

The Chess Journalist

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CHESS JOURNALISTS OF AMERICA



This issue ended up with a theme of the book review. No less than eight books were reviewed! Lots of great new books!

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Hello From the Editor

We are back on schedule with this issue. Unfortunately most of the material came in after the deadline so its been a lot of late nights. I really do enjoy putting this magazine together for the readers, but having things on time would make it more enjoyable...Laughs!!

We lost one of my boyhood heroes, GM Dr. Robert Hübner, on January 5. There are many tributes to him on the internet. I have written a bit about him on page 12.

World ICCF Champion GM Jon Edwards sends in a review of a new Thinkers Publishing book series, *Forgotten Genius*. This two volume set covers GM Dragoljub Velimirovic. Jon gives a glowing review of the books.

Thinkers Publishing has been putting out some really fine books and they sent me several to review. Jon did the *Forgotten Genius* books and I reviewed *FIDE President: Folke Rogard*. An excellent book about the how the FIDE President established FIDE and dealt with the Cold War politics. We will have a few more reviews of Thinkers Publishing books in next issue.

I reviewed the fantastic new book by Charles Hertan, *The Real Paul Morphy*. This is definitely one of the best books written on Morphy, and I think should be a candidate for best book of the year. I was also lucky enough to interview Charles. It was nice getting to know him a bit better. He has a very interesting story.

NM Randy Bauer reviews Petter Doggers book *Chess Revolution*. This might be Randy's first article for the CJA?

Joshua reviews the two McFarland books: *Deadline Grandmaster* by GM Andrew Soltis and *Chess in the Third Reich* by Taylor Kingston.

Lastly I reviewed former CJA vice-president Robert Irons's book *San Sebastian 1911*.

If you can't tell by now, this issue has a lot of book reviews. It is

funny how a theme just develops sometimes. As there continues to be a bunch of really great books published, we will continue with reviews...maybe not eight at once though.

We have two newcomer authors:

First Nathan Smolensky asked to be our journalist at the 2024 World Chess Championship. He writes about his experience in Singapore.

Second Patricio Robayo was a journalist at the 2024 FIDE Rapid and Blitz Championships held in New York late December. He has a nice story and some really impressive photographs.

There is another interesting knight's tour that celebrates the Olympiad by Awani Kumar.

Tony Sullivan is back with a cartoon. Consider purchasing his book [Chess Peace: Cartoons](#).

Evangeline Juliet John Francis Kennedy or simply Eva has joined us as our Social Media & Outreach Manager. She will be behind the scenes posting on our Facebook page among other things. See more about Eva on page four.

Eva sent in two short articles: *The Souls of the Board* and *Every Move Matters*.

Rachel will be back with "Chess Keys" and "Queens Corner" next issue.



—Mark Capron

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

Please consider sending in an article or idea for an upcoming issue. More authors are always welcome and make the issues better!! Deadline for next issue is April 5.

Please send your comments, suggestions, or even better, send me a story or idea for the next issue:

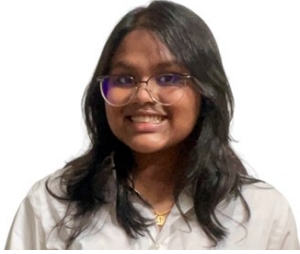
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How many of you still have this? I continue to use it when reading books as my go to board. Mine still functions if I plug it in too!

"Excitement is found along the road, not at the end."— Neil Peart

Meet Eva: Making Moves On and Off the Board



Hi, I'm Evangeline Juliet John Francis Kennedy, but you can just call me Eva! I'm a junior in the Class of 2026, and I'm excited to share a little about myself. In the chess world, I wear many hats—just like a queen on the board. I'm a journalist and the social media and out-

reach manager for Chess Journalists of America (CJA). I'm also the social media manager for Tri-Bridges Chess Club.

My passion for journalism and managing social media began during my freshman year when I joined *The Spoke* as a reporter. That passion only grew during my sophomore year when I became a social media editor. Those experiences taught me how much I enjoy building an online presence and connecting with people through stories. Managing social media is a bit like playing chess—you need a good strategy, the ability to anticipate what people want, and occasionally a bold move to keep things exciting.

During my free time, I love karate, baking, spending time with friends, and occasionally playing video games with my younger brother. A few fun facts about me: My favorite colors are purple and red, caramel Frappuccino's are my absolute favorite drink, and my favorite animal is the snow leopard.

I'm thrilled to be part of this chess journey and to contribute to growing the social media presence of CJA and Tri-Bridges Chess Club. Chess is so much more than a game—it's a way to inspire creativity, build connections, and bring people together. I'm excited to help take this community to new heights, one move at a time. After all, life is like a chessboard, and the best stories come from the unexpected checkmates along the way!

Topic: Winter CJA Meeting

Time: Feb 2, 2025 08:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8185542253?pwd=SDBtNFpLeExhNC9WaUN6L0VIRnBEUT09&omn=87212314928>

Meeting ID: 818 554 2253

Passcode: 08062021

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbQz3caR1c>



Chessable Research Awards 2025: Applications Now Open

Applications Now Open for Chessable Research Awards 2025 Cycle

Chessable, the leading online chess learning platform and part of Chess.com, is now accepting applications for the 2025 cycle of the Chessable Research Awards. Undergraduate and graduate students, along with their faculty research sponsors, are invited to apply.

The Chessable Research Awards aim to promote chess research and develop our understanding of how chess can benefit our lives, how we can improve our knowledge of the game, and how we can understand other phenomena, both within and outside of the chess world.

Awards include \$500 for each winning faculty research sponsor, \$500 for each undergraduate student winner, and \$1,000 for each winning graduate student. The deadline to apply is May 15, 2025.

University students from all fields of study, such as cognitive psychology, education, literature, history, computer science, etc., are invited to apply. For more information, visit the Chessable Research Awards site at chessable.com/research_awards.

Blog posts by past Chessable Research Awards winners: [Denise Trippold](#), [Aditya Gupta](#), [Jérôme Genzling](#), [Jordan von Hippel](#), [Michael Martins](#), [Jane Zhang](#), [Adam DeHollander](#), [Sarah Kudron](#), [Jade Oldfield](#) and [Julia Engel](#).

For more information about other initiatives by the Chessable Science Team, visit chessable.com/science.

[Video 2025 Chessable Research Awards](#)

Best regards,

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Peeking Behind the Curtain at the 2024 World Chess Championship

By Nathan Smolensky



Singapore: Oriental city. And the city didn't know what the city was getting. Or did it?

"The idea [to bid to host] first came about when Gukesh won the candidates back in April," said GM Kevin Goh, president of the Singapore Chess Federation, who led the bidding process. "I remembered catching the moment live (despite the rather ungodly hours in Singapore!) and realizing that this match will be between a Chinese and Indian. The thought that Singapore would then be an ideal host came about quite easily."

Soon enough, the *crème de la crème* of the chess world would descend upon the first World Championship in Southeast Asia in nearly fifty years, and the small island nation showed itself perfectly capable as a host. Though it wasn't quite a show with everything people might have been hoping for, it was clean, organized, and efficient - exactly as the country likes to do things.

Though it has an area a quarter the size of Rhode Island, the city-state of Singapore boasts some six million people, among them large populations of both Han Chinese and Indians, the latter primarily tracing to Tamil Nadu, the southern state from which Gukesh Dommaraju hails. It's also a major hub of transportation and commerce that takes great pride in its racial harmony, and, despite early concerns from GM Goh and others about gathering the necessary funds and operational resources, it emerged quickly as a frontrunner to host.

"Our neutrality was a strong competitive advantage," noted GM Goh, "but I would like to think there were other components of our bid that were attractive to the FIDE Council. The bidding process took place throughout the entirety of June, and we were reasonably confident of the outcome by the final week."

It was shortly after that that I made my own arrangements to attend. Being married to a Singaporean and having lived in the country myself for several years during the Pandemic, it was a destination already very much on my radar for the holidays. The successful bid by GM Goh and company gave me the perfect opportunity to see World Championship chess up close for the first time. And by working with *The Chess Journalist*, I would be able to attend with media accreditation, and gain insight into just how the magic happens.

And so, on the 24th of November, I made my arrival. It was a humid 90 degrees—as all days are in Singapore - and I took a short train ride to Sentosa, the island-within-the-island. There, I would find the venue, at the Equarius Hotel on the edge of the popular Resorts World cluster. On the outside, it looked and sounded like any other vacationer hotspot, with poolside cheers and summery music bouncing by the roadside. Inside, however, something special was happening.



For anyone who gets starstruck around chess celebrities, the World Championship is either a dream or a nightmare. While Ding and Gukesh mostly avoided the crowd when they weren't playing, there were iconic personalities all over the halls. Former World Champion Vishy Anand made his way through on numerous occasions, sometimes bantering with GM Boris Gelfand, his 2012 challenger. Elsewhere, Filipino GM Eugene Torre—Southeast Asia's first Grandmaster, and a legend of the region - roamed, while chatting with his wife. Former Women's World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk was in and around the fan area for several days, as were a number of other well-known Grandmasters from around the world.

Even the media room, in its quiet corner of the event space, was filled with familiar faces. Mike Klein was there for Chess.com, Charlize van Zyl was leading interviews for FIDE’s official broadcast, and popular streamer Eric Rosen was planning out content. Quietly, a number of journalists were clacking on their keyboards, working on articles that would be printed on ESPN India, Australia’s *Saturday Paper*, and Spain’s *El País* (whose designated reporter, Leonardo Garcia, has been regularly attending championships since the mid 1980’s).

Each game was slated for 5:00 pm local time, and scarcely one started after the clock struck 5:01. By that point, most attendees were gathered silently in the designated viewing area, seated in front of a large one-way mirror, so that they could clearly see (but not signal to) the Champion and Challenger in the adjoined room. For the first few minutes, cameras and phones filled the room to capture the stage and the excitement. But the photography was capped at 5:10, while electronic devices were banned altogether at 5:30—and bins were provided to keep them outside the hall.



After that, a few fans would typically stick around to continue observing the game up close in ceremonial silence, but the majority migrated over to the designated Fan Zone in the neighboring ballroom. There, fans from all over the world - speaking English, Mandarin, Tamil, Malay, French, Spanish, Russian, German, Tagalog, and even Australian—bantered and played casual games while FIDE’s official coverage of the match rolled on a few screens. And then, at around 7:00, some special guest would arrive, either a player like Kosteniuk or national champion GM Tin Jingyao to answer crowd questions, or a streamer like Rosen or WGM Nemo Zhou (better known as Nemo) playing live games against a few lucky attendees.

It was in this ballroom as well that a number of special events were held earlier in the afternoon on match days, geared primarily towards “VIP” fans—guests of honor, or more often those who had purchased VIP tickets. These included ten-board simuls against the likes of Kosteniuk, Anand, and Gelfand, as well as lectures from Rosen, GM Zurab Azmaiparashvili (who shared stories of his time as a member of Kasparov’s team in the 1980’s), and others.

In a nearby building, the same organizing committee had also put together the Singapore International Open with a prize fund of some \$100,000 in the local currency. The norm-eligible tournament boasted participants from over 40 countries and included 37 Grandmasters in its ‘A’ group. After nine rounds, China’s Lu Shanglei emerged clear winner.

At times, these side events generated as much buzz and excitement as the match itself. For the latter, what banter there was focused more on the psychological obstacles faced by the young challenger and struggling champion, and less on the chess proper or any major drama surrounding the event. But the lack of controversy was by design, as GM Goh confirmed when I asked him about the Singapore federation’s top priorities with the event.

“First and foremost,” he said, “it was important for us to host a match that is of the highest quality for the two players. Both... must feel that the conditions were the best possible. In general, I think both players do not have too many issues, which [is] good news for us.”

The feeling of a good, clean event wasn’t exclusive to the players, either.

“It’s running incredibly smoothly,” offered Chess.com’s Klein, whom I spoke to prior to the sixth game. “There has never been an organizing committee that has reached out to me, in advance of a World Championship, and said, ‘Mike, what do you need? What kind of information, help with your hotel booking?’ They were prepared to send a car to the airport to pick me up.”

“Really top notch,” he continued, “and that’s how it should, kind of, always be run. A local organizing committee that knows the local layout and has the local contacts. Even as far back as the Olympiad [in September], they sent a member of the organizing committee to talk to people like me who they knew were coming, to tell me about the event, tell me about the planned activities, help me understand what hotel’s going to work best for me. So yeah, incredibly top notch, and Singapore’s a city that runs incredibly well, too.”

	Game 1	Game 2	Game 3	Game 4	Game 5	Game 6	Game 7	Game 8	Game 9	Game 10	Game 11	Game 12	Game 13	Game 14
Gukesh D.	0	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	0	0.5	1
Ding L.	1	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0	1	0.5	0



Even without the chaos, without accusations of cheating or violations of dress code, and without the spectre of Soviet influence that marred so many a Championship before it, those in attendance were treated to a historic and dramatic finish, as Ding Liren's blunder of Rf2 in the final classical game sealed the match for his opponent. As soon as the move reached the board, several were scrambling out of the media room towards the final press conference, and within less than an hour the young Indian challenger - now Champion - was surrounded by an ecstatic crowd chanting his name.

The next day held another signature moment for the event, however, as Ding was handing out autographs shortly before the awards ceremony. He was approached by a young girl with a drawing she made of him to sign, and to this the former Chinese #1 cracked a rare, bright smile and a laugh. Local media ran with the image, and it became emblematic of a sort of miniature era of good feelings that had been created on the island—a friendly match for all the stakes, between gracious gentlemen, without any controversy or fuss.

Time will tell if Singapore hosts another World Championship, or if the organizing committee should make any bids for another international major. They've certainly made a clear case for themselves, and, if they do schedule something, I'll plan on being there.

And if you should find yourself in the vicinity of a World Championship and able to go, it's an opportunity you won't want to miss. Just be sure to ask around, if anyone wants an article about it—it's a great way to earn media credentials and a front-row ticket to the Top of the Chess World, and you might even help out a local journal while you're at it.

Gukesh Dommaraju (2783)—Ding,Liren (2728) [C11]
 WCC Match 2024 Singapore (1), 25.11.2024
[Mark Capron assisted by Stockfish 17]

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♗c3 ♗f6 4.e5 ♗fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♗ce2 ♗c6 7.c3

Transposing to an offbeat Advance French.

7...a5!

Interesting and aggressive. Normal here is 7...♖b6 8.♗f3 f6.

8.♖f3 a4 9.♗e3 ♗e7

The position is equal. To this point we have followed the game Duda,J (2743)—Caruana,F (2823) Chess.com Speed blitz 2020 10.♗d2 0-0 11.h4 b5 12.dxc5 ♖xc5 13.♗xc5 ♗xc5 14.♗ed4 ♗xd4 15.cxd4 ♗e7 16.♖f2 b4 17.♖c1 ♗b6 18.g4 ♗d7 19.♖g3 ♖fc8 20.♗d3 b3 21.a3 ♖xc1 22.♖xc1 ♖c8 23.♖e1 ♗b5 24.♗b1 ♗c7 25.h5 ♗d8 26.♖f2 ♗a5 27.♗e3 ♗a7 28.♖g1 ♗b6 29.f5 ♖c4 30.♖d1 exf5 31.gxf5 ♖c6 32.f6 ♗d7 33.♗g5 1-0.

10.g4 N

Gukesh varies first and plays a move that becomes somewhat of a theme throughout the tournament.

10...♗a5 11.♗g2

11.♗d2 f6 12.♗g2fxe5 13.dxe5 ♗b6 14.♗f2 ♗c4 15.♗c2 0-0 16.0-0 ♗d7 17.h4 ♗e8 18.h5 b5 19.♗g5 ♗xg5 20.fxg5 b4 21.cxb4 ♗xb4 22.♗c3 ♗c6 23.♗g3 ♗b4xe5 24.♗f4 ♗d7 25.h6 gxh6 26.gxh6 ♗b4 27.♗e3 d4 28.♗h4 ♗f7 29.♗f6 ♗xh6 30.♗h4 as in Vnigris,M—Narcisco Dublan,M. Lorca op 13th. December 30, 2024, 1-0, played after this WCC game.

11...a3

Even more aggressive. ♘11...♗b6 [-0.05/36]

12.b3=

Hoping for dxc5. 12.dxc5? axb2 13.♖b1 ♗xa2

12...cxd4 13.b4!

Forcing Black's Queen to retreat, but leaving a hole on c4.

13...♗c7 14.♗exd4 ♗b6

with the idea of ♗d7-b6-c4-b2.

15.0-0=

15.♗b5± [0.38/36] ♗d8 16.♗f1

15...♗c4! 16.♗f2 ♗d7 17.♗e2 ♗xd4 18.♗xd4 ♗b2

Planting a thorn in White's game.

19.♗e3 ♖c8 20.♖ac1 ♗c4! 21.f5 ♗d3

21...♗xa2 22.f6 (22.♖a1 ♗c4=) 22...gxf6 23.exf6= (23.♖a1 ♗c4=)

22.♗e1? [-2.49/27]

Better is 22.g5± [-0.74/34]

22...♗g5!-+ 23.♖c2 ♖c4

23...0-0 may have been stronger.

24.h4 ♗f4 25.♗b1 ♖xc3 26.♖xc3 ♗xc3 27.fxex6 fxe6→ [-0.31/35]

Black mounts an attack. Losing much of the advantage. Black should play 27...♗xe6-+ aiming for ...♗e3. [-2.08/37] 28.♗e2 ♗xe5 29.♗xf4 ♗xf4

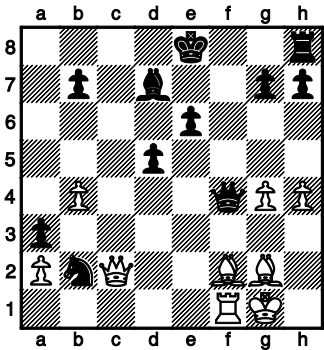
28.♗e2≠

Threatening both Queen and Bishop.

28...♗xe5

28...♗xb4 29.♗xf4 ♗xf4 30.♗c5 ♗xg4 31.♖f2=

29.♗xf4 ♗xf4 30.♗c2? [-2.93/34]

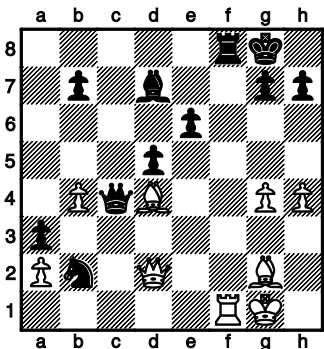


30.♗c5!≠ maintains the slight disadvantage. [-0.60/35] 30...♗xg4 31.♗c2

30...♗c4!-+

There is that square c4 again! Not 30...♗xb4 31.♗c7 0-0 32.♗xd7 ♗xg4 33.♖h2±; And not 30...♗xg4 31.♗c5 ♗c4 32.♗f2=

31.♗d2 0-0 32.♗d4



32...♗d3!

Weaker is 32...♖xf1+ 33.♗xf1 ♗c7 34.♗g5=

33.♗e3 ♖xf1+ 34.♗xf1 e5! 35.♗xe5

♗d4 is the strong threat.

35...♗xg4+ 36.♗g2 -+

♘36.♗g3 [-3.33/40] ♗xb4 37.♗e2

36...♗f5

White must now prevent ...♗e4.

37.♗g3 ♗e4 38.♖h2 h6 39.♗h3 [-10.88/35]

♘39.b5 ♖h8 40.♗d2

39...♗d1 40.♗d6

Black threatens mate.

40...♗c2+ 41.♖g3 ♗xa2 42.♗e6+ ♖h8 0-1

Ding,Liren (2728)—Gukesh, D (2783) [C50] (2), 26.11.2024

1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.d3 ♗f6 5.♗c3 a6 6.a4 d6 7.0-0 h6 8.♗e3 ♗e6 9.a5 ♗xc4 10.dxc4 0-0 11.♗xc5 dxc5 12.b3 ♗xd1 13.♖fxd1 ♖ad8 14.♖dc1 ♗d4 15.♗e1 ♖d6 16.♖f1 g6 17.♖d1 ♖fd8 18.f3 ♖g7 19.♖f2 h5 20.♗e2 ♗c6 21.♗c3 ♗d4 22.♗e2 ♗c6 23.♗c3 ♗d4 1/2-1/2

Gukesh D (2783)—Ding,Liren (2728)

[D35] (3), 27.11.2024

[Mark Capron assisted by Stockfish 17]

1.d4 ♗f6 2.♗f3 d5 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗c3 c6

Queen's Gambit Declined, Exchange Variation.

6.♗c2 g6 7.h3 ♗f5 8.♗b3 ♗b6 9.g4

The position is equal. Here is this g4 move again.

9...♗xb3 10.axb3 ♗c2 11.♗f4 h5 12.♖g1 hxg4 13.hxg4

Up to this point they followed Kramnik,V (2753)—Erigaisi,A (2681) World-chT Rapid Duesseldorf (12), 28.08.2023 which continued 13. ... ♗xb3 14.♗d2 ♗c4 15.♗xc4

dxc4 16.e3 ♗b4 17.♗xc4 b5 18.♗b3 a5 19.♖e2 ♗bd7 20.♗a2 ♗e7 21.♗c1 ♗e4 22.♗c2 ♗g5 23.♗xg5 ♗xg5 24.♗e4 ♖e7 25.♗xc6 ♖ac8 26.♗xd7 ♖xd7 27.♗d3 a4 28.♗c5+ ♖e8 29.b3 axb3 30.♖h1 ♖xh1 31.♖xh1 b2 32.♖d2 f5 33.gxf5 gxf5 34.♖c2 ♖f7 35.♖xb2 f4 36.♗e4 ♗e7 37.♖h7+ ♖e8 38.♖h8+ ♖d7 39.♖xc8 ♖xc8 40.♖c3 fxe3 41.fxe3 ♖c7 42.♗f2 ♖d6 43.e4 ♗f6 44.♗d3 ♗d8 45.♗b4 ♗a5 46.♖b3 ♖d7 47.♗c2 ♗d2 48.d5 ♖d6 49.♗d4 ♖e5 50.♗xb5 ♖xe4 51.♖c4 ♗e3 52.♗d6+ ♖e5 53.♗b7 ♗b6 54.♗c5 ♖d6 55.♗e4+ ♖d7 56.♗c3 ♖d6 57.♗b5+ ♖d7 58.♖d3 ♗c5 59.♖e4 ♗b6 60.♗a3 ♗c5 61.♗c4 ♗f8 62.♗e5+ ♖d6 63.♗g6 ♗g7 64.♗h4 ♗f6 65.♗f5+ ♖d7 66.♖d3 ♗e5 67.♖c4 ♗b8 68.♗d4 ♗e5 69.♗e6 ♗d6 70.♖b5 ♗e7 71.♗d4 ♖d6 72.♖c4 ♖e5 1/2-1/2

13...♗bd7 N 14.♗d2 ♗ ♖g8 15.g5 ♗h5

With the idea of ♗h5-g7-e6.

16.♗h2 ♖h8 17.f3

To protect the e4 square.

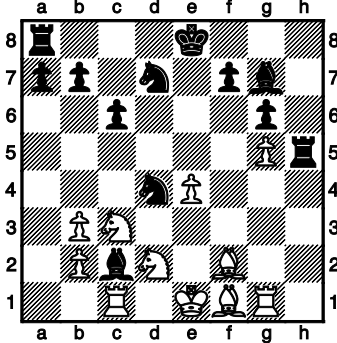
17...d7g7 18.dg3 h5

18...e7=

19.e4!± dx4

19...e6±

20.fx4± e6 21.c1! dxd4 22.f2 dg7



23.e2! dxb3

23...xe2? 24.xe2 d3 25.dxd3+-

24.xc2 dxd2 25.dxd2 e5

Strong threats of ...d8+.

26.d4 d8

Hoping for ...f3+.

27.e2

Inhibits f3.

27...h2

And now ...Rxd4 would be advantageous.

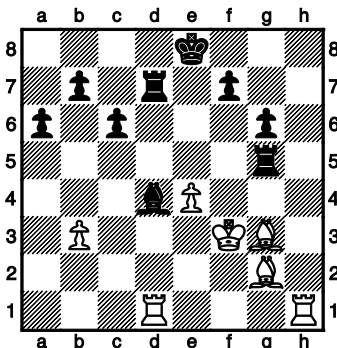
28.dg2 a6 29.b3 d7 30.c1 e7 31.cd1 e8 32.dg3 h5 33.f3 dxf3 [2.57/306]

33...xd1 was called for. 34.xd1 d7

34.f3+-

Don't play 34.dxf3?! dxg5 35.xd7 dx7±

34...d4 35.h1 dxg5



[4.22/26]

35...hx1 [2.29/28] 36.hx1 (36.hx1 d3+-) 36...d3

36.dh3! f5

36...dxg3+ [4.37/31] 37.dg3 d8

37.d4 h5 1-0

Ding,Liren (2728)—Gukesh,D (2783) [A06] (4), 29.11.2024

1.f3 d5 2.e3 f6 3.b3 f5 4.e2 h6 5.a3 d7 6.0-0 e6 7.f8 d8 8.c4 d8 9.d3 0-0 10.cxd5 exd5 11.b4 c6 12.d4 h7 13.b3 e5 14.a4 c8 15.a5 b6 16.f3 dxf3+ 17.f3 d4 18.e2 dxe3 19.dxe3 e4 20.f1 e7 21.dxe4 dxe4 22.axb6 axb6 23.d3 fd8 24.dxe4 dx4 25.h3 c5 26.d8+ dx8 27.bxc5 bxc5 28.c1 e5 29.c2 d5 30.g3 f5 31.g2 h7 32.c4 d6 33.e4 e5 34.exf5 fx5 35.e4 d5 36.d5 dx5 37.f3 f3 38.e4 d4+ 39.e3 e5 40.e4 d4+ 41.e3 d5 42.e4 d4+ 1/2-1/2

Gukesh,D (2783)—Ding,Liren (2728) [B22] (5), 30.11.2024

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.f3 f6 5.d3 c5 6.c3 c4 7.c2 d6 8.e2+ e7 9.xe7+ e7 10.0-0 e8 11.e1+ f8 12.xe8+ e8 13.d5 d7 14.d2 h6 15.h4 h5 16.e1+ f8 17.g4 f4 18.d3 d6 19.g5 hxg5 20.dg5 d7 21.f3 e8 22.e5 e5 23.dxe5 d3 24.d3 cx3 25.f3 d4 26.dxc4 dxc4 27.e4 d6 28.d4 d3 29.f2 d6 30.xc4 d8 31.d4 d4 32.cxd4 d5 33.b3 e7 34.e3 e6 35.d3 g6 36.c3 a6 37.d3 f5 38.e3 e6 39.d3 f5 40.e3 e6 1/2-1/2

Ding,Liren (2728)—Gukesh,D (2783) [D02] (6), 01.12.2024

1.d4 f6 2.d4 d5 3.e3 e6 4.f3 c5 5.c3 d6 6.b5+ d6 7.dxc6+ bxc6 8.d6 dx6 9.a4 0-0 10.a3 e4 11.f2 e5 12.dxe4 dxe4 13.dxc5 dg6 14.d2 dxg2 15.0-0 dx2 16.dxe5 h8 17.d4 e6 18.d2 f3 19.e1 dxc4 20.dxc4 f5 21.dxc6 dx5 22.d5 e7 23.d6 g5 24.d5 e7 25.d6 g5 26.d5 h4 27.ed1 g6 28.e5 h8 29.dg3 h5 30.f4 a5 31.a3 b5 32.d4 e2 33.d1d2 f3 34.c2 dxf4 35.exf4 f5 36.h4 e3 37.e2 e7 38.d3 f8 39.h5 gxh5 40.d5 h4 41.f5 d7+ 42.c2 g7 43.dg2+ h8 44.e2 g7 45.dg2+ h8 46.e2 g7 1/2-1/2

Gukesh,D (2783)—Ding,Liren (2728) [D78] (7), 03.12.2024

1.f3 d5 2.g3 g6 3.d4 dg7 4.c4 c6 5.dg2 f6 6.0-0 0-0 7.e1 dxc4 8.e4 dg4 9.d2 c5 10.d5 e6 11.h3 d3 12.d3 exd5 13.exd5 d7 14.dxc4 b5 15.d3 b6 16.d4 f8 17.d2 d8 18.d2 f8 19.b4 c4 20.d3 a6 21.d4 dx1+ 22.d1 dx1+ 23.a1 b3 24.a3 b1+ 25.g2 d7 26.a5 b3 27.a3 b1 28.a5 b3 29.d5 b3 30.f4 dx2 31.d6 f5 32.dxf5 gx5 33.dg7 dg7 34.c5 dg6 35.dxc4 e5 36.d4 d6 37.f4 e7 38.b5 f6 39.d4 h6 40.f1 e5 41.h4 dx5 42.h6 d3 43.c6 e4 44.e1 f6 45.h4 d3 46.d1 f4 47.gxf4+ e4 48.d2 d5 49.c4 f5 50.d4 f3 51.d1+ g2 52.b3

e5 53.f4 e7 54.e3 h7 55.h5 f6 56.e5 dx5 57.d5 dg3 58.f8 b7 59.a4 f3 60.f5 f4 61.f6 e4 62.d2 d6 63.d8 e5 64.d3 f7 65.d5+ e6 66.d2 b6 67.d4 d6 68.c3 dx5 69.d5 d6 70.b4 dx5 71.d5 a6+ 72.d6 1/2-1/2

Ding,Liren (2728)—Gukesh,D (2783) [A21] (8), 04.12.2024

1.c4 e5 2.d3 d4 3.d5 e7 4.f3 d6 5.g3 c6 6.dxe7 dxe7 7.dg2 f6 8.0-0 e6 9.b3 d5 10.d3 0-0 11.c1 a5 12.e1 e8 13.f4 exf4 14.f4 dxc4 15.bxc4 dg6 16.e4 d6 17.d2 c7 18.d4 f7 19.d3 e5 20.f3 d7 21.dxe8+ dx8 22.b1 b5 23.cxb5 b6+ 24.f1 cxb5 25.d2 xa2 26.d4 dxc5 27.c1 d3 28.e1 e6 29.f2 c8 30.d3 c7 31.d4 f7 32.d6 dx6 33.dxc6 dx6 34.dxc5 h6 35.e1 b4 36.d4 e5 37.d2 g2 38.f2 d5 39.d4 g2 40.f2 d5 41.d4 a2+ 42.c2 e6 43.d8+ h7 44.d5 b3 45.c1 d5 46.d4 g2 47.d4+ dx4 48.dxc4 b2 49.b1 d2 50.d2 dx4+ 51.c3 dx2 1/2-1/2

Gukesh,D (2783)—Ding,Liren (2728) [E11] (9), 05.12.2024

1.d4 f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d4+ 4.d2 e7 5.dg2 d5 6.f3 0-0 7.0-0 c6 8.c2 d7 9.d1 b6 10.d3 b7 11.d2 d7 12.d1 fd8 13.b4 c5 14.bxc5 bxc5 15.b2 d6 16.a5 dxc4 17.dxc4 d3 18.dxb6 axb6 19.d3 a6 20.d5 xa2 21.dxb6 a7 22.b1 b8 23.dxc5 a6 24.d5 dxc5 25.dxc5 dx6 26.dxb6 axb6 27.c6 dx6 28.dxc6 g5 29.g2 b2 30.f1 g7 31.h3 h5 32.a1 c2 33.d5 c5 34.d3 d7 35.f4 gx4 36.gxf4 c3 37.f2 d5 38.e3 dx3 39.exd3 c2 40.f3 d2 41.a3 g6 42.b3 f6 43.a3 f5 44.a5+ e5 45.fxe5 dx3+ 46.e2 dx3 47.exf6+ e6 48.f2 h4 49.g2 dg3+ 50.h2 g6 51.b5 dg5 52.d5+ dx5 53.h3 f6 54.d4 1/2-1/2

Ding,Liren (2728)—Gukesh,D (2783) [D37] (10), 07.12.2024

1.d4 f6 2.f3 d5 3.d4 e6 4.e3 c5 5.d2 d6 6.dxc5 dxc5 7.c4 0-0 8.0-0 e6 9.c3 dxc4 10.dxc4 h5 11.d5 e7 12.e4 f6 13.dxf6+ d6 14.d8 dx8 15.d6 gx6 16.f1 d7 17.d1 e8 18.d8 dx8 19.f1 g7 20.a3 f5 21.e1 f6 22.d2 e7 23.g3 c8 24.dxc8 dx8 25.d2 d6 26.d4 dxc4 27.dxc4 d6 28.f4 b6 29.d2 e7 30.c3 d6 31.b4 f6 32.d4 h6 33.d3 d7 34.d4 d6 35.d3 d7 36.d4 d6 1/2-1/2

Gukesh,D (2783)—Ding,Liren (2728) [A09] (11), 08.12.2024

[Mark Capron assisted by Stockfish 17]

1.f3 d5 2.c4 d4 3.b4 c5 4.e3 f6 5.a3 dg4

3...d6

6.exd4= cxd4 7.h3 d3 8.d3

White has an edge.

8...c7 9.d3 a5 10.b5 d7 11.g3! d3 12.dg2 f7 13.0-0! e5 14.f4 d8

14. ...b8 would be better.

15.♠d1 [-0.91/41]

Better was 15.♠d2=

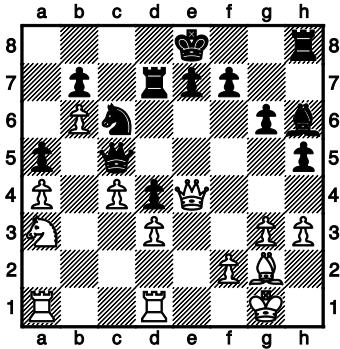
15...g6=

15...e6≠ Threatens to win with ...♠d6.
[-0.91/41] 16.♠d2 ♠d6

16.a4

Black must now prevent ♠a3.

16...h5 17.b6 ♗d6 18.♠a3 ♠h6 19.♠xc5
♗xc5 20.♗e4 ♠c6 21.♠a3 ♠d7



21...0-0!=

22.♠c2

White should try 22.♗e2!±

22...♗xb6± 23.♠ab1↑

23...♗c7 24.♠b5

White has compensation.

24...0-0! 25.♠a1=

25.♠db1± ♠b8 26.♗e1

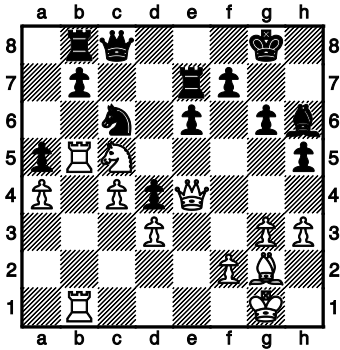
25...♠b8 26.♠b3 26...e6?

26...♠d6= and Black has nothing to worry about.

27.♠c5+- 27...♠e7 28.♠db1

Losing some of the advantage. Better was
28.♠xb7+- ♠xb7 29.♗xc6 ♗xc6 30.♠xc6

28...♗c8



28...f5? 29.♗h4 ♗f7 30.♠xb7+-; 28...♠b4!±

29.♗xc6!! 1-0

Ding,Liren (2728)—Gukesh D (2783)
[A13] (12), 09.12.2024
[Mark Capron assisted by Stockfish 17]

1.c4 e6 2.g3 d5 (English Opening) 3.♠g2
♠f6 4.♠f3 d4 5.0-0 ♠c6 6.e3 ♠e7 7.d3 dxe3
8.♠xe3

Aiming for d4. The position is equal.

8...e5 9.♠c3 0-0 10.♠e1 h6 N

10. ... ♠e6; 10. ... e5; and 10. ... ♠g4 have all
been tried here before.

11.a3 a5

Playing to stop b4

12.h3 ♠e6 13.♗h2 ♠b8 14.♗c2 ♠e8 15.♠b5
♠f5 16.♠ad1 ♠d7

16...♠f8=

17.♗d2± ♠g6 18.d4

Prevents ♠c5.

18...e4 19.♠g1 19...♠b6

♠19...♠f8±

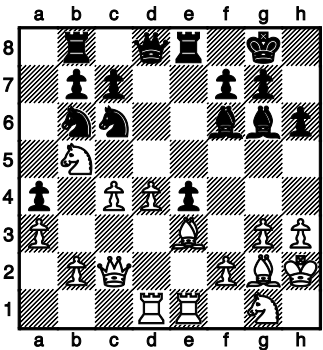
20.Qc3

White should try 20.♠f1.

20...♠f6±

20...f5±

21.♗c2 a4±



21...♗d7± keeps fighting.

22.♠e2!+-

And now ♠f4 would be very advanta-
geous.

22...♠g5+-

♠22...♠a5

23.♠f4! ♠xf4 24.♠xf4 ♠c8

24...e3? 25.♗c3 exf2 26.♠f1+- (26.♠xe8+
♗xe8 27.d5 ♗e2+-)

25.♗c3

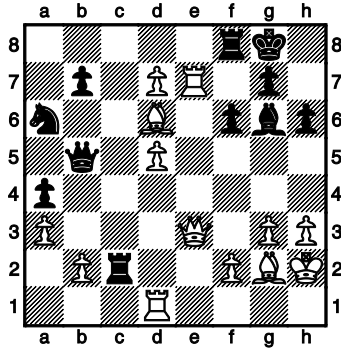
Against ♠a5

25...♠b8 26.d5

♗d7+-

♠26...♠a6± 27.♗d4 ♠h5

27.d6 c5 28.♠c7 ♠f8 29.♠xe4 ♠c6 30.♠g2
♠cd8 31.♠d5 ♠xd5 32.cxd5 ♠b8 33.♗xc5
♠c8 34.♗d4 ♠a6 35.♠e7 ♗b5 36.d7 ♠c4
37.♗e3 ♠c2 38.♠d6 f6



39.♠xg7+!! 1-0

Gukesh D (2783)—Ding,Liren (2728)
[C11] (13), 11.12.2024

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♠c3 ♠f6 4.e5 ♠fd7 5.♠ce2
c5 6.c3 ♠c6 7.a3 ♠e7 8.♠e3 ♠b6 9.♠f4 cxd4
10.cxd4 ♠c4 11.♠xc4 dxc4 12.♠ge2 b5 13.0-
0 14.♠c3 ♠b8 15.♠h5 f5 16.exf6 ♠xf6
17.♗f3 ♗e8 18.♠xf6+ ♠xf6 19.♗e2 ♗g6
20.f3 ♠f8 21.♠ad1 ♠e7 22.♠f4 ♠b6 23.♠c7
♠b7 24.♠d6 ♠e8 25.♠xe7 ♠exe7 26.♗e5 a6
27.d5 exd5 28.♗xd5+ ♗e6 29.♗c5 ♠e8
30.♠de1 ♗f7 31.♠e4 ♠f8 32.♠d6 ♠c7
33.♗e5 ♗f6 34.♗d5+ ♗h8 35.♠e5 ♠e7
36.♠fe1 ♠xe5 37.♠xe5 h6 38.♗c5 ♠d7
39.♠e4 ♠f4 40.♠e7 ♠f5 41.♗d4 ♠g8 42.h3
♗c1+ 43.♗f2 ♠xe4 44.♠xe4 c3 45.bxc3
♗xa3 46.♗g3 ♗b3 47.♠e7 a5 48.♠b7 ♗c4
49.♗e5 ♗c6 50.♗xb5 ♗xc3 51.♠a7 ♗e1+
52.♗h2 ♗b4 53.♗xb4 axb4 54.♠b7 ♠a8
55.♠xb4 ♠a2 56.♗g3 ♗h7 57.♠b5 ♗g6 58.f4
♗f6 59.♗f3 ♠c2 60.g3 ♠c3+ 61.♗g4 ♠a3
62.h4 ♠c3 63.♠b6+ ♗f7 64.f5 h5+ 65.♗f4
♠c4+ 66.♗f3 ♠c3+ 67.♗f4 ♠c4+ 68.♗f3
♠c3+ 1/2-1/2

Ding,Liren (2728) - Gukesh D (2783)
[D02] (14), 12.12.2024

[Mark Capron assisted by Stockfish 17]

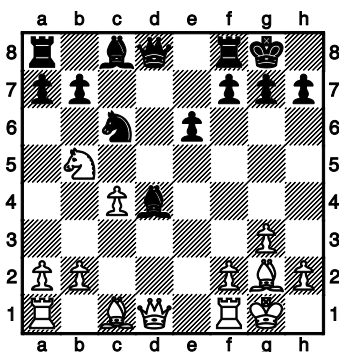
1.♠f3 d5 2.g3 c5 3.♠g2 ♠c6 4.d4 (Queen's
Pawn Game) e6 5.0-0 cxd4 6.♠xd4 ♠ge7
7.c4 ♠xd4!

Don't play 7...dxc4 8.♠b5 ♠f5 9.♗xd8+
♗xd8 10.♠d1+ ♠d7 11.♠1a3±

8.♗xd4 ♠c6!

White is slightly better.

9.♟d1 d4 10.e3 ♘c5 11.exd4 ♘xd4 12.♞c3 0-0 13.♞b5



♘xc6 is the strong threat.

13...♞b6

13...e5=

14.b3

14.♟e2± is more appropriate.

14...a6= 15.♞c3

Black should prevent ♘a3.

15...♞d4 16.♞b2 e5

Keeping an eye on f4.

17.♟d2 ♘e6 18.♞d5 b5 19.cxb5

19.♞xd4 is more complex. 19...♞xd4 20.f4 bxc4 21.bxc4 ♞c8 22.♞ac1

19...axb5 20.♞f4 exf4 21.♞xc6 ♞xb2 22.♟xb2

Aiming for ♞fd1.

22...♞b8 23.♞fd1 ♟b6 24.♞f3 fxg3 25.hxg3 b4 26.a4

With the strong threat of a5.

26...bxa3 27.♞xa3 g6 28.♟d4 ♟b5

28...♞xb3?! 29.♟xb6 ♞xb6 30.♞b1 ♣

29.b4 ♟xb4 30.♟xb4 ♞xb4 31.♞a8 ♞xa8 32.♞xa8

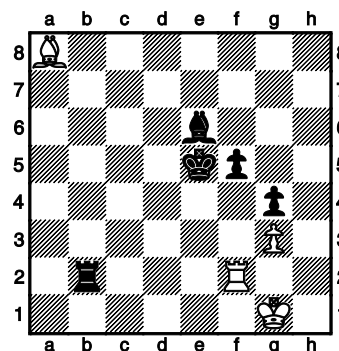
We have reached a theoretically drawn endgame KRB-KRB

32...g5 33.♞d5 ♞f5 34.♞c1 ♟g7 35.♞c7 ♞g6 36.♞c4 ♞b1+ 37.♟g2 ♞e1 38.♞b4 h5 39.♞a4 ♞e5 40.♞f3 ♟h6 41.♟g1 ♞e6 42.♞c4 g4 43.♞d5 ♞d6 44.♞b7 ♟g5 45.f3 f5 46.fxg4 hxg4

Of course not 46...fxg4 47.♞e4 ♣

47.♞b4 ♞f7 48.♟f2 ♞d2+ 49.♟g1 ♟f6 50.♞b6+ ♟g5 51.♞b4 ♞e6 52.♞a4 ♞b2 53.♞a8 ♟f6 54.♞f4 ♟e5 55.♞f2?

An unbelievable mistake! As soon as Ding realized what he had done he put his head down. Gukesh couldn't believe his eyes! Allowing the exchange of the rook and the bishop. Throwing away the game and the World Championship in an amateur slip up. After the piece exchanges, the 2-1 pawn advantage is winning.



55.♞a4=

55...♞xf2!

Black mates.

56.♟xf2 ♞d5 57.♞xd5 ♟xd5 58.♟e3 ♟e5

0-1

And Gukesh is the youngest World Champion ever!



Nathan Smolensky seated in the blue polo on the left, playing games in the Fan Zone. Photo credit to Matthew Griffin of the Saturday Paper (AUS)

GM Dr. Robert Hübner Passes

By Mark Capron



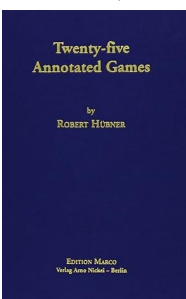
On January 5, 2025 Dr. Robert Hübner (born November 6, 1948) passed away at the age of 76 due to complications from stomach cancer.

When I was young, I looked forward to receiving each Informant when they came out. I would immediately look at the cross tables and see how various players did in the selection of tournaments. Dr. Robert Hübner was one of those players I followed closely. As the Cold War was still happening, he represented the “free world” and how he did compared to the “USSR” was a big deal.

Dr. Hübner was a scholar and chess player. Chess was always second for him though. His first love was philology (the study of literature or to language as used in literature) and specializing in papyrology (the study of manuscripts of ancient literature, correspondence, etc., preserved from antiquity). He spoke or could understand more than a dozen languages. In a 1996 *New in Chess* interview he stated “The study of philology is an attempt to approach man, to get a grasp on the subjective side of life. Man tries to depict reality through language. This is why language is of great importance.”

Hübner received his IM title in 1969 and his GM title in 1971. He reached number three in the world in July 1981 behind Karpov and Korchnoi.

His approach to the game was summed up in his protest statement to the anti-doping tests introduced into chess, “I am always happy if my opponent’s abilities can fully unfold, because then I learn more.” Playing wasn’t his favorite aspect of chess though, analysis was, “Long analyses are an attempt to improve the game in hindsight, to transform the imperfect piece of work that is a game of chess into something closer to perfection.” His only book, a 400-page monstrosity, contains only 25 annotated games!



Hübner had a chance to play in four Candidates Tournaments.

The first one in Seville 1971 against Tigran Petrosian. As the match progressed Hübner complained to Golombek, who was the arbiter, about the noise level in the playing room and asked for a change of room. Ambient noise flowed in from the road outside the venue and from the spectators within. Petrosian was hard of hearing, so the outside noise had no effect on him. Despite Hübner’s request to play in another room, Petrosian refused to move. In the next game Hübner lost concentration and a piece then forfeited the match. His statement later was “In the 7th game the noise once again arose after one and a half hours of play, during the rush-hour in Seville. I informed Mr. Golombek that I was disturbed, but he took no

action. With the advantage of hindsight I think now that I should have stopped play at this point and refused to play on in the match unless the room were changed. But at this stage my position was very advantageous, so I was unable to resolve on this course. Because of the noise I consumed more time than usual and on move 39 I blundered away a piece in a drawn position.” The German Chess Federation sent a protest on behalf of Hübner to FIDE but it wasn’t upheld.

The second match was against Viktor Korchnoi in 1981. Hübner led by one point after six games. He simply withdrew at that point. The only explanation presented was “I found myself exposed to additional outside pressure. I didn’t feel able to play chess with the commitment and level I demand of myself.” From an interview for *Der Spiegel*.

The third match was in 1983 against Vasily Smyslov. After ten games and four tiebreak games the match was still tied. At this point the regulations stipulated that a roulette wheel would be used to break the tie. At Casino Velden match arbiter Willy Kaufmann and Smyslov readied to spin the wheel. Hübner refused to attend. If black, Hübner won. If red Smyslov won. The first ball landed on zero! No winner. The only thing that could be done was spin it again. This time it landed on red and Hübner lost.

Hübner’s last attempt was in 1991 against Jan Timman. Hübner lost 4½-2½. There were no odd circumstances.

Hübner impacted the chess world and this player in his formative years. Thank you Doctor!

Hübner, Robert (2600) - Korchnoi, Viktor (2695) [B19]

Candidates Final +3–2=3 Merano (1), 20.12.1980

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♖c3 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♘f5 5.♗g3 ♗g6 6.h4 h6 7.♗f3 ♗d7 8.h5 ♗h7 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♙xd3 ♙c7 11.♗d2 ♗gf6 12.0–0–0 e6 13.♗e4 ♗e7 14.♙b1 c5 15.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 16.dxc5 ♗xc5 17.♙e2 0–0 18.♗e5 ♗fd8 19.f4 ♗ac8 20.g4 ♗b6 21.♗c1 ♗d7 22.♗xd7 ♗xd7 23.g5 ♗xd1 24.♗xd1 ♙c4 25.♗d3 hxg5 26.fxg5 e5 27.g6 fxg6 28.hxg6 ♗c6 29.♙g2 e4 30.♗g3 ♗f6 31.♗g4 ♙e6 32.♗xe4 ♗xg6 33.♙e2 ♙h3 34.♙c4+ ♗f8 35.b3 ♗c6 36.♗a3+ 1–0

Hübner, Robert (2615) - Kasparov, Garry (2780) [E69]

Dortmund Dortmund (6), 1992

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 g6 3.g3 ♗g7 4.♗g2 0–0 5.♗c3 d6 6.♗f3 ♗bd7 7.0–0 e5 8.e4 c6 9.h3 ♙b6 10.c5 dxc5 11.dxe5 ♗e8 12.♗a4 ♙a6 13.♗g5 b5 14.♗c3 ♗c7 15.♗e7 ♗e8 16.♗d6 ♗e6 17.a4 b4 18.♗e2 ♙a5 19.♗d2 ♗a6 20.f4 c4 21.♙h2 ♗ad8 22.♙c2 ♗b6 23.♗fd1 ♗f8 24.♗f3 c3 25.♗ed4 ♗xd4 26.♗xd4 cxb2 27.♙xb2 ♗c4 28.♙b3 ♙b6 29.a5 ♙b7 30.♗xf8 ♙xf8 31.e6 c5 32.e5 ♙c7 33.exf7 ♙xf7 34.♗c6 ♗xd1 35.♗xd1 ♗xe5 36.♗d5 ♗c4 37.♙c2 ♗g4+ 38.hxg4 ♗e2+ 39.♙xe2 ♗xe2 40.♗xf7 ♗xd1 41.♗c4 b3 42.♗xa7 b2 43.♗a2 ♗e2 44.♙g2 ♗d3 45.♙f3 ♙e7 46.♙e3 b1♙ 47.♗xb1 ♗xb1 48.♗b5 ♙d7 49.a6 ♙c6 50.f5 1–0

First Encounter: The 2024 FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship on Wall Street



Story and Photos by Patricio Robayo

On a cold, windy December morning, I stood outside the Cipriani on Wall Street, ready to watch and cover the 2024 FIDE World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championship. For the first time in history, this tournament came to New York City.

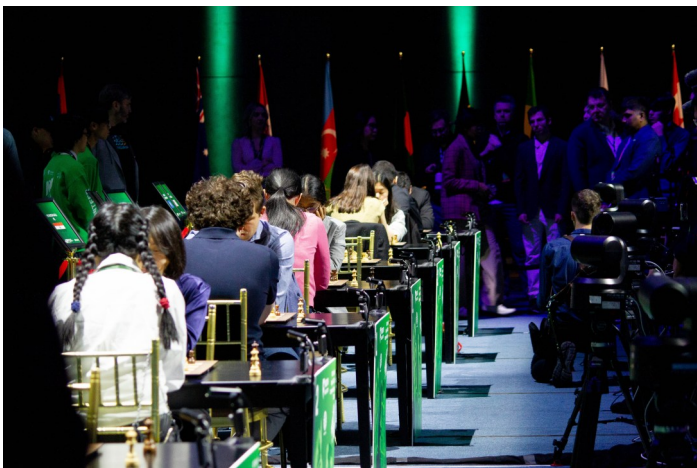
For me—both a fan and journalist, as well as an adult improver—this felt like a personal milestone.

I had never been to a live chess tournament of this size before. Usually, I'd watch games online or read about them. Walking into the grand venue, I was overwhelmed by the atmosphere. I was about to be in the presence of some of the best players in the world.



On the Board

The tournament lasted six days, split between the Rapid and Blitz formats. Volodar Murzin, an 18-year-old prodigy, shocked the chess world by winning the Open Rapid competition, becoming the second-youngest champion ever.



Meanwhile, Humpy Koneru claimed her second Rapid title in the Women's section, a triumph that added to her already impressive career.

Off the board, there was drama too. Magnus Carlsen made headlines for wearing jeans, breaking FIDE's dress code. After being fined, he withdrew from the Rapid competition, only to return for the Blitz. This decision stirred plenty of debate, especially on social media platforms like Reddit, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter). In my world, that's where most of the chess discourse happens.



The Blitz

The Blitz section, played with just three minutes per player and a two-second increment, brought its own excitement. Watching the fast-paced games unfold on the board was thrilling, especially with the stakes so high.

The knockout stage was particularly intense. It ended in a final showdown between Carlsen and Ian Nepomniachtchi. After a series of tied games, the two players decided to share the gold medal. It was a rare and debated decision. Some fans thought it was a fitting outcome, given how evenly matched the players were. Others felt it went against the spirit of competition. The long day and it being New Year's Eve might have influenced the competitor's decision.

Ju Wenjun's victory in the Women's Blitz was another highlight. Her commanding performance against Lei Tingjie in the final was a reminder of the incredible depth of talent in the Women's competition.



A Lasting Impression

What struck me most was the sense of community. Fans of all ages packed the hall. Kids collected autographs, while adults debated strategies and analyzed games. It felt amazing to be surrounded by people who understood and loved the game as much as I did.

During an off-day of the chess tournament, I decided to sit down at one of the tables to play a casual game. While the other participants who had paid significant sums were engaging in matches against chess legends like Magnus Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana, I enjoyed the experience of feeling the smooth texture of the wooden board and pieces. It was humbling to play at a table that had hosted some

of the world's greatest chess masters the previous day—and would again the following day.



The tournament wrapped up on New Year's Eve, adding a festive note to an already memorable experience. As I left the Cipriani that night, I felt a deep appreciation for the game and the players who dedicate their lives to it.

Reflecting on the event, it's clear that it was historic for many reasons. Murzin's meteoric rise, Koneru's continued excellence, and the unprecedented, shared title between Carlsen and Nepomniachtchi all stood out as defining moments.

It's an experience I'll carry with me, and I'm already looking forward to the next opportunity to watch the world's best players compete. Until then, I'll keep playing and learning.



The top players in the Open Rapid and Women's Rapid followed by the knockout stage of the Blitz finals.

#	Player	Rating	Score
1	Murzin, Volodar	2588	10
2	Grischuk, Alexander	2675	9,5
3	Nepomniachtchi, Ian	2758	9,5
4	Dominguez Perez, Leinier	2699	9
5	Erigaisi, Arjun	2694	9
6	Sindarov, Javokhir	2655	9
7	Firouzja, Alireza	2756	9
8	Dubov, Daniil	2677	9
9	Grigoryan, Karen H.	2622	9
10	Sevian, Samuel	2614	8,5
11	Giri, Anish	2678	8,5
12	Muradli, Mahammad	2464	8,5
13	Yu, Yangyi	2698	8,5
14	Mamedyarov, Shakhriyar	2711	8,5
15	Caruana, Fabiano	2766	8,5
16	Robson, Ray	2645	8,5
17	Praggnanandhaa, R	2688	8,5
18	Bortnyk, Olexandr	2642	8,5
19	Wei, Yi	2760	8,5
20	Niemann, Hans Moke	2618	8,5
21	Salem, A.R. Saleh	2647	8,5

#	Title	Player	Rating	Score
1	GM	Koneru, Humpy	2431	8,5
2	GM	Ju, Wenjun	2536	8.0
3	GM	Lagno, Kateryna	2433	8.0
4	GM	Tan, Zhongyi	2502	8.0
5	GM	Dronavalli, Harika	2416	8.0
6	GM	Kosteniuk, Alexandra	2486	8.0
7	WIM	Khamdamova, Afruza	2188	8.0
8	IM	Assaubayeva, Bibisara	2444	7,5
9	IM	Sukandar, Irine Kharisma	2354	7,5
10	IM	Tsolakidou, Stavroula	2381	7,5
11	IM	Cori T., Deysi	2243	7,5
12	GM	Muzychuk, Mariya	2422	7,5
13	WGM	Munkhzul, Turmunkh	2333	7.0
14	GM	Paehzt, Elisabeth	2406	7.0
15	IM	Wagner, Dinara	2307	7.0
16	IM	Kamalidenova, Meruert	2368	7.0
17	GM	Muzychuk, Anna	2408	7.0
18	GM	Zhu, Jiner	2449	7.0
19	GM	Zhao, Xue	2433	7.0
20	WGM	Huang, Qian	2399	7.0
21	IM	Divya, Deshmukh	2393	7.0

1	Ian Nepomniachtchi	2½				
8	Volodar Murzin	½		Ian Nepomniachtchi	3	
5	Alireza Firouzja	1		Wesley So	2	
4	Wesley So	3				
3	Magnus Carlsen	2½			Ian Nepomniachtchi	3½
6	Hans Niemann	1½			Magnus Carlsen	3½
7	Jan-Krzysztof Duda	2½		Magnus Carlsen	3	
2	Fabiano Caruana	½		Jan-Krzysztof Duda	0	
1	Vaishali Rameshbabu	2½				
8	Zhu Jiner	1½		Vaishali Rameshbabu	½	
5	Ju Wenjun	2½		Ju Wenjun	2½	
4	Valentina Gunina	½			Ju Wenjun	3½
3	Kateryna Lagno	2½			Lei Tingjie	2½
6	Carissa Yip	1½		Kateryna Lagno	2½	
7	Bibisara Assaubayeva	1½		Lei Tingjie	3½	
2	Lei Tingjie	2½				

*In the **Limelight**:* Charles Hertan

Interview by Mark Capron



What do you do for a living? According to Wikipedia, you are a numismatist (Abraham Lincoln said everything is true on the internet :)). Is this something that you still do? What has been the rarest coin you have found?

Yes, I have been a professional numismatist since 1990 and spent 15 years working as a mental health clinician, which helped to inform my opinions and research about Paul Morphy's psychological problems. The rarest coin I have ever owned would be hard to say; I now own an obsolete bank note of which only six are known, but surprisingly it is worth under \$1000! I have sold many coins in the \$10,000-\$20,000 range and a few higher, but this is not that unusual in the numismatic community.

Wikipedia says that you enjoy wildlife photography. Do you have a favorite you would be willing to share?

I was seriously into landscape photography for several years. There are lots of woodland trails where I live in western Massachusetts and I was an avid hiker. I did a lot of gallery shows but these days my creative energy goes into writing.

Thank you for sending me several of your photos. They are amazing. I am selecting three to share here.

View from Long Mountain



Daniel Shay's Horse Caves



Hadley Field



I especially like this last one. I have always been partial to the mists and fog in photographs.

When did you begin playing chess. And who taught you?

I learned the rules at age 11, but quickly got serious a year later when I became close friends with Stephen Feinberg (just appointed Deputy Secretary of Defense by the President-elect!). Steve was a very gifted junior who made master at age 13—a very rare achievement at that time. He was active in the local chess club where we lived in Rockland County, NY. Soon we were attending all the tournaments we could in New York City—with no adult supervision! It was great fun, and I quickly improved, although I didn't make master until my late teens.

You recently wrote a great new book on Paul Morphy, *The Real Paul Morphy*. What were you working on that

led you to Morphy? And what eventually made you decide it would make a good book?

Originally, I was planning a book on the top 5-10 American chess players of all time. Then I really got swept up by Morphy's incredible play and unique story. As I did more research, I realized that no one had ever stitched together a compelling biography of Morphy which placed his important games in the context of his life events—giving equal weight to the man and his art.

The research in *The Real Paul Morphy* is excellent. There are lots of references and quotes from historical documents. How were you able to find and physically see these documents? Any good stories on the search process or how you stumbled onto anything?

All the research was done from books and the internet. Fortunately, there is a large body of source documents, letters, newspaper articles and other materials available through these routes. It is hard to wrap our heads around how famous Morphy was both in the US and abroad during his meteoric career, so much so that contemporary sources remain to be uncovered. To find something new I had to go beyond traditional chess research into topics such as New Orleans history, the Civil War and American slavery. Since I am quite a devotee of history books and memoirs, this search was very enjoyable. Probably my favorite discovery was the connection between Morphy's grandfathers and notorious Caribbean pirates! This was only vaguely alluded to by past authors, but I was able to corroborate these anecdotes with some more in-depth study.

The pirate connection was definitely a surprise when I read the book.

What is your personal chess library like and were you able to use it to help write *The Real Paul Morphy* or did you need to spend a lot of time at places like the White Collection in Ohio? What other places did you visit?

Like many people these days I collect less books than I used to, since they are so replaceable, although I will always prefer the look and feel of a good book to reading online. I only had a few Morphy books when I began, so I went on a buying spree. Research is the key to good non-fiction writing, so before I start, I buy everything I can related to the topic and add to that list as I go along. As the book starts to take shape you fill in the gaps. Believe it or not this was all done from home.

Which sources did you find the most intriguing?

As for Morphy sources, the memoir by family friend Leona Queyrouze adds a lot of depth to our knowledge about his childhood. I was very lucky to have *New In Chess* maga-

zine editor, Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam, as my editor for this project. He is a Morphy specialist, and not only pointed me to Queyrouze, but contributed photos from his private collection and that of world-class Morphyana collector, David DeLucia. Among the non-chess sources, I really like Neil Sublette's [The World That Made New Orleans: From Spanish Silver to Congo Square](#).

I found your annotations to be very easy to read and understand. I especially liked how you wove things together and your use of colloquialisms. Is this just something that came natural or how did you develop this writing skill?

Thank you. I am very dedicated to the craft of writing; and I am a perfectionist, editing a manuscript many times until I get it just right. Good writing should be very natural and easy to read; but it takes a lot of hard work to achieve that ease. I have great respect for Dutch chess author, Willy Hendriks, because his prose flows so smoothly. I also conform to his preference for a light hand on annotations. These days with the availability of incredibly strong engines, it doesn't make sense to go too deep into the weeds with analysis. The reader can do that on his own, but what the author can offer is a framework for better understanding the logic of the positions in human terms.

Any specific reason you decided on Fritz 18 as the computer program to partner up with on the analysis and annotations?

I thought a 3300 rated engine would be plenty strong to convey the key points of the game, but I have since changed my mind. The book is now in its second printing, and when the 3rd printing comes out, likely in 2025, it will probably be updated with SF17 analysis. The first edition out now may become highly collectible—almost all the hardcover Morphy books I had to buy cost \$150+ in the aftermarket!

Would you elaborate a bit more on changing your mind about the chess engine?

I have been corresponding with AI legend GM Larry Kaufman, who helped me understand the quantum leap from engines like Stockfish which use a version of neural networks, to the older programs that don't. I will leave it at that for now...more to come.

I recently did a review on a book about Gideon Stahlberg and that author had spent ten years working on it. How long did it take for you to complete *The Real Paul Morphy*?

Four years. I started during the Covid pandemic. I was quite relieved when the first café in my area reopened, since I prefer to do all my writing in cafes!

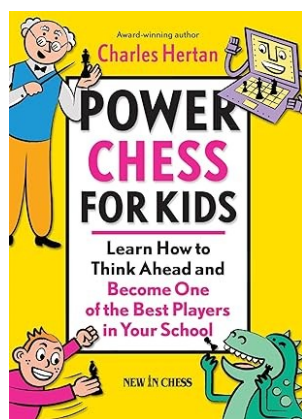
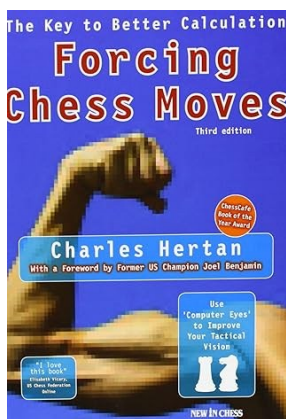
The Real Paul Morphy is the seventh book you have written in the chess world, if I am not mistaken. Which book gave you the most pleasure writing and why?

This book was the most fun to write, since it allowed me to indulge in my love of history and biography and do some very interesting research. I also knew that if done well, it would attract very strong interest. I am being contacted and friended by Morphy lovers around the world—his appeal is timeless.

The Real Paul Morphy	NIC	2024
Strike Like Judit!: The Winning Tactics of Chess Legend Judit Polgar	NIC	2018
Start Playing Chess!: Learn the Rules of the Royal Game	NIC	2016
Basic Chess Openings for Kids: Play like a Winner from Move One	NIC	2015
Power Chess for Kids: More Ways to Think Ahead and Become One of the Best Players in Your School (Volume 2)	NIC	2013
Power Chess for Kids: Learn How to Think Ahead and Become One of the Best Players in Your School	NIC	2011
Forcing Chess Moves: The Key to Better Calculation	NIC	2008

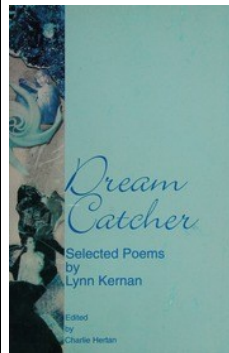
Which book has done the best sales-wise and any thoughts as to why it did so well?

Forcing Chess Moves remains highly popular, and winning the 2008 Chess Café Book of the Year Award certainly helped. Among my kids' books, the *Power Chess for Kids* series is a bestseller, as chess books go.



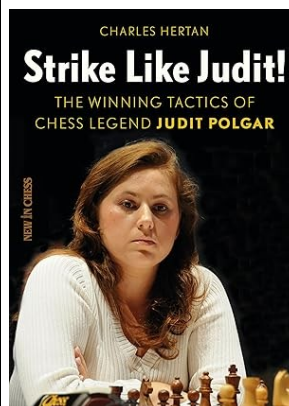
Besides your scientific papers related to your career, I see you also compiled and edited a book of your late

mother's poetry called *Dream Catcher: Selected Poems* by Lynn Kernan. A very nice tribute. Is this the only book outside of chess?



Dream Catcher is the only non-chess book I have produced to date. I could certainly write about other things—but having such a terrific publisher, *New In Chess* in the Netherlands, makes it extremely attractive to continue making chess books.

Forcing Chess Moves and *Strike Like Judit!* are both centered around tactics. What made you decide to write these books? Did they evolve out of your coaching?



Forcing Chess Moves did evolve out of coaching, and the work I did to help my students improve tactically. *Strike Like Judit!* was conceived as a tactical tribute to her legacy. At the time, I was writing a problem column for *New In Chess* magazine, and in my research I was just astounded by the beauty and fearlessness of her games.

Are you still actively coaching? If so, how many students do you typically coach?

I don't have much time for it now, due to my busy schedule working, writing, and raising a 9-year-old. I call myself 'the guru on the mountain'—I don't look for students, but if they find me, I will teach them.

Do you have a coaching philosophy or game plan you rely on, or do you tailor your approach to each individual?

I'm a believer in Soviet-school teaching methods—the first few years should be mostly learning all the basic tactical patterns and studying foundational endgames. These are the 'ABC's' of chess. Using one of the many good problem-solving sites online is a good adjunct, I like Lichess, because it is good and varied, and free. Openings can come later when you begin seriously competing; up until then knowing the basic principles of good development is enough.

Did the *Power Chess for Kids* books come from coaching in general or were there specific students that laid the groundwork as you helped them become better players?

These books cover all the tactical basics I allude to above, starting with the 'geometric patterns' pin, fork and skewer, and going deeper into various motifs such as deflection, double check, overworked piece etc. Then I add in the beginnings of thinking ahead by analyzing forcing moves 1.5 moves deep. These 'basics' aren't always thoroughly grasped, even by better players, and many adults have become fans of my kids books.

If you could tell the chess world one idea or one concept that would improve their game what would that be?

I have a study aid called 'The Hertan Hierarchy' which I devised to help students with their thinking process (you can find it online or in the 2nd edition of *Forcing Chess Moves*). Two principles covered there are always analyzing the most forcing moves first, and if no good ones are available, trying to play to your strength. Too many players default to defending their weakness.

The Hertan Hierarchy:

Opponent makes a move

- What is he/she threatening?
- Is there a direct (one move) threat or attack on a piece?
- What about a 2-3 move sequence of forcing moves?
- Did the piece moved uncover a threat by a different piece?

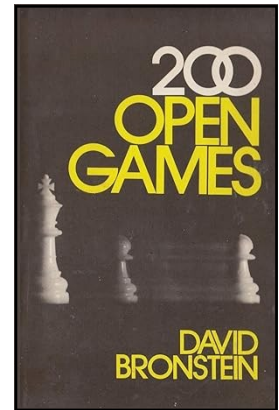
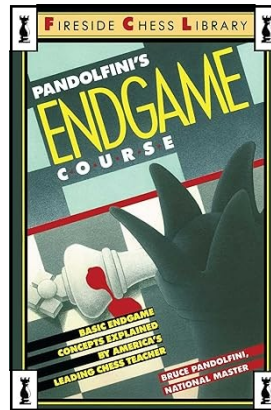
It goes on from here with further breakdowns to aid the thinking process.

Do you recall the first chess book you ever had?

Steve Feinberg and I used to study games from *The Chess Informant* and we had a copy of *Flank Openings* by Raymond Keene.

What are some of your favorite books, chess and non-chess?

There are so many, but to name a few, *My Great Predecessors* by Kasparov, *Pandolfini's Endgame Course* by Bruce Pandolfini, *200 Open Games* by Bronstein, and any history book by Nathaniel Philbrook.



Based on what I have seen you have an affinity for endgames. What endgame book(s) do you feel are the go-to book(s) for the aspiring player?

Pandolfini's Endgame Course is the most clear and readable ending book I have ever read, and the selection and explanation of key positions is fantastic. Any aspiring player who devours this book is guaranteed to improve. We all need to put in some endgame work at some point to reach our chess potential.

Who is your favorite player and what makes them special to you?

I will pick two, Paul Morphy and Magnus Carlsen. Paul elevated the art of chess to new heights by striving for objectivity and correctness. Both players were incredibly well-rounded, fantastic tacticians and great endgame players. Magnus wins games which would have been abandoned as drawn for the past 100 years; he is in my opinion the greatest of all time, but if Morphy had had the opportunity and longevity there is no telling what he could have accomplished, so I call him very possibly the most gifted player of all time.

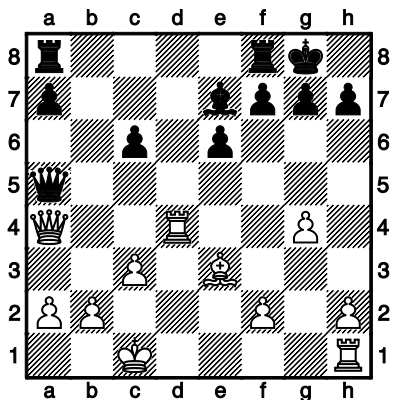
Do you have a favorite game?

It's impossible to pick one, but I enjoy games where four

queens appear on the board for more than a move or two. Here's an entertaining example:

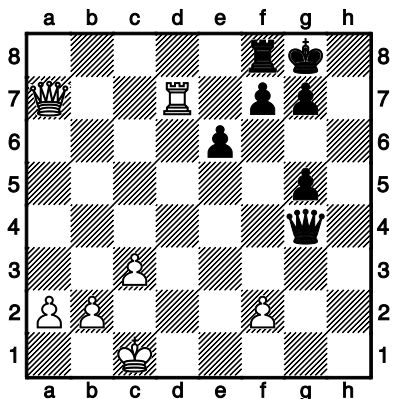
Polgar, J – Khalifman ,A Zurich Rapid London, 2009

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♞c6 5.♞c3 d6 6.♞e3 ♟f6
7.♞e2 ♞e7 8.g4 d5 9.exd5 ♟xd5 10.♞xd5 ♟xd5 11.♞f3 ♟a5+
12.c3 ♞d7 13.♟b3 0-0 14.0-0 ♞xd4 15.♞xd4 ♞c6 16.♞xc6
bxc6 17.♟a4



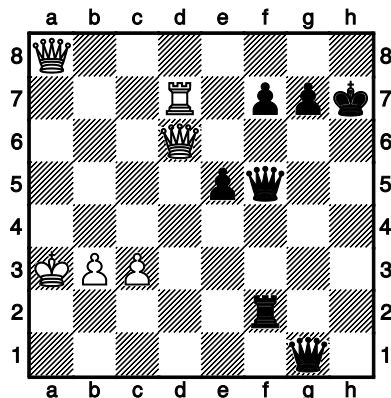
Nothing too exciting yet; black has neutralized white's attacking chances, so he has reason to be satisfied. But look what happens next...

17...♟c7 18.♟c4 c5 19.♞d2 ♞ad8 20.♞hd1 ♞xd2 21.♞xd2
♟xh2 22.♞d7 ♟h4 23.♟f4 h6 24.♟e5 ♞g5 25.♞xg5 hxg5
26.♟xc5 ♟xg4 27.♟xa7



Both players are full-blooded attackers, so things get very interesting. Without switching on the engine my guess is that white is slightly better here, but black has great chances to hold. King safety is of paramount importance in any major piece ending, and black is a little better in that regard.

27...♟f4+ 28.♟e3 ♟a4 29.♞a7 ♟b5 30.♟d4 ♟f1+ 31.♟c2
♟e2+ 32.♟d2 ♟e4+ 33.♟d3 ♟f4 34.♟d4 ♟f5+ 35.♟c1 e5
36.♟d2 g4 37.♞d7 ♟h7 38.a4 ♞a8 39.b3 ♟g6 40.♟b2 ♞h8
41.♟a3 ♞h2 42.♟d6+ ♟h7 43.a5 ♞xf2 44.a6 g3 45.a7 g2
46.a8♟g1♟



Black's advantage in king safety is now decisive.

47.♟d8 ♟c1+ 48.♟b4 ♟e4+ 49.c4 ♞f3 50.♟f8 ♞xb3+ 0-1.
Thank you!

The Souls of the Board

By Evangeline Juliet John Francis Kennedy

Beneath the silent checkered plain,
A kingdom stirs, its fate in chain.
The pawns march forth, a humble row,
Dreaming of crowns they'll never know.

The knights weave arcs, in shadows glide,
Guardians sworn, their paths untried.
With unseen power, they leap unseen,
Bridges of trust where war has been.

Bishops slide on angled ways,
Paths of chaos, their truth ablaze.
One eye on battle, one eye on peace,
Whispering softly, "Our work won't cease."

The rooks stand firm by castle walls,
Silent watchers, until duty calls.
Straight as an arrow, their power flies,
Breaking the calm with steady cries.

The queen, a tempest, boundless and free,
Wields destiny's hand with mastery.
She conquers worlds, she bends the tide,
The force of empires at her side.

And the king, the crown, so frail yet grand,
Holds the weight of the realm in his *trembling* hand.
He cannot run, yet cannot fall,
For the game's design protects it all.

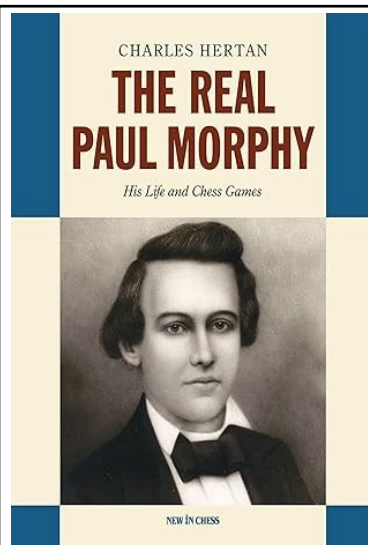
But beyond the board, the truth unfolds:
Each piece reflects the stories we hold.
A pawn can rise; a queen may fall,
In the chess of life, we play them all.

The Real Paul Morphy

By Charles Hertan

New in Chess, 2024, [ISBN: 9789083378800](#)

Reviewed by Mark Capron



“What Mozart as to innate, natural ability was to music, Morphy likewise was to chess.” Charles A. Maurian, from Morphy’s obituary.

“Boden remarked that only a fraction of Morphy’s enormous capacity for chess was ever tapped, since that was enough to reach his goal. There is no doubt that his repertoire would have evolved in many new and interesting ways had he continued to do battle.”

writings. Additionally, “Adolf Anderssen undoubtedly exerted great influence on Paul Morphy’s play, probably more than anyone. For a brilliant young tactician with a love of open gambits, there was no better role model than the world’s first super-GM.” p.62. The mesh of the two schools of thought would be ingrained within Morphy.

Next, Hertan discusses Paul Morphy’s ancestors. One of the more interesting stories was that of Paul’s paternal grandfather “Don” Diego Morphy and his interactions with the infamous Caribbean pirates, Jean and Pierre Lafitte. Don Diego had excellent diplomatic skills and dealt with the piracy ring operating just 23 miles from New Orleans. In the end, Don Diego and Jean Lafitte became allies. The pirate story continues, but this time with Paul’s maternal grandfather, Joseph Esau Le Carpentier.

Paul’s main chess mentor was his uncle Ernest Morphy. Ernest was a very strong player sometimes even called “The King of New Orleans Chess.”

Paul’s childhood is discussed next. Morphy was a studious, young lad and by the time he was nine his strong chess skills showed. By age ten, Morphy had bested the three leading New Orleans players, Eugene Rousseau, Ernest Morphy and A.P. Ford. Interestingly, in the Morphy household, chess was a secondary pastime, and Paul was only allowed to play formal games out of the house on Sundays. His parents instilled a strong belief that chess should not be mixed with monetary gain.

In 1850 Morphy played several offhand games against Johann Löwenthal at the Morphy home. Löwenthal was considered one of the great players of the time. A mystery surrounds the match concerning how many games were played, and what the final score was. Any which way, the very young Paul dominated his older opponent.

At this point, Morphy’s games start to appear interspersed throughout the text.

One of the book’s strengths is its analysis of games. They are presented with a mix of historical context, modern colloquialisms, and 21st century engine insight. I found the author’s annotations like a home-cooked meal; they just make you comfortable and satisfied.

A favorite note was found in the game

Let’s get this out of the way immediately, WOW!! Charles Hertan’s latest work is one of the best I have read about Paul Morphy. The 384-page book published by *New In Chess* will be a contender for book of the year.

Hertan aims to uncover the man behind the legend, separating fact from myth while highlighting Morphy’s enduring influence on the game of chess. He delves not only into Morphy’s games and brilliance, but also into his personal life, motivations, and the psychological complexities that may have led to his eventual withdrawal from competitive chess. Hertan, an International Master and professional psychotherapist who worked with mental health patients for 15 years, is uniquely suited for the subject.

Paul Morphy has been written about potentially more than any other player. Especially a player with such a short chess career (1857-1859). Morphy has generally been believed to be one of the greatest players of all time.

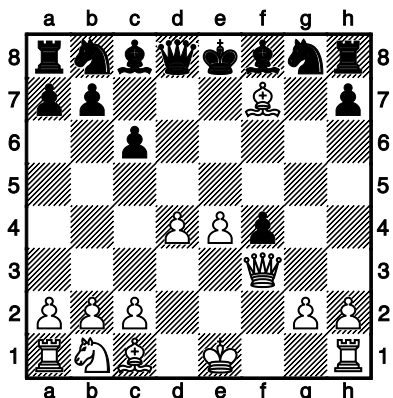
Morphy was born in 1837 in New Orleans. Unfortunately, before the time Morphy was 23 he had stopped playing competitive chess.

Hertan begins by covering some of the famous matches and tournaments in the early 1800s prior to Morphy’s time setting the stage for what chess was like. It was “an age when most strong players were gunning to rip your head off from move one, ...”. The landscape would change with Howard Staunton as he began to play more positionally. Morphy would learn much from Staunton’s games and

Cochrane, John—Staunton, Howard

London 1842

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♖f3 g5 4.♙c4 g4 5.d4 gxf3 6.♗xf3 d5
7.♙xd5 c6 8.♙xf7+

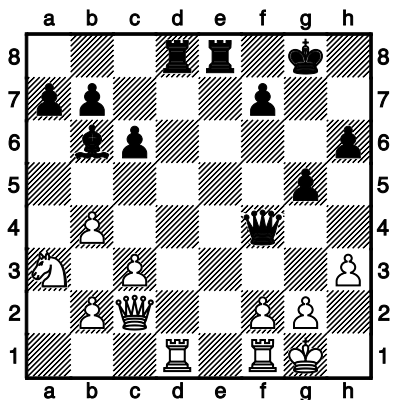


Vintage Cochrane—what’s another piece among gentlemen?

Another good example, this time Hertan offers a glimpse into the strategic mind of Morphy:

James Thompson—Paul Morphy

First American Congress New York 1857 Round 1 Game 3



Black is simply much better. His killer bishop dominates White’s lame knight, and all his men are more active. White can’t contest with 22.♖fe1? ♖xe1+ 23.♖xe1 ♖d2 and is induced to blunder. Such games make it hard to fathom how some dispute that Morphy was ahead of his time positionally.

22.♖d3?!

Maroczy suggests 22.b3 but 22. ... ♙c7 23.g3 ♗f3 ‘and Black is winning’ per Fritz.

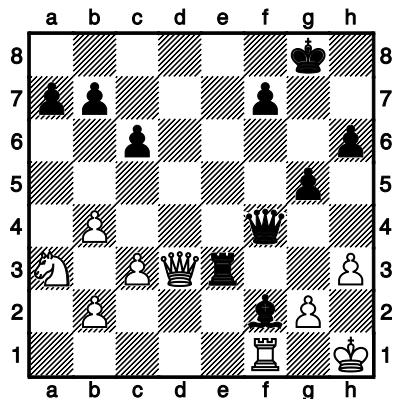
22. ... ♙xf2+!

Black’s strategic dominance results in a very ‘modern’ *pe-tite combinaison*.

23.♖h1

23.♖xf2 ♖e1+ and mate.

23. ... ♖xd3 24.♗xd3 ♖e3



25.♗d8+

25.♗c2 ♖xh3 is mate in three. White trades queens to escape this fate, but Morphy’s technique is deadly:

25. ... ♖g7 26.♗d4+ ♗xd4 27.cxd4 ♖e2 28.♖c4 ♖e1 29.♖xe1 ♙xe1 30.♖a5 ♙xb4 31.♖xb7 ♗f6 32.♖d8 c5 33.♖c6 ♗e6 34.dxc5 ♙xc5 35.g4 ♗d5 36.♖d8 f6 37.♗g2 a5 38.♗f3 a4 39.♗e2 ♙d4 40.♗d3 ♙xb2 41.♖f7 ♙e5 42.♗c2 ♗c4 43.♖d8 a3 44.♖b7 a2 45.♖a5+ ♗b4 46.♖b3 ♗a3 0–1

The First American Chess Congress in 1857 paired Paul Morphy with Louis Paulsen in the Finals. This was the toughest test Morphy had ever faced. After four games, they had each won a game and drawn two. Then Morphy took over and won all four remaining games and with that the tournament.

A few more fun annotations from the Paulsen match:

“Paulsen isn’t up to the task. Opponents seemed to tremble and quake when Morphy launched an attack.” p.136.

“Morphy has again made Paulsen look like a two-bit club player, unable to cope with the direct assault on d6. In typical fashion he elects to cash in concretely.” p. 141.

“According to Lawson, ‘Morphy took twelve minutes before offering his Queen for a Bishop (Morphy’s longest time on any move during the tournament.)’ [!!] *Twelve minutes!* Who else in chess history analyzed this fast, or had such faith in his analysis during the most important game of his life?” p.148.

After the First American Chess Congress, Daniel Fiske asked Morphy to be co-editor on the *Chess Monthly*. The first issue together was to be the January 1858 issue. Morphy was never good about writing and barely met his commitments thereof.

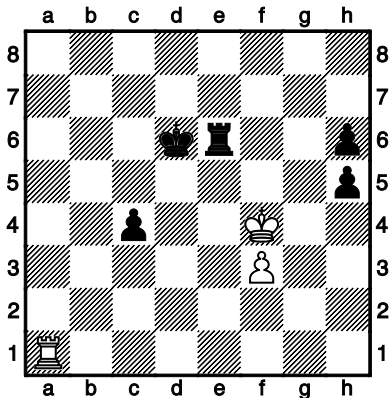
The book contains a beautiful 16-page section of color photographs. Some of these rare photographs were contributed by Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam and David DeLucia, both huge Morphy collectors.

Another aspect of the book was to infuse today's technology into the games to see how well Morphy's moves and analysis held up.

Löwenthal, Johann—Morphy, Paul [C42]

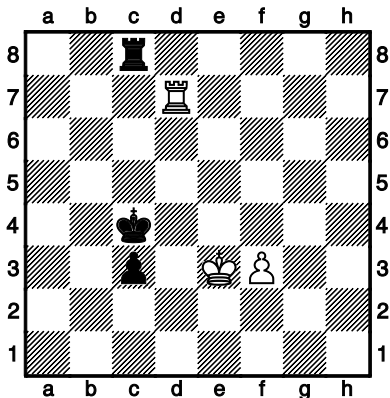
Match Morphy-Loewenthal +9-3=2 London (3), 22.07.1858

54.h5 gxh5!



Löwenthal criticizes this move, claiming that 54. ... ♖f6+ 55.♗e3 g5 'would have won without difficulty'. In the present age of 3500 rated leviathans, Löwenthal's line yields only a draw after 56.♖a6+ ♗e7 57.♖a7+ ♗d8 58.♗d2 (58. ... ♖xf3 59.♖a6).

55.♗f5 ♖e3 56.♗f4 ♖e8 57.♖a6+ ♗d5 58.♖xh6 c3 59.♖xh5+ ♗d4 60.♖h7 ♖c8 61.♖d7+ ♗c4 62.♗e3!



62. ... Re8+? 63.Kf2!!

Löwenthal wrote: 'This was a grievous error. 63.♗f4 would have made the *remise* a certainty.' Max Lange concurs, 'it seems that 63.♗f4 would have ensured the draw.' I regret to inform Löwenthal's ghost that only his 63.♗f2!! holds. If 63.♗f4? c2 64.♖c7+ ♗d3 65.♖d7+ ♗e2 66.♖c7 ♗d2 67.♖d7+ ♗c1 Black again gets back to stop the f-pawn, e.g. 68.♗g4 (or 68.♗g5 ♖g8+) 68. ... ♖c8 69.♖h7 ♗d2 70.♖h2+ ♗e3.

In pre-computer times it was extremely tempting to fall back on old analysis at such complicated junctures.

Maroczy followed his predecessors into the analytic quagmire: '63.♗f2? The decisive error! White had the draw in hand with 64.♗f4 etc. The text move loses because the white King cannot support his pawn satisfactorily.' In times past the grandmaster had the last word – but now a chap named Fritz intones the postscript, 'baloney'.

63. ... c2 64.♖c7+ ♗d3 65.♖d7+ ♗c3 66.♖c7+ ♗d2 67.♖d7+ ♗c1 68.♖b7?

This perfectly innocent-looking move turns out to be the culprit. 68.♖c7!! holds.

68. ... ♖e5 69.f4 ♖e4 70.♗f3 ♖c4

This move would not be possible after 68.♖c7!!, and White's counterplay would suffice.

71.♖h7

White must expend a tempo because on 71.f5 ♗d2 72.♖d7+ ♗c3 he can't get back. If you understand every nuance of this ending, congratulations! You likely gain 20 elo points.

71. ... ♗d2 72.♖h1 c1♗ 73.♖xc1 ♖xc1 74.♗e4 ♖e1+ 75.♗d4 ♗e2 76.f5 ♗f3 77.♗d5 ♗f4 78.f6 ♗g5 79.f7 ♖f1 80.♗e6 ♗g6 0-1

Maroczy appends the comment, 'a game replete with sins of omission' - but the real sin of omission is Maroczy's failure to fully grasp Morphy's technical power. Paul's depth of understanding of the pure rook ending was about as deep as a human could hope to achieve, hence Löwenthal's experience of 'a grasp against which it was almost vain to struggle.' p. 208-12.

One more example of this found in a game vs. Paulsen:

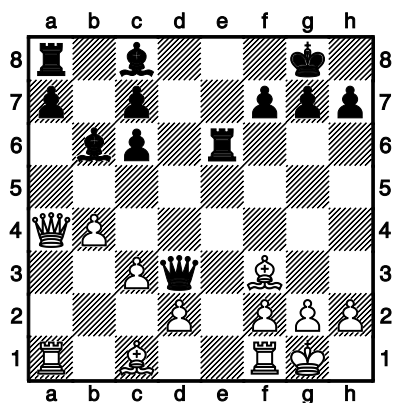
Paulsen, Louis—Morphy, Paul [C48]

USA-01 Congress Grand Tournament New York (4.6), 08.11.1857

1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♖c6 3.♖c3 ♖f6 4.♖b5 ♖c5 5.0-0 0-0 6.♖xe5 ♖e8! 7.dxc6 8.♖c4 b5 9.♖e2 ♖xe4 10.♖xe4 ♖xe4 11.♖f3 ♖e6 12.c3

Morphy notes that 12.d3 'would have been preferable'. What an understatement for a move that simply equalizes. Better yet, White could make active equality with a move that leaves humans in the dust: 12.d4!! The main line is 12. ... ♗xd4 13.♖e3! ♗xd1 14.♖axd1 ♖e7 15.♖f4 and White's problems are over.

12. ... ♖d3 13.b4 ♘b6 14.a4 bxa4 15.♗xa4



15. ... ♘d7

'15. ... ♖g6 promises more than it would yield.' – Morphy. Sorry, Paul, but 15. ... ♖g6 yields quite a bit. If 16.♘xc6 ♖b8 White can scarcely meet the dual threats of 17. ... ♘h3 or 17. ... ♖xc6!! 18.♗xc6 ♘b7 with the crushing idea of 19. ... ♗g6 20.g3 ♗e4. If 17.♖e1 ♘d7!! 18.♘xd7 ♗f3 mates. Maroczy's suggestion 15. ... ♘b7 is also good for Black.

If computers ruled the world back then, we would have missed out on one of the greatest combinations in chess history, as Morphy had envisioned a shot for the ages.

16.♖a2 ♖ae8! 17.♗a6 ♗xf3!! 18.gxf3 ♖g6+ 19.♗h1 ♘h3 20.♖d1 ♘g2+ 21.♗g1 ♘xf3+ 22.♗f1 ♘g2+ 23.♗g1 ♘h3+ 24.♗h1 ♘xf2 25.♗f1 ♘xf1 26.♖xf1 ♖e2 27.♖a1 ♖h6 28.d4 ♘e3 0-1

"This thunderous 'game for the ages' decided the match psychologically. Morphy fever had already enveloped the land, and we can only imagine the delirium that followed the greatest combination ever seen on US soil." p.146-8.

Morphy has been condemned for not being very creative and not very good in closed positions. Herten states: "Creativity is certainly subjective, though, and my 'scientific' reply is: hogwash!" p.366.

An interesting anecdote (attributed to Frederick Edge) was found on page 244: "months later (November 1, 1858) Edge got a letter from Löwenthal asking for the complete score of this game, as Staunton had published only the first 24 moves. '... I [Edge] said I should be obliged if he would let me bring him a board and light in order that he might dictate to me the required moves [M. had gone to bed], when he answered, 'There's no necessity for that; read me over what Staunton published, and I'll give you the remainder.' He called over the omitted [25 extra] moves as fast as I could write them down."

A large section of the book details Morphy's trip to Europe. Although he never got to play Staunton (mostly due to

Staunton ducking the match) he did get to play several other strong players including Adolf Anderssen. There is a lot of detail on the Paris match with Anderssen. Morphy lost the first game of the match in a long 'grueling struggle'. After a draw in game two Morphy evened the match, winning game three by uncorking a novelty (12.c3!) in the Ruy Lopez. Anderssen didn't score again until the eighth game which was drawn. Morphy won game nine and eleven, but lost game ten. After game ten Anderssen jokingly stated, 'Mr. Morphy wins his games in Seventeen moves, and I in Seventy.' The final score was +7-2=2 in favor of Morphy.

Morphy decided that he had reached the apex and there were no other players to challenge him, so issued a challenge to the chess world of pawn and move.

No one came forth to accept this challenge. The stronger players would have been embarrassed if they had accepted and either won or lost. The weaker players already knew they could not win even at odds.

Morphy gave a speech when he returned to America from Europe in 1859. "Chess never has been and never can be aught but a recreation. It should not be indulged in to the detriment of other and more serious avocations – should not absorb the mind or engross the thoughts of those who worship at its shrine; but should be kept in the background and restrained within its proper province. As a mere game, a relaxation from the severest pursuits of life, it is deserving of high commendation. It is not only the most delightful and scientific, but also the most moral of amusements. Unlike other games in which lucre is the end and aim of the contestants, it recommends itself to the wise by the fact that its mimic battles are fought for no prize but honor. It is eminently and emphatically the philosopher's game. Let the chess board supersede the card table, and a great improvement will be seen in the morals of the community [great applause] (...). I shall leave New York with melancholy sorrow, for I part from friends than whom none truer can be found. Let them rest assured that along with the memory of the chess board I possess the memory of the heart..." p.331.

Many lucrative deals started to appear, but Morphy could not shake his upbringing and mix chess and money. However, when Robert Bonner publisher of the *New York Herald* newspaper offered Morphy \$3000 (\$114,000 in today's money) to write a weekly chess column, Morphy accepted. Morphy wrote 52 columns.

***** Continued on Page 27 *****

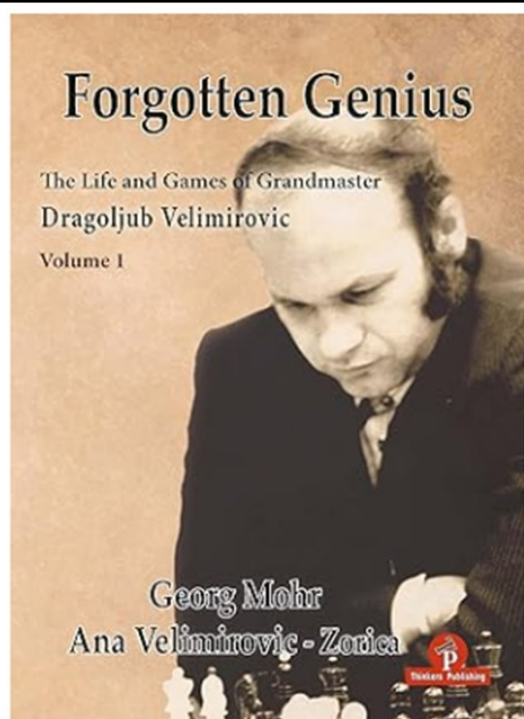
Forgotten Genius: The Life and Times of Grandmaster Dragoljub Velimirovic

By Georg Mohr & Ana Velimirovic-Zorica

Thinkers Publishing: 2024, [Two Volumes](#)

Reviewed by ICCF GM Jon Edwards

32nd World Correspondence Chess Champion



Kindly imagine an era in which excellence in chess was guided not by engines, databases, and technical prowess but rather by inspiration, creativity, and dedication. We sometimes dismiss the Grandmasters of the past because their chess ideas do not pass muster with modern engines, and because their repertoires contain choices that are sub-optimal by our modern, neural net-influenced standards. We are so busy adopting to a modern age that we might be forgiven for forgetting about the geniuses who inspired our chess past.

The chess author of these two volumes, Slovenian GM Georg Mohr, was born in 1965, a generation behind Velimirovic. He reached an agreement with Thinkers Publishing to commence a series on the Forgotten Geniuses of chess. His first book in the series (co-authored with GM Adrian Mikhalchishin) explored the career of Alvin Planinc (Forgotten Genius - The Life and Games of Grandmaster Albin Planinc, Thinkers Publishing: 2021) is well worth a place in your chess library.

Velimirovic is the subject of the second part of this series, in this case a remarkable and pleasantly well-written, two-volume tome. Here, he is joined by a different co-author, Ana Velimirovic-Zorica, who emerged unexpectedly midway through the project with cartons of games personally and comprehensively annotated by her father, as well as photos and cartoons that now appropriately personalize these two volumes. In total, Velimirovic had annotated 316 of his games, but died before publishing the material.

These games and Ana's observations form a lasting tribute to her father, who left her "with beautiful memories." The material she provides is so rich that it became possible, through Velimirovic's own thoughts, to reveal the thinking behind the development of his opening ideas and his very distinct, very aggressive approach to the game.

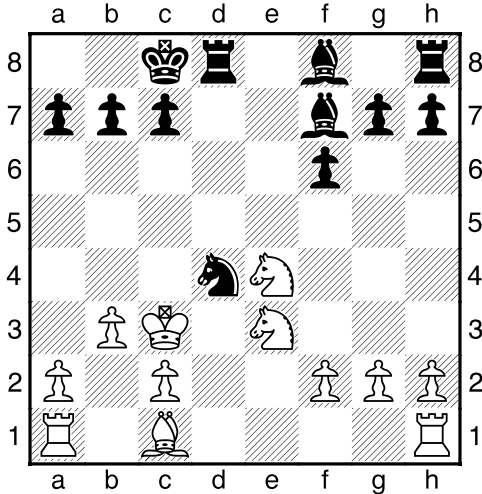
Perhaps "forgotten" to modern fans of the game, GM Drasko Velimirovic (1942-2014), the "Gazda" (Boss), was an inspiration to many of us growing up with chess. His is a career worth remembering, an attacking style reminiscent of Tal, his commitment to complex chess, his numerous tournament triumphs, and his extraordinary theoretical contributions to our opening repertoires. Add in his coaching of many future Grandmasters and his wonderful anecdotes and you wind up with a chess legend whose story demands to be told and remembered.

Volume 1 focuses upon his chess life and career from 1958, his late start in tournament chess, through to his victory at Novi Sad in 1975, the strong 30th National Championship of Yugoslavia.

Volume 2 picks up the story in 1976, and reviews Velimirovic's chess through to his last tournament in 2011. Infrastructurally speaking, these are solidly constructed books. I obtained the hard cover editions which I wholeheartedly recommend, if readers can afford the extra few dollars, because they make it much easier to read while reviewing the games on ChessBase.

There are so many highlights. Frankly, readers should read the wonderful stories themselves. I was well bemused by the Tunisian bear at the Sousse Olympiad chasing **Svetozar** Gligoric, who managed to escape by flinging himself into the ocean only to ruin his only clothes, an airline having lost his luggage.

But you are here for the chess, so here is a taste from his schoolboy days.

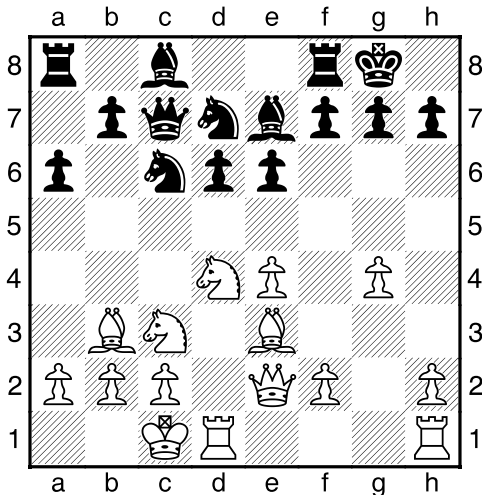


Kosanski-Velimirovic, Pristina, 1060

From one of Velimirovic's early games, saved from his "dusty old notebooks" and thereby shared for the first time. White resigned after 14...f5 because the knight retreats, such as 15.g5, meet up with 15...b5+ 16.b2 a3 17.b1 c3#.

It's always fun to see games that have never appeared in any printed source or database, but the lasting contribution of this book, for me at least, is how well it reveals Velimirov's development of the Sozin variation that will forever carry his name. Volume 1 contains six games in the Velimirovic Attack, well highlighted by this note in his 1971 game against Vladimir Bukal:

1.e4 c5 2.f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.fxd4 f6 5.c3 c6 6.c4 e6 7.e3 e7 8.e2 a6 9.0-0 c7 10.b3 0-0 11.g4 d7



"It's this critical position that prompted Bobby to call me into the room in Palma de Mallorca, where he chose the

bad 12.h4? against Larsen and gave Black the initiative on the queenside. I immediately showed Fischer, without hiding anything, the move 12.f5. He just smiled. A sequel followed a few months later. Gligoric came back from a tournament in New York and immediately looked for me. 'Come quickly so that we can reanalyze your 12.f5 together! Fischer informs you that the sacrifice is completely correct!'

Of course, Velimirovic's opponent in this game could not have known any of this."

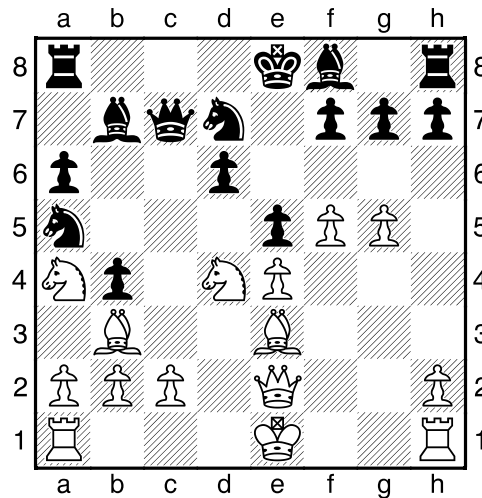
The game continued: 12.f5 exf5 13.d3 d8 14.gxf5 with a very well annotated win ahead. For those of you who care, modern neural nets also find and approve of 12.f5!

You will forgive me please for continuing to focus here upon games in both volumes that involved the Velimirovic Attack.

Velimirovic - Ivanovic [B89]

Budva, 1981

1.e4 c5 2.f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.fxd4 f6 5.c3 d6 6.c4 e6 7.e3 a6 8.e2 c7 9.b3 a5 10.g4 b5 11.g5 d7 12.f4 b4 13.a4 b7 14.f5 e5



15.fxf7+

"This sacrifice was prepared by Velimirovic! Modern analysis shows that not everything is completely correct, but we will see how quickly Black can become confused and how difficult it is to defend such positions over the board. On paper, you stand better, but everything is conditioned by a series of individual moves, and any mistake leads to defeat. And since humans are not computers (yet), such mistakes never disappear entirely. The computer suggests two other interesting sacrifices, 15.e6!? fxe6 16.fxe6 c5 with some classic Velimirovic compensation, and even 15.g6, when White sacrifices the d4-knight again in a different way."

15...♙f7 16.♗h5+ ♘g8 17.f6 g6 18.♗h3 ♚c4 19.♛e6 ♜x4
20.♞f1 ♙f7

Modern engines find 20...♞f5 21.♞x5 gxf5 22.♗xf5 ♗h4+
23.♞f2 ♗h5, but that's a lot to expect of a human playing
over-the-board.

21.♛g7 ♞f5 22.♞xf5 gxf5 23.♗xf5 ♞d8 24.b3 ♗d5 25.♞d1
♗h1+ 26.♙d2 ♗xh2+ 27.♙c1 ♞xg7 28.♞xd6 ♞f8 29.g6+ 1-0

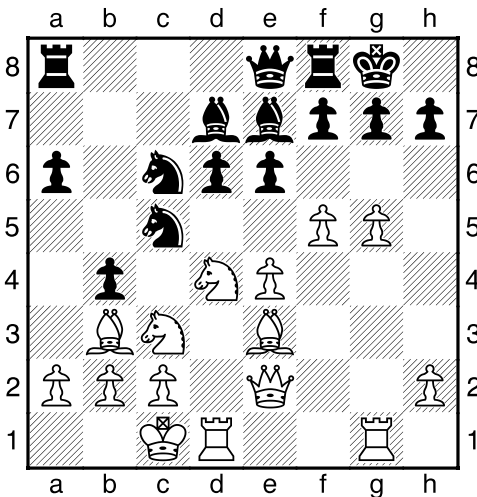
And, while I am tempted simply to soak up pages in this
review by replicating all the book's fun annotations, I will
constrain myself to one more example:

Velimirovic - Vuckovic, B
Belgrade, 2000

1.e4 c5 2.♞f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♛xd4 ♞f6 5.♛c3 ♛c6 6.♞c4 e6
7.♞e3 ♞e7 8.♞b3 0-0 9.♗e2 a6 10.0-0 ♗e8 11.♞hg1 ♛d7
12.g4 ♛c5 13.g5 ♞d7 14.f4

Correctly avoiding 14.♗h5 ♛xd4 15.♞xd4 ♛xb3+ 16.axb3 f5!

14...b5 15.f5 b4



16.f6 bxc3 17.♗h5!

"Velimirovic keeps the game at a high level of tension. It
did not even occur to him to take on g7 or e7, whereupon
his game would gain clarity but offer Black a break to close
his ranks in defense.

"The power of the white pawn on f6 is incredible, because
with it White cuts off the black pieces that cannot defend
themselves. The material is no longer important at all
(Lubomír Ftacnik)"

The game continues, interspersed with Velimirovic's own
notes taken from those newly discovered dusty old boxes.

17...cxb2+ 18.♙xb2 ♛xe4 19.♞df1 ♗d8 20.fxg7 ♗a5 21.♛xc6

"I could have chosen 21.♞f3 but in the upcoming time
crunch, did not notice the wonderful 21...♗e5 (21...♙g7
22.♞f3 +-) 22.gxf8(♗) ♞f8 23.♞f5!!, when Black would lose
control over the fifth rank and the break-through of the g-
pawn would decide. For example, 23 ♗g7 24.♞f7! ♞xf7
25.g5! h×g6 26.♞xg6 or 23...exf5 24.g6 with checkmate"

21...♞xc6 22.♞d4 ♗d2 23.gxf8♗+ ♞xf8 24.♞d1 ♗a5 25.♗h6

These are the sorts of annotations that permeate both vol-
umes and make them a lengthy, very fun read. At this
stage of my advancing chess book collecting, shelf space
is at a premium. I have made it a priority to find room for
these two volumes.

***** Continued from Page 24 *****

Morphy's aversion to mix money and chess further re-
moved him from the game that had brought him so much
fame. It seemed everyone wanted to talk chess, and he
struggled in his attempts to be "normal."

The Civil War took its toll on the Morphy family, and they
ended up fleeing to Paris until the war was over. While in
Paris Morphy avoided most chess situations. After coming
back to New Orleans, he tried to practice law, but it just
never worked out.

"His growing morbidity, extreme sensitivity and increasing
suspiciousness of those around him culminated in an im-
balance that deprived him of practically all company ex-
cept that of his immediate family." p.348. Morphy died on
July 10, 1884 from "congestion of the brain [stroke]" while
taking a midday bath.

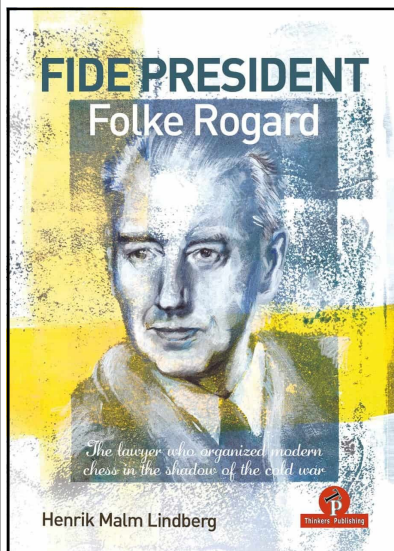
The second to last chapter details Morphy's mental illness
(deterioration) from the perspective of the author's profes-
sional opinion. Using modern diagnostic tools, Herten says
quite a bit about Morphy's illness. Evaluating the origins
and symptoms that became apparent. "Paul Morphy's life
reads like the most pathetic of Greek tragedies, and it is
certainly tempting to view his illness as the culmination of
an astounding fall from grace." p.357. This chapter is ex-
tremely enlightening, and I won't divulge its secrets. I leave
that to you the reader to uncover for yourselves.

The book paints a well-rounded portrait of Morphy—not
just as a chess prodigy, but as a complex individual, navi-
gating the pressures of fame amid his personal struggles
and mental deterioration. The only negative comment I
have about the book is that I wish it were longer! It is a
must have for Morphy fans and any student of the game.
Highly recommended. **5/5 Stars.**

FIDE PRESIDENT: Folke Rogard, The Lawyer who Organized Modern Chess in the Shadow of the Cold War

Henrik Malm Lindberg, Thinkers Publishing, 2024, 336 pp., \$56.00 Hardcover

Reviewed by Mark Capron



[ISBN: 9789083429038-\\$ 56.00](#)

that shaped the trajectory of modern international chess. Lindberg succeeds in balancing a thorough historical analysis with a captivating narrative, offering readers a deep dive into the complexities of Rogard's leadership.

The Cold War started shortly after World War II ended, and was in full force by the time Rogard took over in 1949. Even though Rogard consistently stated that chess and politics were not compatible and should be kept separate, he had to realize that during his reign (Cold War) they were intricately coupled. The book offers a detailed examination of the tensions that Rogard navigated, particularly the conflicts between the Soviet chess machine and Western players. "Rogard was determined to put FIDE in charge of world chess, organise it efficiently, and use international chess tournaments and congresses to promote international brotherhood and peaceful relations among people of various creeds, races, and political beliefs."

Lindberg's book is more of an account of how Rogard dealt with chess matters that came up during the cold war than a strict biography. There is still some basic biographical information one would expect in a normal biography. No games or crosstables will be found in the book.

Rogard was born July 6, 1899, in Hedvig Eleonora parish in Stockholm, Sweden to Lilly and Cornelius Rosengren. He changed his last name to Rogard later in life, most likely due to having multiple lawyers with the same name in town, but there were several other stories or rumors documented in the book.

Folke's favorite subject in primary school was math and thus problem solving. He and his brother Gösta played tennis competitively. He started to play chess at the age of ten. He played his first chess tournament when he was 16 and came in 2nd in the second class.

In a time when few women could own a business, let alone property, his mother, Lilly, was an entrepreneur and ran a company called Stockholm's Uthynings (Stockholm's Rental Agency). This was very successful for quite a while, but in the mid-1920s the business went bankrupt, and so did Lilly and Cornelius.

Rogard went to law school at Stockholm University. During school he did his military service and was placed as an expedition assistant in the supply department of the Stockholm regiment, Royal Gota Lifeguard. In one of his first chess organizational feats, he initiated the Chess Club at Stockholm University. He graduated from university in 1922 with the highest grade, "pass with excellent distinction." By July 1924 he was appointed district judge, which was the highest step on the career ladder.

Rogard was married many times and had multiple children and stepchildren.

The book features footnotes at the bottom of each page. Most are references, but a few expound with more detail. The paper is of a reasonable weight and the font is easy to read. However, I would have printed it a bit darker. Had they done this, they would most likely have had to use heavier paper, because there is some bleed-through on the large, bold chapter numbers. At times, the timeline becomes a bit blurred as the author recounts events in an unusual order. The book contains many nice photographs, some pretty rare.

In November of 1939 Rogard became chairman for the Stockholm Chess Federation after Ludvig Collijn passed. He was voted in unanimously.

In 1940 Rogard was elected to the board of the Swedish chess federation and by 1941 he became vice-chairman.

Rogard might never have made it to FIDE in the first place. In 1942 he was representing the Swedish Chess Federation when Germany tried to institute the European Chess Federation to replace FIDE. It was really a political push from Germany. The regular clubs in Sweden didn't want to

join, but Rogard and Erik Olson still voted yes. They did this to help get Gösta Stolz and Erik Lundin into more international chess events. Later, a group back in Sweden formed to remove Rogard, but it was not successful. So Rogard remained vice-chairman and at least for a while Sweden was on board with the ECF. Stolz and Lundin did get more invitations, but the ECF was short-lived, and Sweden pulled its support even before the ECF collapsed due to minimal support and no trust in the German regime.

Rogard was a very successful lawyer, having several high-profile cases over the years. For example, he represented the Ford Motor company in Sweden, and he defended Ingrid Bergman in a custody battle. The latter case set new precedent in international family law. Rogard's background in law helped him mediate between conflicting interests in the backrooms of the chess bureaucracy. His commitment to fairness in the governance of chess was clear, even though he faced numerous political mines.

Rogard's rise continued and he became the FIDE delegate and president of the Nordic Chess Federation in 1947.

The organization and running of the 1948 Saltsjöbaden Interzonal, was the lynchpin that pushed Rogard into position to take over FIDE. The praise for Rogard's arrangements was widespread in the press. This was the first mega-tournament after the end of World War II that was organized by the Swedish Chess Federation. It was the brainchild of Rogard and the beginning of an infrastructure that would become the qualifying path to the world championship.

In Paris, on September 24, 1949, Rogard became FIDE president, replacing Alexander Rueb.

One of the huge obstacles Rogard continuously had to deal with was FIDE member federations not paying their fees on time or even at all. Some organizations like the USCF, consistently had no money to support players' travel expenses. Rogard worked with many Maecenas to get around this and much of what he accomplished may never have happened, if it wasn't for opening his own wallet.

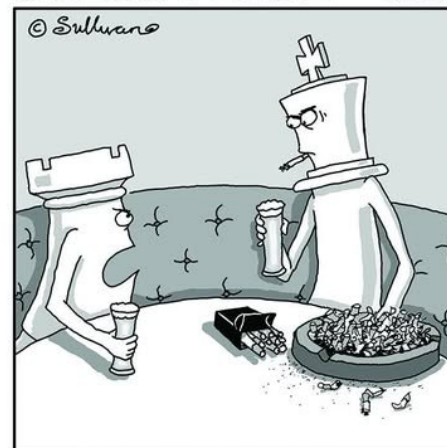
The USCF had words with FIDE (Rogard) over the 1950 Budapest candidate's tournament that had no westerners in it. To help appease the USCF, Rogard tried, unsuccessfully, to get a match for Reshevsky with one of the Soviets: Botvinnik, Smyslov, or Bronstein. It came down to no funds to send Reshevsky overseas, and the Soviets refusing to come to America due to mandatory fingerprinting. Fingerprinting was considered an insult in the USSR.

Rogard spent significant time at the various countries' embassies to discuss topics that were needed to make things move forward. Many times, this was about getting visas cleared, so players could travel into the country.

Rogard oversaw the implementation of the Elo rating system. Interestingly, it took a long time before being officially realized. As early as the 1950s countries like Great Britain and Yugoslavia began to use numerical ranking systems. By 1960 the USCF was using the rating system developed by Kenneth Harkness. Around this time Arpad Elo's work was reviewed by Max Euwe and Euwe suggested it to Rogard. Rogard liked it, but it took until 1965 before it was officially discussed at the Wiesbaden Congress. It was then more formally discussed in Havana in 1966. Elo, with the help of Fred Cramer (USCF), started to do rating calculations for players and soon it was obvious that a fair rating system was paramount to the international chess arena. Finally, in 1970 at the Siegen Congress, the Elo system was officially adopted.

In conclusion, *FIDE President Folke Rogard* is an outstanding work that offers an engaging account of a key figure in chess history. The author doesn't just recount the facts; he situates Rogard's decisions against the backdrop of the global political climate and the ever-evolving chess scene. Rogard's diplomatic skills and ability to navigate the complex, often ideologically charged environment were instrumental in the survival and development of international chess. As a result, *FIDE President Folke Rogard* becomes more than just a biography—it is a window into the political intricacies and challenges of managing a global sport in a divided world. Whether you are a chess historian, a player, tournament organizer or simply someone interested in the politics of sports, this book offers a compelling story. Highly recommended, **5/5 stars**.

CHESS PEACE by Tony Sullivan

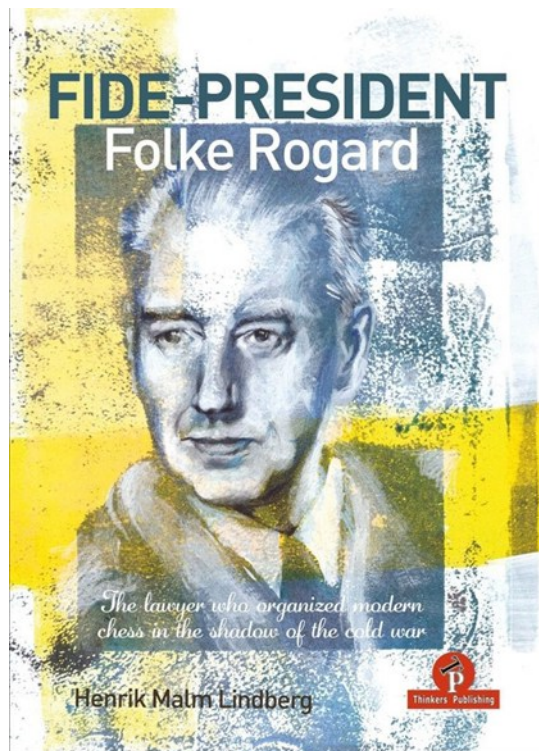


"No wonder you can only move one square at a time!"



Thinkers Publishing

FIDE PRESIDENT FOLKE ROGARD – The lawyer who organized modern chess in the shadow of the Cold War



[Henrik Malm Lindberg - \\$ 56.00](#)

This biography of Folke Rogard is primarily focused on his roles as FIDE President and organizer of modern chess for more than two decades. Being in that genre, it aims to capture his personality — what his driving forces were and the constraints that held him back. This well researched biography paints a picture of a lawyer who used his network and energy to promote and spread chess as well as give it an organizational infrastructure.

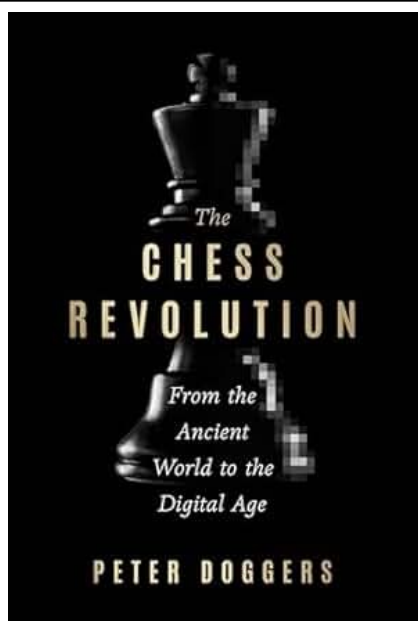
Rogard reigned over world chess as President of FIDE during the first half of the battle between East and West after World War II. The Cold War shaped chess during this period, but it also served as a battleground for the "Cultural Cold War" as both sides fought for the hearts and minds of people. Hitherto unknown facts and processes in FIDE and, f.e., the USCF are unveiled and brought to light.

The Chess Revolution: From the Ancient World to the Digital Age

Peter Doggers, Puzzle Wright Press, 2024, 408 pp., \$29.95 Hardcover, [ISBN: 1454959231](https://www.puzzlewrightpress.com/books/the-chess-revolution)

Reviewed by National Master Randy Bauer

Rating: 8/10



Most chess books these days are focused on how to play the game, including books on opening theory, middlegame and endgame play, combinations, strategy, and tournament or player games collections. Peter Doggers' book is a departure from the typical, as it explores chess as a part of culture, from its inception through the current 'digital age.' You will not encounter any actual chess games until

the Appendix, where pages 381 to 400 are devoted to some sparsely annotated games or game fragments that have been discussed in earlier parts of the book.

While the chess content is minimal, the examination of chess in key facets of the world around us is detailed, fascinating, and full of interesting factoids and direct quotes from many contemporary chess luminaries. As one who has been immersed in chess for over 50 years, I learned a lot from the author's deep research and excellent presentation.

The time and effort necessary to present a book of this depth and breadth is evident throughout. For example, the book's bibliography lists 99 books, 61 scientific works, 31 articles in magazines and newspapers, 91 online articles, and 12 videos and documentaries. The author also acknowledges 76 individuals who spoke with the author or helped in other ways. This includes world class chess grandmasters Anish Giri, Hikaru Nakamura, Judit Polgar, Wesley So, Peter Svidler, and Jan Timman, as well as other strong players, chess entrepreneurs and politicians.

As the title suggests, the author seeks to cover chess from its beginning to its current state. That said, the coverage of chess's origins up until the formal recognition of chess world champions is brief. The author provides an explanation in the introduction, where he suggests that the last

book that sought to cover the full history of chess was published in 1985, and this book intends to "bridge the gap with the modern era, collating chess' past, present, and future in one place, and charting its relationship with culture and technology."

The author provides excellent discussion and examples of how chess fits into the realms of politics, sports, the arts, literature, theater, movies, music, science, psychology, and the benefits of chess. This discussion comprises about one-fourth of the book, and I found it the most interesting portion. With about 100 pages to work with, the author provides much more depth to discussions than you will find elsewhere, and the stories and anecdotes are ones I had not run across before reading the book. Just one example (there are dozens) relates to Marcel Duchamp. The author explains his new-found passion for chess: "The story goes that Duchamp was so crazy about chess that in the first week after getting married to his first wife, Lydie Sarazin-Levassor, in 1927, he hardly spent any time with her but instead visited the chess club every night. She got so angry that she glued the pieces to his chessboard. The marriage didn't last long."

Besides these stories and anecdotes, the author also delves into deeper subjects. The benefits of chess, related to its educational, or more lately, mitigation of Alzheimer's effects, have been studied. The author does a good job of discussing the (sometimes conflicting) study conclusions. I appreciated that the author doesn't necessarily 'oversell' the benefits of chess but also discusses studies that do not find a correlation between chess and suggested positive outcomes.

In any book of chess history, there will undoubtedly be a discussion of who is the 'greatest of all time (GOAT)' player. According to the author, this boils down to a comparison of Bobby Fischer, Garry Kasparov, and Magnus Carlsen, which is a relatively mainstream perspective. The author then makes the case for each player, provides backing for the claims, and draws his own conclusion. I like that the author doesn't just present the claims but seeks to analyze their worth. Eventually, he also reaches his own conclusion and supports it (and I happen to agree with it at this point in time).

This introductory material takes the book through about 150 of its 400 pages. The majority of the book relates to the 'Chess Revolution' that has been ushered in by the Internet and chess-playing software. The author first discusses the early computer chess playing attempts, which can be described as rudimentary. The turning point, which the book describes in detail, was Garry Kasparov's loss to Deep Blue in 1996. This is a section where I knew a lot about the match and outcome, but the book provides extensive, revealing content, including a variety of direct quotes from participants. It is an example of the author's work to provide extensive first-hand comments and details about key chess historical events.

The author also delves into the 'what's next' situation with chess playing software programs. As computing processing time has dramatically improved, it has heightened the chess software level of play. Even more interesting, the author describes how new approaches to software design have greatly enhanced chess playing skill. In particular, neural networks have made machine-to-human, chess comparisons obsolete. The author notes Kasparov's quip – "Who would want to see Usain Bolt try his luck against a Ferrari?"

Of course, a key outcome from the rise of computer chess play is the opportunity for human players to use it to their benefit. As an online chess player, this abuse is common. The more relevant discussion, for this book, is how it might impact on high level chess. The 'cheating in chess' section details how this has occurred in the past and how it might continue to occur in the future. I found this chapter to be at least a bit troubling, as a fair amount is devoted to the incident related to a Carlsen-Niemann game. From my neutral third-party perspective, the author is more willing to accept the view of his employer, Chess.com, on some of the grey areas than I find acceptable. This is an area where a co-author who is not associated with Chess.com would have been helpful. This is not the only place where this sort of assistance would have been useful.

The chess world, particularly at top levels, has changed dramatically with the rise of the Internet and strong chess playing software. I appreciated the author mentioning the role that Mark Crowther, founder of The Week in Chess (TWIC) played in getting tournament games into the hands of players on a weekly basis. This provided players with access to far more games by possible opponents than in the past. I was a tournament chess player in the era prior to the Internet and software databases like ChessBase. Back then, it was far more difficult to assimilate chess information. I once wrote a 'playing to win with your defense' article where I explained how to use books and a handwritten notebook to keep track of key developments in a particular opening variation. That was all very '20th century' in today's chess world.

The final 100 plus pages are devoted to what might be considered the title's 'chess revolution,' part III, titled "The Online Revolution: How the Internet Changed the Game." This starts with a discussion of early, online playing and sites, including the Internet Chess Server (ICS), the Free Internet Chess Server (FICS), and the Internet Chess Club (ICC). The ICC was truly revolutionary, and I recall discussing it with one of its founders, Marty Grund, when it was in the developmental stage. Marty and his partners had a vision, and they executed it with great results for many years. The author discusses that, as well as how ICC lost its place at the top of chess online play.

Section three, chapter nine is titled "How Chess.com Came, Saw, and Conquered." The following 47 pages are an interesting read on how Chess.com came to be and ultimately overtook ICC to become, along with Lichess, the most oft-used sites for online play. I found some of the content here somewhat distracting and not particularly accessible to non-software code writers. It does, however, explain how Lichess became a strong competitor for Chess.com, and that was of interest. In all, though, this reads at times like a movie script for the author's employer, Chess.com.

I did enjoy the author's confession to be a 'weak chess player, but a strong chess player' – meaning he can effortlessly beat the average amateur player, but could not expect to beat an internationally titled player (I also belong in this category). It does call into question one of the claims on the book's back dustcover, that the author is 'an internationally ranked chess player.' This is true – any player who gets an international ranking is 'internationally ranked' – but it is hyperbolic. The author is well below the playing level of even the lowest of the international titles, FIDE master, let alone that of an international master or grandmaster. That said, his discussion of how he came to become a chess journalist via the Internet is an interesting read, and the author is, indeed, a well-respected chess journalist.

The last chapter describes what has become incredibly impactful for many chess personalities: streaming. Streaming live events has been available for over a decade, but the rise of online tournaments at regular time controls was largely driven by the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic. The book describes how Magnus Carlsen led the creation of a series of international events during this time-period. While this is true, the concept of moving chess online wasn't revolutionary. For example, at the same time, the United States Chess Federation was partnering with online platforms (including Chess.com) to move its national title events online.

***** Continued on Page 34 *****

Chess in the Third Reich: How the Game Was Played, Glorified, and Abused in Nazi Germany, 1933 - 1945

Taylor Kingston, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2025, 285 pp., \$49.95, [ISBN: 978-1-4766-9260-9](#)

Reviewed by Joshua Anderson

Author's note: During these two reviews there were two topics of note that deserve far more coverage than they are going to get. The first topic worthy of some discussion is at what level people should be using computers to check older games. The second issue is Chat GPT reviews. I had done them purely out of curiosity and was amazed at how they read. I then asked Chat GPT for the reviews of the books Mark did. My thoughts on GPT's results and what, if anything, this means for chess publications, in the next issue.

Please Note: I am friends with Taylor Kingston on Facebook and we have had numerous positive interactions.

McFarland changed its title type with Taylor Kingston's *Chess in the Third Reich: How the Game Was Played, Glorified, and Abused in Nazi Germany, 1933 - 1945* (from the usual name of subject: A Chess Biography), but in style, if not substance, it is much of the same. Fortunately, for the reader, that is quite good. Like other McFarland books, it is largely well written, thoroughly researched, and possesses an interesting collection of games.

While there are many books on chess and World War II, there are few about both. There are even fewer supporting the old Earnest May historical maxim: "Historians may not love our enemy, but we certainly do study them." This oddity led Kingston, a lifelong chess player with an interest in World War II, to examine how the Germans used chess during the years of 1933 to 1945.

In his forward, Herbert Bastain (President of the German Chess Federation 2011-2017) maintains that while the material is difficult, Kingston writes "in a factually precise yet entertaining manner, which makes it enjoyable to read despite the many times depressing nature of events." (Forward, 3) While I concur completely that Kingston's style is factually precise and I find the writing very readable, if with a few more block quotes than I think necessary, I can't quite go so far as to say entertaining¹. That said, how a study of World War II Germans makes me feel, should not stop anyone else from reading this work and having their own history dictate the balance between educational and entertaining.

¹ It might be noted that quite a few readers probably like block quotes and I know IM Tony Saidy is a big fan arguing that they provide a good sense of the time and place he is reading about. I do not think Saidy is wrong, but I find the jarringness of them to interrupt the flow of the text more than the verbiage is usually worth. Still, I will be the first to say that this is a matter of personal preference and in no way should be taken as gospel.

As a factually precise work, the book makes for an excellent research resource. The many score tables are quite useful for assessing how people did. On top of this, Kingston provides much information on the star players of the region and era, such as Alekhine, Keres, Kurt Paul Richter, and Josef Lokvenc. The bibliography, while not extravagant, is sufficient to help provide a starting point for those who wish deeper study into some points covered.

Simply reading the footnotes provides quite a bit more information as Kingston clearly enjoys "playing" in his footnotes. By "playing," I simply mean adding more material than simple citations, routinely suggesting ideas or theories that one doesn't feel strongly enough to put in the text, but want the readers to be aware of. Some scholars are very opposed to this, while I am not, and I think Kingston generally does a nice job. For example, when dealing with Alekhine's anti-Jewish work, his text comment is "To rebut all the *non sequiturs* and falsehoods in these excerpts, let alone in the full articles, would be another book in itself." (p.186) In the footnote, he talks more specifically about how the reader might see Alekhine's attack on Rudolph Spielmann as blatant falsehood that Alekhine knew was "rubbish." (p.272)

Bastain makes another point that is echoed at various times by Kingston, if not directly - "The book appears, tragically, at a time when some events of that period are beginning to be repeated in one part of Europe." The bombastic and over the top speech that is so pervasive with certain government officials on both sides of the Atlantic is routinely demonstrated in this push for German First, or more broadly, Aryans first. An example was: "At this historical moment {the Sudetenland affair} the German chess friends greet their Sudeten German comrades with up lifted hearts and warmly welcome them to the now joint Greater German Chess Federation. This great deed of the Führer..." (p.129)

As the book is very much top down, focusing on the top players in Germany, there is routinely a focus on the two German chess magazines of the day—*Deutsche Schachzeitung* (DSZ) and *Deutsche Schachblätter* (DSBI). The DSZ had been around since 1846, while the DSBI had only been around about 25 years with some interruptions for the First World War (of course they didn't number them at the time as no one knew mankind would be stupid enough to have a sequel.) The DSBI was the newer and more nationalistic magazine. For example, there were still occasions when DSZ, with a long chess history and a

working relationship with some players, choose to take the high road, such as choosing not to print part of Alekhine's "Dr. Euwe—Toy of the Jews," (p.186) whereas the DSB was more inclined to print.

While buyers of McFarland books are more interested in the "connective tissue" than most chessplayers, the games are still the thing. Here we have just 135 of them: 21 of them Alekhine's, seven of them Paul Keres', 18 of them Erich Eliskases', and 14 of them Efim Bogoljubow's (a few of the games are between these players). On the plus side, the book includes games from top players despite the limited number of contests and difficulties caused by the war. On the downside, most of these games are already known, and a few already have significant commentary.

Traditionally, McFarland books cover many games, but only provide a diagram or two per game. I was instructed that for the Byrne games I should pick just one position for a diagram. Not sure why, but many of the games have multiple diagrams, some have quite a few. Game 111 Georg Kieninger (not on Elo list #30 on chessmetrics.com) —Josef Lokvenc (Elo—book—2460, #28 — chessmetrics.com) has 6 in a 55 move game! It's a fine game and Lokvenc does win the championship, but it's odd to see so many. Probably a few too many for my tastes. Also, he adds very specific scores to variations arguing that they are more precise than *Informant* symbols. But then he argues not to pay too much attention to the specific numbers. Somewhat confusing. Also, while he gives specifics on the computer he is using, what he is using to reach his goal of "truth" won't ever get him there².

One thing of note that is missing and which given Kingston's subtitle I think would have served him well, would have been a chapter or two looking at how the average players, soldiers, and those in the detention/concentration camps used chess to help cope with the war. To be fair to Kingston, such information would have likely been quite difficult to come by having to rely almost completely, if not completely on anecdotal evidence. There is a brief section on the chess variant Wehrschach, but, as Kingston points out, most of the 25,000 sets went to the military and the game never really had a connection with the public.

² This leads to an interesting discussion on what level of computing power and strength is expected in historical monographs. One would expect a researcher to get access to the papers necessary for his research even if they were located far away or at some expense, but how much should/could be spent on quality computer analysis. Also, historical works may take years, Mark Taylor is at about 20 years on one of his projects, I am at about nine on the Byrne brothers (though lately it is mostly just game analysis causing the trouble), the strongest computer programs in 2015 are not close to as strong as those in 2025. Am I expected to go back and redo all my analysis? Should we expect Kingston, whose book seemed to take roughly seven years, to go back and redo his analysis, since the "truth" he sought is different now than it was when he started?

Chess in the Third Reich by Taylor Kingston offers a unique exploration of the intersection between the game of chess and the political climate of Nazi Germany. In this work, Kingston delves into the way the Nazi regime both utilized and manipulated chess for propaganda purposes, as well as how prominent chess figures were affected by the totalitarian government. Available in print and digital form.

***** Continued from Page 32 *****

As the book describes, streaming has become a lucrative business for many players, even some that lack chess international titles. The book provides an interesting look at how this has developed and how Twitch and YouTube chess content became a big-time source of income for its top streamers. The author notes that, because of a hack, it was revealed that Hikaru Nakamura earned \$774,000 from August 2019 to October 2021 on Twitch. As a world class player, that may not be completely surprising, but it was also revealed that many non-world-class players were earning hundreds of thousands of dollars as well. Clearly, this is no longer just a 'side business' for many chess Twitchers and YouTubers.

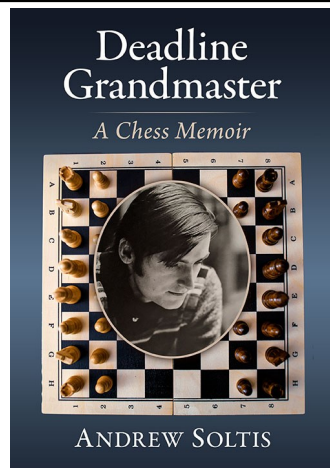
It's odd to discuss shortcomings of a book of this detail (and number of pages), but there are some topics that might have been addressed. The fall of Soviet Union/Russia chess in the 21st century is particularly notable. Its rise is discussed as it relates to Bobby Fischer, but its fall is also worthy of mention. Conversely, the rise of the U.S. as a chess superpower has been a notable development, driven by 'top 10' player status of Fabiano Caruana, Hikaru Nakamura, and Wesley So. It is interesting that Caruana is not mentioned at all in the book, even as the world championship contender who took Magnus Carlsen to tiebreaks in their match. Some of the credit for the rise of U.S. and international chess should be given to chess philanthropist, Rex Sinquefeld. Besides being the funder for the U.S. Championship for well over a decade, he has been a key driving force behind the Grand Chess Tour, which has been a significant source of strong tournaments and prize money for top international players.

I liked the book, and I learned a lot about 21st century chess from it. That said, I disagree with the author's early claim that this is a book that is targeted at "the contingent of new chess fans who've encountered the game as Netflix watchers [of the Queen's Gambit mini-series] or YouTube subscribers and are in desperate need of a good introduction to this sport and the world behind it." This is far too in-depth and 'inside baseball' for the casual chess player or fan. To me, the target audience is the committed chess player or fan who already has a decent knowledge of the game and its history. For that person, this book will complement their knowledge, and I am confident they will enjoy the book and its many interesting back stories.

Deadline Grandmaster: A Chess Memoir

Andrew Soltis, McFarland & Company, Inc., 2024, 368 pp., \$39.95, [ISBN: 978-1-4766-8998-2](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781476689982)

Reviewed by Joshua Anderson



Please note: I consider Andy a friend and try to see him whenever I am in New York. Further, many of the people he writes about are still alive and are, at the least, Facebook friends of mine. Many others who are deceased I also have some familiarity with due to my research on the Byrne brothers. There are a few little connections as well, such as the photo of Donald Byrne, from his son

Chris. I sent it and many other pictures to Soltis to see if they would be of help. Soltis's reminiscences of the switch from descriptive to algebraic led to a discussion about when and how Robert Byrne's column switched. The point here is that one should not expect an unbiased review.

Alexey Root famously, or perhaps not so famously, put a picture of one of her rabbits, Abba, in one of her chess books. In his autobiography, *Deadline Grandmaster*, Andy Soltis goes a bit further, placing a picture of many of his and his wife Marcy's bears. Don't worry; they have not changed the policies for New York apartments; these bears are stuffed.

Soltis's book is full of fun peeks into his life, the life of his friends, and New York chess of the last 70 years. In some ways, this is sort of odd, as it is usually John Hilbert whose McFarland books focus on an individual, but also celebrate the chess community from which they stem (a prime example being the Shipley book where he also talks about Philadelphia chess.)

Soltis begins at the beginning, Hazelton, but has the reader at the Marshall by page four, and in the 1962 New York City Junior two pages later. Of course, there weren't really little kids playing at the time, as he notes "The under-8 tournaments of today would have been considered child abuse." (p.6) (As someone who runs events with kids a bit younger than eight, I recognize both sides of this issue, and am reminded to focus on making events fun for our young players.)

Eliot Hearst, one of the many people in this book I knew slightly and Soltis knew much better, was the first to show Soltis that not all chess columns need be analysis-heavy. (Hearst, and a few others wrote "Chess in New York City/

Chess Kaleidoscope" columns for *Chess Life* around the 1940s and 1950s.) Eventually, in 1978, Burt Hochberg asked Soltis to write his own column for *Chess Life*. Soltis, who would have carte blanche, but was instructed to make it enjoyable, was only concerned if he could "do this every month for a full year?" For those of you who stopped getting *Chess Life*, (A mistake, by the way, as it is a steal for \$12 with your US Chess Membership.), yes, he could do it every month for a year. In fact, he is closer to having done it for half a century than for four decades, and if you ask him, he has plenty more topics to last him many years into the future!¹

A better understanding of the *New York Post* as a whole can be found in *Paper of Wreckage* (which incidentally Andy recommended to me), but throughout the book there are numerous references to the Post and Soltis had written the book planning to write about his day job as well. I don't think Soltis highlights the Post as much as he might. He covers his career of course, and a little bit about why his job, mostly second shift, was such a boon to his productivity. That said, he does talk a little about his reporting unrelated to his chess, a few big New York events, including the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, references to famous people he interacted with, and various events dealing with labor and the interplay of labor and management. I suspect more could have been told there, but ever aware of his audience, mostly chess players, Soltis, though a proponent of labor, touches on these issues only superficially.

Soltis's interaction with numerous publishers is more interesting, at least to me as an avid book collector, and who has had contact with many of the companies, as well as collecting books from companies that no longer exist. For instance, *Chilton Book Company*, a publisher of automobile books, really wanted to get into the chess book business at one point. They published Soltis's book, *The Great Chess Tournaments and Their Stories*, but soon decided that the chess book business was not for them. Ken Smith, and his silk top hat, had started *Chess Digest* in the 1970s and Soltis would write many books for them over the

¹ Succeeding Soltis, many years from now, is one of my dream chess jobs. The others being executive director of U S Chess Trust and Chair of the Historical Commission for FIDE. The fourth, running my own chess club, I have done thanks to Tri-Bridges Chess Club, and while I had not dreamed of holding the position of President of the Chess Journalists of America, I consider myself extremely fortunate to have the position.

years. The books, mostly “cheap pamphlets” called monographs by Smith, were on a single opening and were in stark contrast to his McFarland historical tomes. Ironically, his excellent run of McFarland’s started with a book on the Bird variation of the Ruy Lopez!

He is honest about his errors, usually in somewhat funny ways. When asked about a new puzzle from Japan, he briefly interviewed the man who brought it from Japan and, finding it too difficult, he recommended against the Post running it as “It requires a lot of logic. Americans aren’t very logical.” (p.349) The Post ran it anyway. Oh, the game, a little thing called Sudoku.

McFarland readers may be much more interested in the “connective tissue” than most, but the games are still important. In this case, Soltis’s game indices don’t quite match. For instance, the Vienna Game, Mises Variation doesn’t match up quite with C26. This isn’t so much an error as a problem that ECO codes, especially as one gets deep into a variation can be a bit more fluid than some people would like. As for the games themselves, they are interesting choices, highlighted by analysis, not computer driven, but rather historically driven. Soltis will regularly write about how opening idea x evolved in his experience, or how in the game he thought this or that. It may be because I have an interest in the evolution of ideas, or my historical background, but I like this sort of analysis much better than “computer says x.” That said, were I planning to play Gukesh for the World Championship, I wouldn’t find much here to help. Again, Soltis knows his audience and few of his readers will be playing Gukesh anytime soon.

Soltis’s books are often recognized for their thorough research. Obviously, this one was more of the same. But really it is a celebration of a life well-lived. It leaves the reader with a sense of strong academic fulfillment and a soft and squishy feeling, like cuddling up with one of those (thankfully stuffed) bears.

“Genius is a starry word; but if there ever was a chess player to whom that attribute applied, it was Paul Morphy.”
—GM Andrew Soltis

“I have seen that I don’t understand too much about chess.” —GM Robert Hübner

“Among a great many other things that chess teaches you is to control the initial excitement you feel when you see something that looks good. It trains you to think before grabbing and to think just as objectively when you’re in trouble.” —Stanley Kubrick

Every Move Matters

by Evangeline Juliet John Francis Kennedy

The chessboard glowed softly under the dim light of the study, a battlefield in miniature. The pieces stood frozen, as if holding their breath, their roles carved into their very shapes. Across the table, two players sat in silence—an old man with eyes sharp as a blade and a young boy, barely tall enough to see over the board.

“It’s not just a game,” the old man said, his voice gravelly and deliberate. “Every move matters. Every choice leaves a mark.”

The boy nodded, his fingers hesitating over a pawn. He pushed it forward to claim the center. “Why does this move matter so much?” he asked, glancing up nervously.

The old man leaned forward, his hands resting on the edge of the table. “That pawn’s move shapes everything. It opens the board, frees your pieces, and creates opportunities—but it also exposes you. That’s life. Every action has consequences.”

The boy considered this as the old man responded with a pawn of his own. The game unfolded slowly, each piece finding its place. The boy moved his knight, eyeing the center of the board. “This knight’s jump feels different.”

“It is,” the old man said. “Knights are tricky. They see paths others don’t. But remember, boldness without purpose is dangerous.”

As the game progressed, the boy found himself drawn to the queen. He hesitated, then moved her into the fray. “She’s powerful,” he said, almost in awe.

“She is,” the old man agreed. “But power alone doesn’t win games. It’s how you use it. Every move builds on the last. That’s why you must think ahead—and never take a move lightly.”

The boy’s final move brought his queen into position. “Checkmate,” he said, his voice filled with surprise.

The old man smiled, tipping his king. “Well done. You’re learning.”

“So, every move really does matter?”

“Every single one,” the old man said, his voice filled with quiet certainty. “In chess and in life, remember that.”

San Sebastian 1911

Robert Irons, Russell Enterprises, 2024, 272 pp., \$34.95, [ISBN: 978-1-949859-91-1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/9781949859911)

Reviewed by Mark Capron

San Sebastian 1911 by Robert Irons is a retelling of one of the most significant chess tournaments in history. Set against the backdrop of the elegant Spanish resort city of San Sebastián, this book dives into the highly competitive 1911 chess event. Of the greatest players of the time, only World Champion Emanuel Lasker had to decline (due to his wedding). The event featured 15 participants including Akiba Rubinstein, José Raúl Capablanca, Aron Nimzovich, Siegbert Tarrasch, Rudolf Spielmann, Dawid Janowski, Géza Maróczy, Richard Teichmann, Carl Schlechter, Amos Burn, Oldřich Duras, Milan Vidmar, Paul Leonhardt, Ossip Bernstein, and Frank Marshall.

This is an English translation of Jacque Mieses' book *Internationales Schach-Turnier zu San Sebastian 1911* to form the basis of the book. Irons employed Gerard Nielsen to do the heavy translation work. It is more than a pure translation; it includes information from many other sources. Irons was attempting to make a one-stop-shop for everything and anything about the games and tournament.

There are two completely original chapters: "The Case for Capablanca" and "Addendum". In the former, as one would suspect, Irons provides many data points indicating why Capablanca was deserving of the invite even though he did not meet one of the pre-tournament regulations. The regulation was about who was allowed to be invited to play. Only masters who had achieved at least two fourth place prizes in international tournaments within the past ten years were allowed to be invited. Capablanca did not meet this regulation because he had never played in an international tournament. The most impressive data point was Capablanca's thorough trouncing of Marshall in a match played in 1909, winning +8-1=14! The other new chapter "Addendum" was a short summary of what might happen if one of these players had to compete against today's masters or if one of today's masters went back in time and played. Much has been debated on this subject over the years. I'll leave it to the reader to decide for themselves after reading Irons' take.

The tournament itself is of immense historical importance as it laid the framework for today's super GM tournaments. Mieses was the organizer of the event and established many player benefits within the regulations he stipulated. Some of these were paying out four prizes, paying players for each win, and covering the travel costs of the players.

There are several uses of humor in the book, for example:

"Germany is represented by the tribunal of Tarrasch, Leonhardt, and Teichmann. The latter bears the joke name 'Richard the Fifth' in the master circles, because his first name is Richard, and he often comes in fifth place. Since there are only four prizes in San Sebastian, he will probably have to try to become his own ancestor and transform into Richard the Fourth."

One more example used by Irons was a quote from *My Chess Career* by Capablanca about his rocky relationship with Nimzovich:

"Nimzovich, who considered himself very superior to me and others in the tournament, became very arrogant during the course of one of his lightning games against Bernstein, saying, because a remark that I made, that I should not interfere with their game, as they were reputed masters and I had yet to become one. The outcome of this discourteous remark was a series of quick games for a side bet, which I won with ridiculous ease, and ended by his retracting the statement he had previously made."

The hardback version has sturdy construction, used paper that did not allow any bleed-through, and displays an excellent front cover design. I did find a few verb tense problems. The tournament was in the past but used present-tense verbs in places. I'm sure this was difficult due to the translation and incorporation of other sources to make the tournament "come to life".

I understand the book is really about the games, but I would have preferred to have a short chapter on each participant highlighting their career or at the very least a single chapter with a small section highlighting each participant's career before the tournament chapters began.

Irons provides analysis of all games played in the tournament (even the partial game Capablanca—Teichmann, the full game score had been lost). The annotations are clear and insightful, which helps us recognize the brilliance of the grandmasters involved. Some of this can be traced back to Mieses' book, but much of it comes from the various sources Irons incorporates. Lastly, Stockfish analysis helps to define the truth as we know it today.

An example of the annotations can be found in the famous game:

Nimzovich,Aron—Capablanca,Jose Raul [C00]

San Sebastian International Masters Tournament (8),
03.03.1911

[Irons,Robert]

This encounter between Nimzovich and Capablanca turns out to be very interesting; the former, in order to free himself from his cramped position, sacrifices two minor pieces for a rook and pawn. Although this does manage to set some problems for Capablanca, it proves insufficient as the Cuban overcomes the challenge and forces White to submit.

1.e4 e6 2.d3

Nimzovich is one of the most talented of the youngest generation of masters with a distinctly personal style. But his preference for strange, bizarre, and even ugly features in the opening causes his defeat when the opponent responds with simple counterplay as in his game with Teichman and here with Capablanca. (Dr. Tarrasch) This restrained central approach, in conjunction with the fianchetto of the white-square bishop, is currently quite popular.

2...d5 3.♖d2 c5 4.♗g3 ♖c6 5.♗e2

White's position is exactly the same setup that he used in Round 6 against Schlechter, who played both center pawns to the fifth rank. The pawn structure Capablanca uses is currently more common.

5...♗d6 6.0-0 ♖c7 7.♞e1 ♗ge7 8.c3 0-0 9.a3 f5?!±

Occasionally followed by ... e6-e5. Both 9...♞d8= and 9...b6= look better than the text.

10.♗f1 ♗d7 11.exd5 exd5 12.b4?±

Here 12.d4± works better.

12...♞ae8?±

Schlechter recommends 12...b5, because after the text move White could play 13.bxc5! ♗xc5 14.d4 ♗d6 15.c4 to improve his game.; 12...b6= is SF's preference.

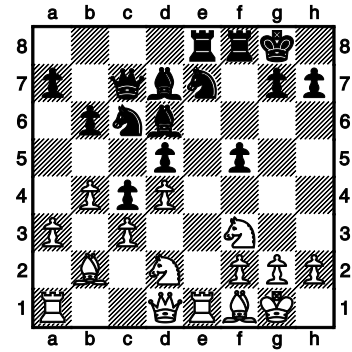
13.♗b2?±

13.bxc5 ♗xc5 14.d4± followed by a4 or even c4 looks good for White.

13...b6 14.d4?!±

Stockfish prefers 14.b5 closing the queenside.

14...c4



15.♗xc4?!±

15.b5 ♗d8 (White tries to free his restricted game by making a sacrifice with plenty of chances. SF prefers 15...♗a5 16.a4 ♗g6 17.♞xe8 ♞xe8 18.♗a3 ♗xa3 19.♞xa3 f4) 16.a4 ♗g6 17.♞xe8 ♞xe8 18.♗a3 ♗xa3 19.♞xa3 f4=.

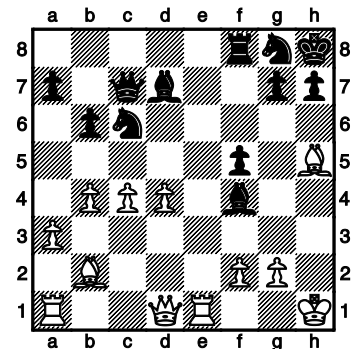
15...dxc4 16.♗xc4+ ♖h8 17.♗g5?+

This "threat" is easily defended but can also simply be ignored. Slightly better is 17.♗f1±.

17...♗xh2+ 18.♖h1 ♗f4 19.♗f7+ ♞xf7 20.♗xf7 ♞f8 21.♗h5 ♗g8

To clear the way for the queen to reach h4 via d8.

22.c4



White seems to be doing quite well.

22...♖d8?±

Black is better off after 22...♞f6 23.♖g1 ♞h6-+.

23.♖f3

Best here would be g2-g3 although Black still maintains his advantage with ... ♗f4-g5-f6.

23...♖h4?!± 24.♖h3

Mieses: 24.♖g1? ♖h2+ 25.♖f1 ♗f6 26.d5 ♗e5 27.♖h3 ♖xh3

28.gxh3 ♖xc4 29.♙xf6 gxh6-+.

24...♗xf2 25.♞e2 ♖g3 26.♗xg3 ♙xg3 27.c5?±

Preferable is 27.d5 ♖ce7 28.♞c1 Intending ♙f3 and c4-c5.

27...♖ce7 28.♙f3 ♙b5 29.♞c2?!-+

29.♞d2 ♙f4 30.♞dd1± is SF's first choice.

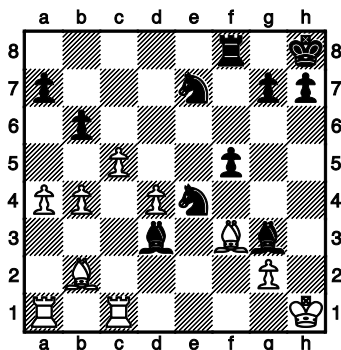
29...♖f6 30.a4?!

30.♞c3 ♙a4 31.♞e3 ♖g6 32.cxb6 axb6 33.d5-+ puts up more of a fight than the text.

30...♙d3 31.♞cc1?!

If 31.♞d2 then 31...♖e4! is no better.

31...♖e4



An unexpectedly quick conclusion now follows.

32.b5 ♞f6

Threatening mate in at most three moves.

33.♙xe4 ♙f2

Mate can no longer be stopped.

0-1

I found the book free of errors for the most part, however, an error crept in on the note to move 31 in the above game (the error was removed for this review).

Irons makes attempts to humanize the players, showing the tension and pressure that built throughout the tournament. The schedule (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday with all other days used to complete adjourned games) was not very forgiving and playing top competition every round took its toll.

The 1911 San Sebastián tournament is remembered as a major event in the chess world, both for the quality of play

and for the way it highlighted some of the major players of the era. Capablanca's victory was especially significant as it added to his growing reputation. His influence on chess was profound, particularly in the area of the endgame. *San Sebastian 1911* is gripping tale that chess lovers and chess historians will both appreciate. **4/5 stars**.

The Souls of the Board

By Evangeline Juliet John Francis Kennedy

Beneath the silent checkered plain,
A kingdom stirs, its fate in chain.
The pawns march forth, a humble row,
Dreaming of crowns they'll never know.

The knights weave arcs, in shadows glide,
Guardians sworn, their paths untried.
With unseen power, they leap unseen,
Bridges of trust where war has been.

Bishops slide on angled ways,
Paths of chaos, their truth ablaze.
One eye on battle, one eye on peace,
Whispering softly, "Our work won't cease."

The rooks stand firm by castle walls,
Silent watchers, until duty calls.
Straight as an arrow, their power flies,
Breaking the calm with steady cries.

The queen, a tempest, boundless and free,
Wields destiny's hand with mastery.
She conquers worlds, she bends the tide,
The force of empires at her side.

And the king, the crown, so frail yet grand,
Holds the weight of the realm in his *trembling* hand.
He cannot run, yet cannot fall,
For the game's design protects it all.

But beyond the board, the truth unfolds:
Each piece reflects the stories we hold.
A pawn can rise; a queen may fall,
In the chess of life, we play them all.

Commemorating The 45th Chess Olympiad

Awani Kumar, Lucknow, INDIA

Hungary has been a significant player in chess for hundreds of years. The Game of Kings (or the King of Games!?) arrived in the country as early as the 14th century. Hungary was involved in founding the International Chess Federation (FIDE) in 1924 and since then, Hungarians have produced many world-famous chess players. The names Lajos Portisch, Péter Lékó, Zoltán Almási, Ildikó Mádl, Richárd Rapport, and the Polgár family are known worldwide. Judit Polgar and Susan Polgar got Best Female Player and FIDE Trainers' 100 Years (female) award respectively during FIDE's centenary celebration. Hungary hosted the 45th Chess Olympiad and it turned out to be the largest. The event was contested by a total of 197 teams in Open section, representing 195 national federations, both records for a Chess Olympiad. The Women's tournament also featured a record-number of 183 teams from 181 federations. In the Open event, the Indian team set a new record by scoring 21 out of 22 possible match points, being the only unbeaten team in the tournament with four match points more than the rest of the field. Nine national teams and teams of refugees made their debut in Budapest. Hungarian Post issued postal envelope and stamp to mark the event and the author wishes to commemorate it with some curious knight's tours. The challenge is to move a knight on an empty board so that it visits all the cells only once.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 are monogram tours (knight move delineating letters). Here, the lines joining the square numbers $1^2, 2^2, 3^2 \dots 8^2$, namely, 1, 4, 9 ... 64 are forming letters 'H' and 'U' respectively – the FIRST letters in Hungary. Figure 3 and Figure 4 has the square numbers forming numeral 4 and 5 (which correlates with 45th Olympiad). Eagle-eyed readers may have spotted that cell 1 and cell 64 are also at knight's move.

21	2	13	6	23	18	15	40
12	7	22	19	14	41	24	17
3	20	1	10	5	16	39	42
8	11	4	49	64	25	30	35
47	50	9	26	31	36	43	38
56	53	48	63	44	61	34	29
51	46	55	58	27	32	37	60
54	57	52	45	62	59	28	33

1.

59	32	57	26	61	30	55	52
24	63	60	31	56	53	10	29
33	58	25	62	27	16	51	54
48	23	64	35	50	9	28	11
39	34	49	44	15	4	17	8
22	47	40	1	36	7	12	5
41	38	45	20	43	14	3	18
46	21	42	37	2	19	6	13

2.

11	44	13	46	61	2	53	6
14	47	10	3	8	5	62	51
43	12	45	60	1	52	7	54
26	15	48	9	4	59	50	63
33	42	25	16	49	64	55	58
30	27	32	39	36	57	22	19
41	34	29	24	17	20	37	56
28	31	40	35	38	23	18	21

3.

17	20	27	24	41	22	29	32
26	13	18	21	28	31	42	39
19	16	25	36	23	40	33	30
12	9	14	55	60	35	38	43
15	4	11	8	37	54	61	34
10	7	2	49	56	59	44	53
3	48	5	64	51	46	57	62
6	1	50	47	58	63	52	45

4.



This Olympiad is all the more memorable to the author because India won double Gold for the first time.