, he must have won his adjourned game with Disleris to reach his final score of four.

(5) As Disleris thus only has 0.5 points with just Luckis to play; and that half point came from Spielmann, then Disleris must have lost twice to Vistaneckis, and also in his first game with Luckis.

(6) As it has now been established that Spielmann drew in Rounds two, three, four, six, he must have beaten Luckis in Round five to obtain his four points.

(7) Luckis has 2.5 points before the last round with Disleris left to play. As per above, he has dropped 1.5 points to Spielmann, and he also lost to Vistaneckis in Round one. He must therefore have won his other two games, that is, his first game with Disleris and his second game with Vistaneckis.

(8) A similar analysis can be applied to Vistaneckis: two wins vs

Disleris, two draws with Spielmann, and win in the first round against Luckis. This is already his four points, so he must have lost his second game with Luckis.

This establishes all the game results except the last-round Luckis-Disleris game. Clearly, this last result could be established (and thus the whole crosstable solved) if the final scores of Luckis and Disleris in the tournament could be found.

I have not been able to find these in Lithuanian newspapers or magazines.

The international magazines that to me would seem to be the most likely to have them (if any do); and that I have not yet been able to see or have checked, are:

- (i) *Deutsche Schachzeitung* (Germany)
 - (ii) *Deutsche Schachblätter* (Germany)
 - (iii) *Schach-Echo* (Germany)
 - (iv) *Denken und Raten* (Germany - a weekly)
 - (v) *Shakhmaty v SSSR* (USSR)
 - (vi) *L'Echiquier* (Belgium)
 - (vii) *La Strategie* (France)
 - (viii) *Schackvarlden* (Sweden)
 - (ix) *Sahovski Glasnik* (Croatia/Yugoslavia)
 - (x) *L'Italia Scacchistica* (Italy)
- There may be others.

As the tournament finished 26 March 1934, it would presumably be in March, April, May or June 1934 issues of these magazines if the final scores were published.

Source 1

The screenshot shows a web browser window with several tabs open. The active tab is titled "ANNO - Historische österreichische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften". The page content is a scanned document from the "WIENER SCHACH-ZEITUNG", issue Nr. 10/11, page 103. The article is titled "Meine Schachreise durch das Baltikum." by Rudolf Spielmann. The text describes a chess tour through the Baltic region, mentioning games against Disleris, Luckis, and others. The page number is 103. The browser's address bar shows the URL "o.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=sze&datum=1934&page=243&size=45". The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the system tray with the date and time "8°C Light rain".

Meine Schachreise durch das Baltikum.

Von Rudolf Spielmann.

Im ersten Teil meines Artikels (Seite 115 usw.) habe ich die Eindrücke in Lettland und Estland besprochen, heute soll von Litauen die Rede sein. Während Lettlands Meisterklasse über drei hervorragende Repräsentanten verfügt, nämlich Apscheneek, Feigin und Petrow, kann Litauen mindestens fünf Spieler von guter Meisterstärke ins Treffen schicken, das sind Lutzki, Macht, Mikenas, Vaitonis und Vistanetzki. Dieser zahlenmäßige Unterschied mag auch der Grund sein, warum in den Länderkämpfen zwischen Lettland und Litauen letzteres Land stets siegreich gewesen ist. Aber die Spitzenleistungen dürften sich in beiden Ländern ungefähr die Waage halten. Gleich anfangs bekam ich in einem doppelrundigen Viererturnier eine gehörige Kostprobe der Spielstärke Litauens vorgesetzt. Ich erzielte nur 2 Gewinne bei 4 Remisen und mußte mich mit der Teilung des ersten Preises mit Vistanetzki zufrieden geben. Es fiel mir auf, daß namentlich Vistanetzki und Lutzki ausgezeichnete Eröffnungskenner sind, und daß selbst gegen den schwächeren Disler das Gewinnen keine so einfache Sache ist. Da der Letztgenannte im zweiten Turnus gegen mich Remis erzielte, konnte ich von Vistanetzki eingeholt werden. In dem unmittelbar daran anschließenden Wettkampf gegen den litauischen Vorkämpfer Mikenas blieb ich allerdings mit 3:1 bei 2 Remisen Sieger. Gegen Dir. Macht, der gegen mich einen eindrucksvollen Gewinn erzielte, spielte ich in zwei freien Partien +1, -1, während ich gegen den in schlechter Form kämpfenden Vaitonis beide Partien gewann. Im allgemeinen halte ich Macht, Mikenas und Vaitonis für die schärfsten, Vistanetzki und Lutzki für die widerstandsfähigsten Spieler Litauens. Natürlich behagt meinem Spieltypus mehr Schärfe als Zähigkeit seitens der Gegner und damit sind auch die verschiedenen Resultate zur Genüge erklärt. Es muß noch der ungewöhnlich hohe Durchschnitt der Schachspieler von Kaunas rühmend hervorgehoben werden, auch die Gastfreundschaft der Schachgemeinde übersteigt das gewohnte Maß! Ich fühlte mich daher während des ganzen Aufenthaltes ungewöhnlich wohl, spielte frisch und unternehmend, wie es folgende zwei Partien veranschaulichen sollen.

Partie Nr. 75. Französisch.

Gespielt am 2. April 1934 in Kaunas.

Anmerkungen von R. Spielmann.

R. Spielmann.	S. Macht.
1. e2—e4	e7—e6
2. d2—d4	d7—d5
3. Sb1—c3	Lf8—b4

Dieser Zug ist nicht nach meinem Geschmack, obwohl damit Nimzowitsch viele Erfolge errungen hat. Ich ziehe das gute alte Sf6 vor.

4. Sg1—e2

Hier ist eine scheinbar widersinnige Feststellung am Platze: Der Textzug involviert ein Bauernopfer, ist aber trotzdem vorsichtiger als das zwar aussichtsvolle, aber immerhin positionell verpflichtende 4. e5 usw. Der Witz ist der, daß Schwarz den Mehrbauer nur unter Gestattung eines sehr gefährlichen Angriffs behaupten kann.

4.	d5×e4
5. a2—a3	Lb4×c3†

Damit deutet Schwarz an, daß er gesonnen sei, den Mehrbauer zu behaupten. Da er dies in der Folge aber

Šachmatai

'Rytas'
Monday
19 March
1934
Page 7

Rungtynės su Spilmanu

Started on Saturday (so 17 March 1934)

Ižymusis austrų didmeisteris savo rungtynes su Lietuvos šachmatininkais pradėjo jau šeštadienį. Tą dieną šachmatininkų s-gos patalpose prasidėjo nedidelis turnyrėlis, kuriame dalyvauja Spilmanas, Vistanekis, Luckis ir Disleris. Spilmanas gražiai ir greitai nugalėjo Dislerį, o Vistanekis išlošė iš Luckio. Turnyras šiandien eina toliau šachmatininkų s-gos patalpose, Laisvės Al. 49. Pradžia 19 val.

Vakar Metropolio salėse buvo Spilmano simultano seansas. Jis lošė vienu laiku su 21 šachmatininku. Pradėjęs rungtynes 20,15 v., baigė tik trumpai prieš 1 v. naktį. Rezultatai tokie: Spilmanas 13 partijų laimėjo, 4 baigė lygiomis (su Barkausku, Machtu — meisterio Machto sūnum, dr. Chmieliausku ir dar vienu) ir 4 pralaimėjo (Z. Kolodnui, Dr. Grilichui, ats. kap. Stanaičiui ir Vilčinskui). Pirmasis laimėjo Z. Kolodnas. Bendrai partijų buvo gan gražių ir įdomių. Ypač puikiai laikėsi ir galų gale laimėjo jaunas šachmatininkas Vilčinskas.

Spilman
defeated
Disleris
nicely and
quickly,
while
Vistanekis
beat
Luckis.

(Tuesday)
 'Lietuvos aidas', 20 March 1934, page 5

24 min., Ikdžiast 5 val. 37
 — 12 val. 12 min.
 Joakimas, Zibartas.
 s. viet., Lingalla.
KAUNO APSKR. KO-
US KRAŠTO BADAU-
VIS SELPTI.
 yfas Kauno apskrities
 krašto badaujantiems
 dr. A. Petraitis (pirmi-
 linas (vicepirm.), J.
) ir nariai: B. Semoš-
 , Valantėjus ir J. Mila-
 is komisija sudaro: A.
 avičius, V. Augustau-
UOSE BUS IR TAUTI-
J KLUBAS.
 ose statyti Pažangos

SPIELMANO SIMULTANAS
 (k) 18-III Spielmannas Metropolisio
 kavinėje sulošė simultaną prieš 21 lošėja.
 Jis išlošė 13 partijų, 4 pralošė ir 4 baigė
 lygiomis. Prieš Spielmanną išlošė: kap.
 Stanaitis, Z. Kolodnas, dr. Griliches ir
 Vilčinskas.

TURNYRAS SU SPIELMANNU
 (k) Praeitą šeštadienį Lietuvos šak-
 matistų sąjungos būste, Komerc viešbu-
 tyje, prasidėjo mažas turnyrėlis su Spiel-
 mannu. Jame dalyvauja Vistaneckis,
 Luckis ir Disleris. Šeštadienį Spielman-
 nas labai gražiai išlošė prieš Dislerį, Vis-
 taneckis — prieš Luckį.

Šį vakarą 19 val. Vistaneckis baltai-
 siais loš prieš Spielmanną.

F. KIRŠOS NAUJA EILERAŠČIU
KNYGA

Lapai gyve
 nariams rėmė
 Mariampolėje,
 d. ir pasibaigė
 Premijų skū
 byno salėn, į
 susirinkimo g
 nės būrys, v
 šaulių atstova
 Skirstyma:
 gai su kalbo
 sauga ir artin
 bius L. A. K. u
 Tiek pirma
 mių skirstym
 lės vyriausias
 Didžiausi I
 nariams rėmė
 kui Albertui,
 2849 ir

Last Saturday (so 17 March 1934) a small tournament including Spielmann started.
 Spielmann beat Disleris, Vistaneckis beat Luckis.

Lietuvos aidas, 26 March 1934, page 8
 This evening at 7 pm will be the last round of the tournament, Spielmann (white) plays
 Vistaneckis; and Luckis with Disleris. Progress score then given. (Vistaneckis has one
 adjournment with Disleris)

TURNYRAS SU SPIELMANNU
 (k) Šį vakarą 19 val. Lietuvos šak-
 matistų sąjungos buveinėje, Komerc
 viešbūtyje, Kaune, bus paskutinis tur-
 nyro ratas su Spielmannu. Loš Spiel-
 mannas (baltaisiais) su Vistaneckiu ir
 Luckis su Disleriu. Pirmoji partija tu-
 rės lemiamos reikšmės turnyro nugalė-
 tojui išaiškinti.
 Tuo tarp padėtis tokia: Spielman-
 nas 3½ taško,* Vistaneckis 2½ taško
 (1 partija — prieš Dislerį — nebaigta),
 Luckis 2½ taško ir Disleris ½ taško
 (1 nebaigta partija).

SROVĖ IŠTEISINTA

(h) Prof. Gaigalaitis buvo iškėles by-

(gv) Darbo biržos
 ju laiku Klaipėdos m
 čius pradėjęs žymiai
 šių darbininkai gaun
 reitą savaitę buvo til
 kai išregistravę beda
 Jau ieškomi namu
 ir darbininkai. Taip
 jęs judėjimas uoste
 darbininkų. Po Vel
 organizuoja visą eilę
 dėl laukiama, kad be
 rėsiąs visai sumažėti
 žemės ūkiui šiais me
 ninkų Klaipėdos kra

LIETUVOS KELIV

'Kytas', Saturday, 24 March 1934, page 9

Translation essence: Spielmann won his first game against Disleris, then had 3 draws in a row, VC Vistaneckis Luckis and the second game with Disleris, progress scores then given (nebaigta = adj.urbed).

Šachmatai

Špilmanas užplaukė ant uolų

Austrų didmeisteris R. Špilmanas, ligšiol taip sėkmingai visur gastroliaues ir pirmąją partiją Lietuvoje prieš Dislerį ko puikiausiu stilium laimėjęs, nuo pirmadienio tris kartus paeiliui turejo ieškoti išsigelbėjimo remize. Pirmąjį smūgį suteikė jam Vistaneckis. Vistaneckis praleido tikrą progą gauti porą praeinamų pestininkų, kurie būtų galėję nulemti partiją. Nežiūrint to ir vėliau tik didelis pri-tyrimas Špilmaną išgelbėjo.

Prieš Luckį jis jau galvojo pasiduoti, bet jo bandomieji kontršansai pavyko ir Luckis turejo prisipažinti, kad bokštų endšpilis ne jo lošimo specialybė. Ir ši partija buvo baigta lygiomis. Visus nustebino Dislerio antroji partija su savotiška Dislerio kvaliteto auka, po kurios Špilmanas trečią kartą gelbėjosi ėjimu pakartojimu, kuriais jis siūlė Disleriui valdovų sukeitimą. Po visų šių partijų tur-nyro padėtis pasidarė tokia: I Špilmanas 2½ t., II-III Luckis — Vistaneckis po 1¼ t. ir po I nebaigta ir IV Disleris ½ t. ir I nebaigta.

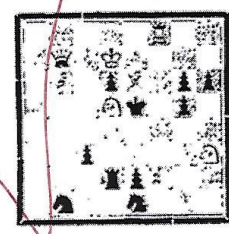
Po tokios Špilmano nesėkmės kai kas gal-ėtų pamanyti, kad didysis austrų meisteris lošia kiek blogokai. Ne. Jo pasiekti paskuti-nieji rezultatai Latvijoje ir kitur kaip tik by-voja priešingai. Ir pas mus jis parodo puikų lošimą, tik, reikia pabrėžti, jo partneriai yra kieti ir parodė ypatingai stiprų, tikrai vertą ekstra klasės lošimą.

(The first of Vistaneckis - Spielmann)
Pirmasis iš trijų remizų 3 draws
1. d2-d4, Zg8-f6 2. g2-g3, d7-d5 3. Rf1-g2, c7-c6 4. Zg1-f3, Rc8-f5 5. 0-0, e7-e6 6. b2-b3, Zb8-d7 7. Rc1-b2, Rf8-e7 8. Zb1-d2, Zf6-c4 9. f3-c5, Ze4:d2 10. Vd1:d2, Zd7:c5 11. d4:c5, 0-0 12. Bal-d1, Vd8-b6 13. Bf1-c1, a7-a5 4. a2-a4, Rc7-b4 15. Rb2-c3 (c2-c3 negerai, kadan-gi silpnintų pestininką b3. Juodieji vėliau baltųjų juodąjį rikį originaliu ėjimu priver-čia sukeisti ant savo rikio. Vargu ar yra juo-diesiems iš to naudos). Vb6-c5 16. Rc3:b4, a5:b4 17. Vd2-d4!, Vc5:d4 18. Bd1:d4, c6-c5 19. Bd4-d2, Rf5-g6 20. e2-c4, d4-d5 (šis juodųjų ėjimas turi didelės svarbos vi-sam vėlesniam endšpiliui. Kažin ar ne ge-riau buvo sukeisti rikį ir pestininką ir tada tučtuojau sulošti Bf8-d8). 21. Rg2-f1, f2-f6 22. e5:f6, Bf8:f6 23. e4-c5, Bf6-f7 24. Rf1-c4, Rg6-f5 25. Kgl-g2, g7-g5 26. h2-h3, g5-g4 (Juodieji numatė grasinimą g3-g4 su rikio f5 pašalinimu ir išvengė jo savo paskutiniuosiais dviem ėjimais, bet bal-tieji vėliau gražiai poziciškai įrodė jų atsi-skyrusio h pestininko silpnumą). 27. h3:g4, Rf5:g4 28. f2-f4, Kg8-f8 29. Rc4-c2! (Vis-

taneckis tiksliai įvertina padėtį. Rikių sukei-timas naudingas baltiesiems). Rg4:c2 30. Bd2:e2, Kf8-e7 31. Kg2-f3, Ke7-d7 32. Be1-h1, Ba8-g8 33. Be2-h2, Bg8-g7 34. Bh2-h6, Bf7-e7 35. g3-g4, Bg7-f7 36. Kf3-c4, Bf7-g7 37. Bh6-h4, Be7-f7 38. Bh1-f1, h7-h5! (Vienintelis šansas sustab-dyti baltųjų ruošimąsi sudaryti sau du pra-čimu pestininku ėjimu f4-f5. Baltieji galė-jo ši praeiją truputį skubiau parengti. Da-bar Špilmanas gražiai ir užtikrintai sunaikina baltųjų įvairius prasiveržimo galimumus). 39. g4:h5, Bg7+g2 40. Ke4-d3, Bg2-g3+ 41. Kd3-e2, Bf7-h7 42. Bf1-f3, Bg3-g2+ 43. Bf3-f2, Bg2-g3 44. Ke2-f1, Kd7-c6 45. Bf2-g2, d4-d3! 46. c2:d3 Bg3:d3 47. Bg2-b2, Bd3-g3 48. Kf1-f2, Bg3-d3 49. Kf2-c2, Bd3-g3 50. Ke2-f2, Bg3-d3. 51. h5-h6, Bd3-d8 52. Kf2-c3, Bd8-g8 53. Ke3-e4, Bg8-g6 54. Bb2-h2, Bg6-g1 55. Bh2-h1, Bg1-g2 56. Bh4-h2, Bg2-g6 57. Bh2-h4, Bg6-g2 58. Bh1-h2, Bg2-g1 59. Bh2-d2, c5-c4 (Juodieji energingu lošimu siekia remizo) 60. b3:c4, Kc6-c5 61. Bh4-h3, Bg1-c1. Padėtis labai įdomi ir loština toliau. Vistaneckio padėtis dar vistiek geresnė, bet jis, būdamas ceitnote, pasiūlė Špilmanui re-mizą, kurį pastarasis tuojau priėmė.

KAUNIETIS Z. KOLODNAS LAIMĖJO ITALIJOJ I PRIZĄ

Kaunietis šachmatininkas Z. Kolodnas, jau iš seniai žinomas kaip geras šachmatų uždavinių komponuotojas, dalyvavo Italijos žurnalo „L'Italia Scacchistica“ surengtam tarptautiniam šachmatų uždavinių konkurse. Neperseniai Z. Kolodnas gavo iš Italijos pranešimą, kad jo pasiūstasis uždavinys laimėjo pirmąjį prizą — aukso medalį. Šis mūsų šachmatininko laimėjimas nėra pirmas. Jis kaip uždavinių komponuotojas, jau seniai žinomas toli už Lietuvos sienų. Čia dedame tą uždavinį.



Matas per 3 ėjimus.

Kiek galima nuryti vinių?

Neseniai New Yorke buvo padary-ta nepaprasta operacija 60 metų mote- daugybė kitokių smulkių viničių, knop ir sagučių:



Happy Christmas 2024



Awani Kumar, Lucknow, India

Enjoy! Rejoice!! Celebrate!!!

Christmas, which commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, is an occasion of festivities and celebrations around the globe. Besides get-togethers and parties, decorating the Christmas tree is a joyous activity. Postal authorities frequently come out with Christmas tree theme stamps and cards. The author plans to join the festivity and wishes to celebrate and commemorate 2024 Christmas with an interesting tour of knight on 20x24 board (which relates to the year 2024). Readers are well aware of the millennium old knight's tour puzzle. The task is to move knight on an empty board so that it visits all the cells only once. Figure below is a knight tour on 20x24 board and the line joining the square numbers 1², 2², 3², ..., 21², namely, 1, 4, 9, ..., 441 delineate a Christmas tree.

45	90	53	74	109	98	51	120	139	118	147	122	137	160	151	124	135	128	131	126
54	73	46	97	52	75	108	117	146	121	138	161	150	123	136	159	152	125	134	129
91	44	89	76	47	110	99	50	119	140	145	148	155	162	153	172	175	130	127	132
72	55	96	111	102	107	48	141	116	143	166	163	170	149	156	191	158	133	174	187
43	92	77	88	83	114	103	100	49	164	160	144	223	154	171	176	173	186	183	178
56	71	112	95	78	101	106	115	142	167	224	165	194	197	190	157	192	177	188	185
93	42	87	84	113	82	79	104	229	226	195	168	251	222	193	198	189	184	179	182
70	57	94	23	86	105	64	81	234	231	228	225	196	285	252	221	254	181	200	219
41	22	85	68	65	80	233	230	227	260	283	250	257	288	255	286	199	220	331	180
58	69	34	37	24	63	66	235	232	247	258	261	284	321	326	253	330	333	218	201
21	40	59	62	67	36	25	246	259	262	249	282	280	256	287	334	327	336	329	332
60	33	38	35	26	279	236	263	248	281	290	339	320	325	322	337	380	385	202	217
39	20	61	8	237	264	245	280	291	340	319	360	323	338	379	384	335	328	381	386
32	7	30	27	16	9	278	293	318	1	316	341	378	361	324	417	388	383	216	203
19	14	17	238	29	244	265	2	315	292	359	362	427	418	401	422	399	416	387	382
6	31	28	15	10	3	294	277	358	317	342	377	402	423	428	419	462	389	204	215
13	18	239	4	243	266	357	314	343	376	363	478	437	426	421	400	429	398	415	390
240	5	242	11	274	295	276	375	364	471	438	403	424	477	436	463	420	461	214	205
307	12	273	296	267	356	313	344	373	404	479	470	455	464	425	476	397	430	391	414
272	241	306	355	312	275	374	365	472	469	446	439	466	475	456	435	460	413	206	213
305	308	297	268	353	350	345	372	405	480	473	468	445	454	465	396	457	212	431	392
298	271	354	311	302	347	352	369	366	451	440	447	474	467	444	211	434	459	412	207
309	304	269	300	351	368	349	346	371	406	449	442	453	408	395	458	209	410	393	432
270	299	310	303	348	301	370	367	450	441	452	407	448	443	210	409	394	433	208	411

The author wishes a very **Happy Christmas**. May it bring health, wealth, love and happiness to all. Amen.





Queens' Corner

Illustrated by Tony Sullivan

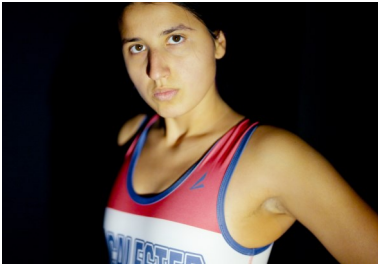


Photo by Pablo Jones

SOFIA DOROSHENKO — Chess x Wrestling Taking it to the Mats!

Interviewed By Rachel Schechter
Pictures from Sofia

That's exactly what 21-year-old Chicagoan Sofia Doroshenko is doing – meshing two sports that she loves: chess and wrestling. She has created a rather unorthodox combination that avoids some of the inherent dangers of chessboxing, i.e. blows to the head. Chess wrestling provides a most interesting, unusual, and physical platform that hopes to attract more competitors as it becomes more widely known. Let's look, click the video showcasing some of the beginners: <https://youtu.be/y9iqT6PlDsk?si=mj6bYV-4Uv16yNG0>. Surely, this is a great way to blow off some steam while improving focus.

The new sport continues to emphasize the split-second logic and accuracy that one needs for successful chess *and* wrestling moves, now and future chess queen Sofia Doroshenko has taken off the gloves from chessboxing and is going to the mat.



Pictured: National Master Giurgiu V.S. Wong

As with most women that compete in chess, Sofia has sought for an answer to that age-old question—***why don't more women stay with the royal game?*** Is it Nature or Nurture? Biology or Psychology? Intelligence? Fiscal realities? Check out Sofia's next video for the charts, the numbers, the brain waves, and ah...the seashore. https://youtu.be/n_VNAt8H2Ac?si=QbBGNjl3h7szHwwf

From these 2 videos we learn this remarkable young woman is super smart, talented, attractive, ambitious, cool, and analytical. Now let's learn a bit more...

Please share a memorable chess story:

When I first wandered into the chess room during my sophomore year of high school, it was because the swimming season was over, and I was looking for another after-school activity. Chess was enticing because my now-deceased grandfather taught me until I was six, and after that, my stepdad prohibited the game, as he claimed it was "gambling" and "not for girls." I played that day anyway—and lost to the chess class captain—but it reignited a flame for the game. I played whenever, wherever I could—at school, on the park tables, always looking over



my shoulder for my stepfather. Unfortunately, over a winter school break, he caught me online and confiscated my laptop. But I persevered and 1 ½ years later, I was the chess captain, and our team won its conference—first time ever.

When did you begin to wrestle? And when did you tie it to chess?

“Wrestling” is often called “physical chess” because competitors must strategize a few moves ahead to be effective. For example, is a throw worth leaving my arms open and exposed even though I’m risking a pin? If that doesn’t work, what’s my follow up? I could fake or move in on my opponent depending on how well he/she is guarded. Moving, strategizing, planning, gaining an advantage. All of these questions must be considered in the moment, as your opponent is also always looking to get that edge. Both sports are psychologically challenging.

Chess and Wrestling? I’ve always admired aggressive sports—the blink of an eye reaction time, the grueling training, the satisfied sense of domination well-earned. However, I’d always been too worried about joining since I’d never seen other women participate. Due to this concern, I only began my junior year of high school. Honestly, I enjoyed the chess club, but there was a lot sexism involving snide comments and general belittling behavior. I thought, how much worse could wrestling be?

Surprisingly, the team treated me as a sister. They cheered me when I had to drag a boy twice my size up a few flights of stairs during conditioning training. When I came up against male opponents during the matches, they cheered even louder. Of course, they teased me when I lost but that only made me want to improve. They were always supportive. Always encouraging me to improve.

After high school I wanted to continue but in elite colleges there generally aren’t wrestling teams that include women. Then I met another girl in the same predicament who’d come from a *women’s* wrestling team and competed in national championships.

Together, we formed the Macalester College Women’s Wrestling Team in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since I’m president of the chess club, I considered chess boxing, its success—I liked its concept—but the dangers inherent in blows to the head were risky and could impede its growth. Chess players *really* value their heads. Enter: Chess Wrestling – Chessling, if you will. Our set of rules/instructions on how to start can be found on the website: <https://chesswrestling.weebly.com/>

Are you in a PhD program? Is your thesis related to male/female intelligence in chess or otherwise?

I am a fourth-year Chemistry, English, and Music student at Macalester College. Although my studies don’t seem to point toward chess, I’ve always found the edges between disciplines blurred.

What are your plans for Chess Wrestling?

To advance it as much as possible and make it a bigger national event. Around the end of January 2025, the team plans to host a bigger competition, at Macalester College in St. Paul, MN. Prizes will be determined based on interest.

How does Chess Wrestling compare to Chess Boxing?

Chess Boxing didn’t take off as it might have due to





endangering the players. No serious chess player wants his/her head bashed in. You don't encounter the same risk level in Chess Wrestling, as it's a grappling sport.

What is your competitive chess rating?

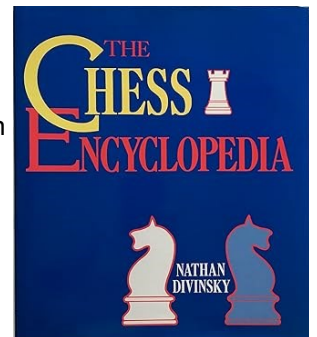
My USCF rating isn't great due to lack of tournament playing since I've entered college. I'm 1800 FIDE and 2400 lichess rapid.

Where do you envision yourself in 10 years? Specifically, how has chess helped you achieve that 'vision'?

Hopefully, I will have a job as a chemist where I've created some great products. Additionally, I would love to have published a few sci-fi dystopia stories and improve my chess rating once I have time to play more. Chess has helped me develop a lot of 'grit' in reaction to the sexism; plus, I've made so many friends from different walks of life.

Favorite chess books

The Chess Encyclopedia. I often pull-out printed sheets during classes since open laptops are prohibited now.



Favorite chess players

Mikhail Tal due to his aggressive and unapologetic style of play.

And what's your favorite tea?

Jasmine! The flavor is sweet enough to entice and bitter enough to wake.

Well, there you have it, chess lovers. Up and coming chess queen Sofia Doroshenko and Chess Wrestling—her innovative contribution to the royal game. A unique evolution of Brains and Brawn.

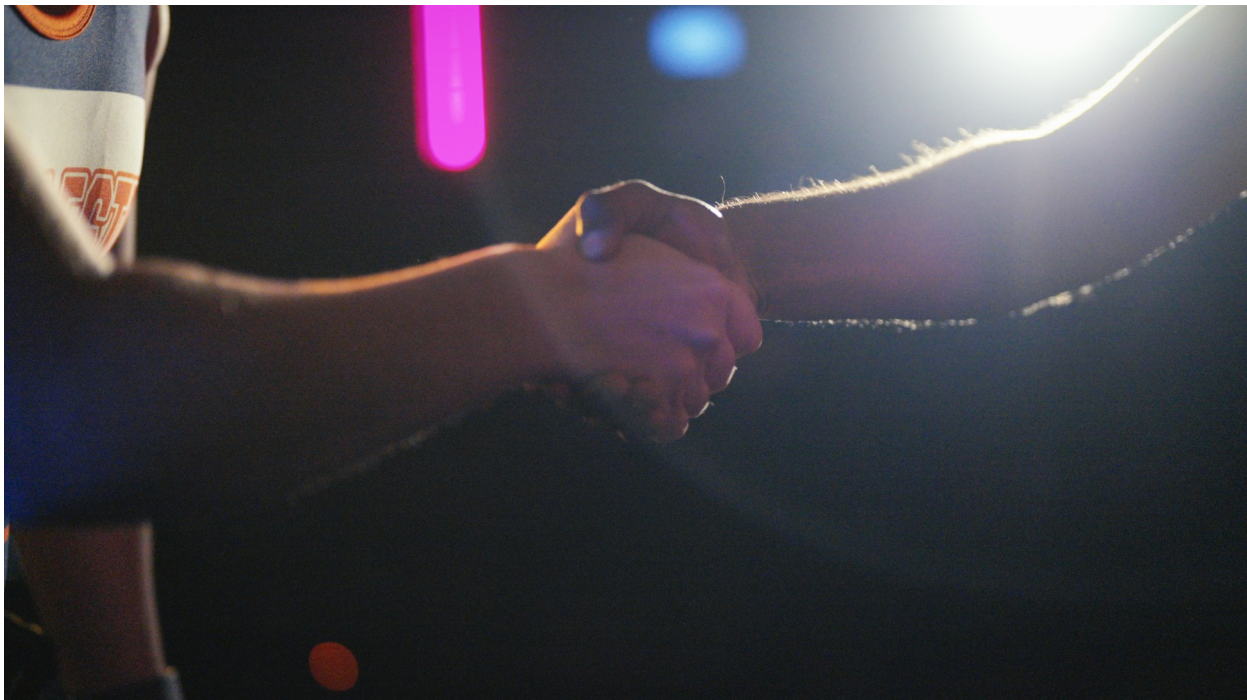


Photo by Pablo Jones.



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P: +1 (212)414-3671 | E: kpowell@prh.com

**AN UPBEAT AND FAST-PACED STEM-INIST MIDDLE GRADE STORY ON
OVERCOMING PERFORMANCE ANXIETY IN THE COMPETITIVE WORLD
OF CHESS**

MAY THE BEST PLAYER WIN

By Kyla Zhao

Praise for MAY THE BEST PLAYER WIN

"This book is a game-changer for readers of all ages, regardless of whether you play chess! *May the Best Player Win* captures the thrill of competition, the weight of expectations, and the sting of naysayers." — Carissa Yip, 2x US Women's Chess Champion & Women's Grandmaster

"Compassionate, empowering, and full of heart, *May the Best Player Win* reminds young readers that sometimes, the only limits on our potential are the ones we place on ourselves." —Rebecca Mix, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Mossheart's Promise*

"May Li is the type of fierce, loveable, larger-than-life heroine who stays with you long after the story ends. Readers will root for May and her friends from start to finish in their epic journey to nationals!" — Katie Zhao, author of *Last Gamer Standing* and the Winnie Zeng series

"Zhao explores gender bias as well as performance stress, and the book's valuable life lessons will speak to anyone who's lost their love for a pursuit... An emotionally intelligent work that explores socially relevant themes." — *Kirkus*

"Digestible chess strategy breakdowns and terminology scattered throughout serve as an approachable introduction to the sport." —*Publishers Weekly*



On September 17, 2024, G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers will publish **MAY THE BEST PLAYER WIN** by *Fraud Squad* author Kyla Zhao (Hardcover; 9780593615867; Ages 8-12; \$17.99). This fast-paced STEM-inist middle grade tackles the overwhelming feelings of performance anxiety in one of the world's fastest-growing games: Chess.

Chess is more popular now than ever according to outlets ranging from *The Washington Post* to *PBS*. Demand for chess clubs continues to rise in schools across the country, and, in 2023, Chess.com saw the biggest growth among players in the youngest age bracket. **MAY THE BEST PLAYER WIN** taps into this excitement and

brings young readers love for the game to the page.

The clock is ticking for May Li, whose middle-school chess team just earned a victory at the state championship—and with it, a ticket to nationals. What’s even more exciting is that May got an award for being the top female player and a splashy feature in the biggest chess magazine in the country. May should be thrilled. But some of her teammates, including her supposed-to-be-friend Ralph, aren’t too pleased with the attention she’s getting—and they’re even questioning her skills. Backed into a corner, but not one to back down, May makes a move as bold as any of her chess tactics: She bets Ralph she can win the school’s internal tournament and be chosen as team captain for nationals. The crown is May’s for the taking... except she’s starting to crumble under the weight of everyone’s expectations. Anxious feelings begin to affect her performance and, what’s worse, eat away at her love for the game. Now May is left to wonder: Can you still play for fun when you’re playing to win?

Historically chess has been a male-dominated sport, but the number of women playing the game continues to rise. Using a kid-friendly touch this STEM-inist story examines the gender bias that surrounds the sport and celebrates the female players who, like May, are changing the game.

While fast-paced and humor-filled, **MAY THE BEST PLAYER WIN** addresses the reality of the high expectations often placed on children to perform well in and out of school. With rates of anxiety in children on the rise, young readers can relate to May’s struggles to cope with her performance anxiety.

Author Kyla Zhao delivers a story with authenticity and charm, writing from her own experience as a former member of Singapore’s Junior Chess Squad. **MAY THE BEST PLAYER WIN** is Kyla’s middle grade debut and is perfect for fans of Kelly Yang and Celia C. Pérez

Kyla Zhao is the author of *The Fraud Squad* (Berkley, 2023). She had her first women's magazine byline at the age of sixteen. Since then, she has also written for the Singapore editions of *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*, and *Tatler*. A native Singaporean, Kyla now works in Silicon Valley after graduating from Stanford University in 2021. In 2023, Kyla made Forbes Asia's 30 under 30 list. She’s still trying to understand why Californians adore hiking and Patagonia fleeces so much. Kyla can be found on X @kylazhao_, Instagram @kylajzhao, and on TikTok @kylazingaround.

MAY THE BEST PLAYER WIN

by Kyla Zhao

G.P. Putnam’s Sons Books for Young Readers; on sale: 09/17/24; 9780593615867; Ages 8-12; \$17.99

Penguin Random House, the world’s largest trade book publisher, is dedicated to its mission of nourishing a universal passion for reading by connecting authors and their writing with readers everywhere. The company, which employs more than 10,000 people globally, was formed on July 1, 2013, by Bertelsmann and Pearson. As of April 1, 2020, Bertelsmann is full owner of the company. With more than 300 imprints and brands on six continents, Penguin Random House comprises adult and children’s fiction and nonfiction print and digital English-German-and Spanish-language trade book publishing businesses in more than 20 countries worldwide. With over 15,000 new titles, and more than 600 million print, audio and eBooks sold annually, Penguin Random House’s publishing lists include more than 80 Nobel Prize laureates and hundreds of the world’s most widely read authors

I’m not a book hoarder. I’m simply prepping for the possibility that one day I might have 173 years to do nothing but read. Better safe than sorry.
— Jonathan Edward Durham

Oddities and Peculiarities (and Obscurities)

My fifteen minutes of fame lasted three days.

By Andy McFarland

Saturday, September 28, 1996.

I was employed as an administrator for the Internet Chess Club (ICC), the original home of online chess. When I logged in on this day, I found commotion and confusion in the chat. One member, "cgdrafts", Charles Drafts, had asked us to send an ambulance to



him in Boston. One member asked him to send his address. Others asked the obvious questions. "Is this a joke?" "If you need an ambulance, why don't you call?" "What happened to you?" I checked the public "finger" notes and private-to-administrator notes. Cgdrafts was a quadriplegic and typed on his keyboard using a stick in his mouth. He

normally played speed chess: two minutes with 14 second increment. He had no reports of disciplinary problems. Cgdrafts had responded with a street address, but nothing else. I decided not to continue investigating as it would take too much time. There was another administrator online from Singapore, but I decided to take charge, and contacted Boston emergency services. "My name is Andy McFarland. I am in Owensboro, Kentucky. I need you to send an ambulance in Boston." Several seconds of silence passed as they decided how to handle this. I told them what I knew and what I didn't know. They must have called the phone for cgdrafts' address and said they could not contact him. They agreed to treat it as a valid emergency. Next call was from Boston Fire Rescue. They said they were outside his door and they were unable to contact him. They asked if I was sure of my report. I was. "We are going through the door." I soon got a call that cgdrafts had been taken to a hospital.

I saved a log of the chat text. I might have just sent firefighters through an innocent person's door. I sent the log to ICC management in Pittsburgh. I got dressed and went to my youngest niece's second birthday party. I told my brother about my morning. We decided not to report it to the local newspaper. Event concluded... until

Sunday, September 29, 1996.

I woke up to a call from Fox 5. It didn't dawn on me that the local Fox is not channel 5. They asked for details. A national wire service got the story from a newspaper in Pittsburgh. They said nice things about me. Next, a call from a newspaper. Details, nice things about me again. This lasts for hours. National TV networks wanted to send a local affiliate from Louisville (100 miles away) to film me. I told them Evansville, Indiana (40 miles) was the closest to my home. I soon had three TV trucks at my house. Each crew took turns, helping the others set up their equipment. Details, nice things. Soon, I received calls from two national TV shows, wanting to fly me to Boston and his hospital room. Several calls determined I could not arrive for the morning show, but could make the noon show. At this point, I was not sure what my name was. I called my brother who took me to Evansville and told me what I needed to do for my first flight on an airplane.

Monday, September 30, 1996.

I left a deserted airport in Evansville before decent people normally get out of bed. While flying, I saw that Lake Ontario looked just like the map. Landing at the Boston Airport involved flying out over the Atlantic Ocean, turning west to land. This was the first time I had seen the Atlantic Ocean. Someone from NBC with an official looking card displaying my name, collected me to a stretch limousine. We went through the Ted Williams tunnel to the hospital. The hospital staff explained that Charles knew I was coming. He was deaf and read lips but had trouble with mustaches. I decided I must establish who I was, mention ICC and not reach out to shake his hand. Charles was in a hospital bed. I was 5' 11", 225 pounds, but Charles was bigger. I found out he had a diving accident as a teenager. Medicine saved his life, but took his hearing. He graduated from Harvard. He used software on ICC that I wrote, ZIICS. That had led to ICC hiring me for customer support. I had a legal pad to write for him. He started to tire, so I wrote asking if he was tired and wanted to stop. He did.

They hid me in a TV truck to wait for my live TV appearance. I met Charles' uncle there. He said Charles was in assisted living. An attendant came in the morning and in the evening and at mealtimes. Charles recognized his lungs were filling with fluid and he was not able to cough it up. He knew he would be dead before his attendant's return at lunch. He knew if he phoned for help, he would not be able to hear what they said. He played a lot of chess online, so we were his best chance.

I was outside the hospital, with an uncomfortable earpiece that kept falling out. Details, nice things on national TV. When I finished with my obligations; a member of the local, Boylston Chess club offered to take me wherever I wanted to go. First the club. They had tournaments for Charles and red T-shirts. Next Harvard Square, where they had tables with chess boards. Then MIT, and we went over the Charles River on a bridge measured in "Smoots*". At MIT, I logged into the ICC as if I were home. At my hotel, I bought a local newspaper, the *Boston Herald*. The story was on the bottom few inches of the front page. March 1997, page 138 of *Reader's Digest* had a story about the incident. CNN Indonesia mentioned it, as it was reported by the brother of the ICC principal owner. The Boylston Chess Club has a picture of Charles who died in 2000.

*The **smoot** /'smu:t/ is a nonstandard, humorous unit of length. It was created as part of an "intoxicated" MIT fraternity pledge to Lambda Chi Alpha by Oliver R. Smoot. In October 1958 he laid down repeatedly on the Harvard Bridge between Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, so that his fraternity brothers could use his height to measure the length of the bridge. They painted each "smoot". That paint has been maintained by subsequent classes.

This was modified with the author's consent from the Originally published story at Andy's DramatizeMe content found at

<https://youtube.com/post/UgkxLXkjuWgo1oh6b24UMTDAOmmS6-M0PxUJ>