

The Chess Journalist

Volume XLVIII (Issue 161)

April 2025



CHESS JOURNALISTS OF AMERICA



From Kasparov with Love!

This board, a generous gift to Tri-Bridges Chess Club from Richard Stoy, was used by Kasparov and Deep Blue for games 2—6, in their 1996 match in Philadelphia. Photos courtesy of Joshua Anderson.

Table of Contents:	Page
Hello From the Editor	3
Chess Journalists of America Nomination Call for 24-25 Awards	4
Chess History of America Preservation Project by Joshua Anderson	5
American Chess Archives: An Update by Joshua Anderson, Jon Edwards, & Mark Capron	8
10th World Champion Boris Spassky Passes by Mark Capron (quotes submitted by Awani Kumar)	10
Former FIDE President and GM Friðrik Ólafsson Passes by Mark Capron	12
In the Limelight: Jon Jacobs interviewed by Mark Capron	13
<i>Piece Down/Under</i> by Dwight Weaver	25
<i>Openings for Amateurs: Theory vs Practice</i> by Pete Tamburro, Reviewed by Andy Ansel	26
WOMEN VS MEN by Bob Basalla	31
From Vienna with Love by Agermose2 (Michael Agermose Jensen)	34
<i>World Chess Championship 1948: The Hague—Moscow</i> by Paul Keres, Reviewed by Mark Capron	39
<i>Unveiling the Victory: How Spassky Won the Third World Junior Chess Championship Antwerp 1955</i> by Henri Serruys, Reviewed by Mark Capron	40
<i>AlphaBet Chess Series Books 1 and 2</i> by Vishnu Warriar, Reviewed by Rachel Schechter	41
<i>The Modernized Flank Attack</i> by Christian Bauer & Pierre Laurent-Paoli, Reviewed by NM Randy Bauer	42
<i>Moves 3 to 10</i> by Nery Strasman, Reviewed by Akshaj Bodla	43
GM Boris Spassky – a tribute by Awani Kumar	44
Oddities and Peculiarities (and Obscurities) <i>The Pion Coiffe</i>	48

The Chess Journalists of America:

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

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

Secretary: Rachel Schechter (rachelaschechter@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Mark Capron (mcapron243@mchsi.com)

Editor: Mark Capron (mcapron243@mchsi.com)

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

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

Social Media & Outreach Manager: Eva Kennedy (EvangelineJJFK.OfficialOutreach@outlook.com)

Advertising policies for The Chess Journalist
(effective 10/31/06)

1. Ad rate \$150/page (fractional pages proportional).
2. All ad copy and payment must be received by the editorial deadline (4/5, 7/5, 10/5, 1/5). If copy or payment is not received by that date, the ad will not appear.
3. The editor reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason. If an ad is rejected, payment will be refunded.

Notes:

1. All copy (paper or electronic) must be camera-ready. We do not provide free design or layout services.
2. Reasons for rejecting ad copy include, but are not limited to: 1) Inappropriate content; 2) Foul language; 3) Actual or potential libel, defined as defamatory factual assertions not probably true.

Submittal deadlines 4/5, 7/5, 10/5, 1/5

Note: The Chess Journalist is published by the Chess Journalists of America. One time only publication rights have been obtained from signed contributors. All other rights are hereby assigned to the authors. Articles do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the CJA, its officers, or its members. Copyright @ 2025 by the Chess Journalists of America.

Join the CJA!

The Chess Journalists of America seeks to encourage chess journalists, writers, editors, and publishers to exchange information and ideas for their mutual benefit, to promote the highest standards of ethics in chess journalism, to represent United States chess journalists in appropriate national and international bodies, and to influence policies affecting the promotion of chess.

Join or renew by sending dues to the CJA Secretary:

Mark Capron
3123 Juniper Drive
Iowa City, IA 52245

Or join via website: www.chessjournalism.org

Membership Dues:

Regular—\$10 for 1 year

Membership Plus—\$15 includes one entry into awards (only available May 1 until the awards submission deadline, usually Mid—June)

Outside the US—\$15 for 1 year

Hello From the Editor

It's that time of year, AWARDS time. See page 4 for the details, but get your entries lined up. We want to see the best in Chess Journalism.

Unfortunately, the Chess World has recently lost two giants, 10th World Champion Boris Spassky, and former FIDE president and GM Friðrik Ólafsson. I have written a bit about each of them in this issue. Happenstance would have it that I was reviewing the book *Unveiling the Victory: How Spassky Won the Third World Junior Chess Championship Antwerp 1955* for this issue. In addition, our friend Awani Kumar, sent in a nice tribute to Spassky.

In continuing with the Thinkers Publishing book reviews we have four this issue: the Spassky book mentioned above; *AlphaBet Chess Series Books 1 and 2* by Vishnu Warriar, reviewed by Rachel Schechter; *The Modernized Flank Attack* by Christian Bauer & Pierre Laurent-Paoli, reviewed by NM Randy Bauer; and *Moves 3 to 10* by Nery Strasman, reviewed by new author Akshaj Bodla.

We have reviewed two other books in this issue, both fantastic. The first is the third book in the Openings for Amateurs series by Pete Tamburro, *Openings for Amateurs: Theory vs Practice*. Andy Ansel gives this book high praise. I have just started to read it and I agree wholeheartedly. The second book comes from Verendel Publishing, *World Chess Championship 1948: The Hague—Moscow 3rd Edition* by Paul Keres. Verendel Publishing has made a name for themselves as the craftsmanship of their books is outstanding. Combine that with content like Paul Keres delivers, and you have a winner that every chess player should own.

We put NM Jon Jacobs in the limelight for this issue. Jon has won multiple CJA awards in the past and is working on a couple of books right now. Jon has a lot of chess history and regales us with some stories.

We have more info on the American Chess Archives project.

Frequent contributor Bob Basalla writes in about Men and Women in chess movie scenes.

I ran into a blog by Michael Agermose Jensen and really enjoyed it as he explored the history of the Pierce Gambit. I received his permission to reprint it here. I think you will take pleasure in this one quite a bit.

I am sure you have all heard of an “odds” game where one player removes a pawn or piece to start the game. Well I found an odds game that will blow your mind. Check out Oddities and Peculiarities for the details.

Due to a requested delay by Rachel's subject for the “Queens Corner” that was meant for this issue, we will need to push it back to the July issue. Believe me it will be worth the wait.



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 July 5.

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

—Mark Capron

Errata: In our review of *Chess in the Third Reich* by Taylor Kingston we errantly stated that he spent seven years working on the book when in actuality he spent only about three years. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused.

"Courageous convictions will drag the dream into existence." — Neil Peart

Chess Journalists of America Nomination Call for 24-25 Awards

The Chess Journalists of America (CJA) calls for nominations for the annual Chess Journalists of America awards. The CJA Awards recognize the best in all facets of chess journalism, both print and online. The best chess articles, columns, photojournalism, online writing, and social media are honored within their respective categories. Recognized annually by their peers, the public, and members of CJA, the prestigious awards showcase American works published in English between June 1, 2024, and May 31, 2025.

CJA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the study and knowledge of chess as a journalistic and scholarly endeavor. Membership is open to everyone at an annual membership fee of \$10. Award winners will be acknowledged by receiving a printable online certificate; listed in CJA's magazine, *The Chess Journalist*; and listed on the CJA website and social media platforms. CJA's annual awards are open to anyone. There is an entry fee of \$15 for the first entry, which includes membership or renewal to CJA, and an \$8 fee for each subsequent entry (unless otherwise noted). State organizations may enter three entries in the Cramer Awards for free. Additional award details can be found online at chessjournalism.org. Interested parties can also contact CJA Chief Judge Joshua Anderson at joshuamiltonanderson@gmail.com. Please use the QR code to go directly to our entry page. Award winners will be announced first at the annual CJA meeting during the U.S. Open, followed by a complete listing on the CJA website.

2024-5 AWARDS

TOP THREE CATEGORIES

(Open to print or online)

Chess Journalist of the Year

Best Story of the Year

Best Column

BEST CHESS BOOK

Best Book – Instruction

Best Book – Other

Best Self-Published Book

BEST VISUAL ARTS

Best Photojournalism Article

Best Single Chess Photo

Best Art

Best Single Chess Magazine Cover

Best Cartoon

BEST PRINT ARTICLES

(Open only to publications)

Best Regular Newspaper Column

Best Single Article of Local Interest

Best Feature Article

Best Interview

Best Tournament Report – National/International

Best Tournament Report – State/Local

Best Club Newsletter

Best Instructive Lesson

Best Review

Best Analysis

Best Historical Article

Best Humorous Contribution

Best Personal Narrative

BEST ONLINE AND SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS AND FEATURES

Best Interview

Best Feature Article

Best Podcast

Best Single Podcast Episode

Best Tournament Report – National/International

Best Tournament Report – State/Local

Best Club Newsletter

Best Instruction Lesson

Best Analysis

Best Humorous Contribution

Best Historical Article

Best Personal Narrative

Best Overall Chess Website

Best Small Organization Website (500 or less, states in Cramer Awards)

Best Online Blog

Best Paid Blog (Substack)

Best Educational Lesson

Best Online Review

Best Non-Instructive Chess Video

Best Twitter Feed

Best Weekly Video Program

Best Documentary

Best Tournament/Match Coverage (This may be a series of videos)

JUNIOR

(Under 21 at the time of writing)

Best Print Article by a Junior

Best Online Article by a Junior

Best Personal Narrative by a Junior

Best Online Website by a Junior

CRAMER AWARDS

Best State Championship Report

Best State Tournament Coverage

Best Scholastic Coverage in State (may be multiple articles)

Best Overall State Website

Best State Magazine/Newsletter – Print

Best State Magazine/Newsletter – Online

Best Personal Narrative

Best Photograph

Best State Magazine Photo

Best State Facebook Page

Link to the Chess Journalists of America webpage where you can enter.



Chess History of America Preservation Project by Joshua Anderson


Back in October 2024 Joshua Anderson presented the following slides to The Saint Louis Chess Conference—Chess in Education in St. Louis about the project to preserve all the great chess writings in America. See the following article for a project update.

Chess History of America Preservation Project (CHAPP)

Joshua Anderson, President of Chess Journalists of America
Chess Preservation for Education and Research: Games, Data, and Periodicals
The Saint Louis Chess Conference 24-26 October 2024

Who Is The CJA?


- Chess Journalists of America (CJA): established in 1972
- Purpose: support chess journalists and writers across the country
- Objective: encourage members to exchange information and ideas
- Focus: preservation of written and oral chess history
- Recognition: annual awards for excellence in chess journalism

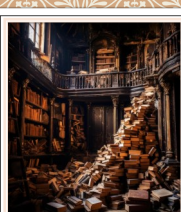


Overview

3 Big Questions:

1. Why should chess periodicals be preserved?
2. What is the Chess History of America Preservation Project (CHAPP)?
3. How will CHAPP contribute to the preservation effort?





“When I was younger I thought of my published writing as the fragments shored against my ruin. As I approach my ruin I no longer care. Eventually my online work will disappear and my printed work will be packed away. I'm fine with that.”

- Anonymous Chess Writer

When Did American Chess Libraries Start?

- **George Allen (1808-1876)** Philadelphia, PA: his chess library was described as the largest and most valuable in the country in 1857
 - Upon his death, collection of almost 900 books and 250 letters bought by Library Company of Philadelphia, now in National Archives
- By the 1880's collecting chess publications became a prominent pastime for gentlemen in America
- White, Cook, and Gilberg were dominant figures and staunch friends who cooperated in sharing their knowledge and discoveries, including maximizing the opportunities provided by the dispersal of several European chess collections in the 1870's and 1880's
- **Charles A. Gilberg (1835-1898)** Brooklyn, N. Y.: his chess library contained over 2,000 chess books
 - Upon his death, collection was bought by Columbia University, now in Harvard University library
- **Eugene Beauharnais Cook (1830-1915)** Hoboken, New Jersey: Princeton University Class of 1850
 - Amassed the 3rd-largest collection of chess books in the world and was particularly interested in creating and collecting chess problems
 - Upon his death, the collection was donated to Princeton University
- **John G. White (1845-1928)** Cleveland, Ohio: was the foremost chess collector of his era and frequently gave books to his friends
 - Upon his death, donated 11,000 books from his private library and an endowment of a \$250,000 (~\$4,602,280 today) for continuing his collections to the Cleveland Public Library
 - The John G. White Chess and Checkers Collection has the largest collection of chess books and periodicals in the world

How Can Chess Periodicals be Useful?

Educational resource for individuals:

- **Improving** playing skills like strategy, tactics, openings, endgames, or even how to prepare for a tournament
- **Learning** about history- periodicals uniquely speak to a particular audience at a specific moment in time, so these magazines can provide a window into the past showing how people viewed an event at that time
- **Understanding** chess culture and the global chess community
- **Inspiring** current players and future generations to continue- lure of possibility of finding a hidden gem, such as discovering an “unknown game” that had been forgotten or coming across an unexpected move that might come in handy at the next tournament

Desirable source material for conducting research:

- Can serve as a primary or secondary source depending on the specific research question being asked

Provides a variety of content, such as:

- **News:** coverage of recent chess events
 - Frequently includes a detailed account of the facts
 - Often also has commentary from 1 or more perspective(s)
- **Interviews:** engaging conversations with top players
- **Analysis:** expert game commentary with strategic insight
- **Instructional articles or puzzles:** for learning and improvement
- **Historical stories:** entertainment or to gain a different perspective
- **Annotated games:** enhance understanding of the thought process
- **Book reviews:** contemporary chess books with initial reactions
- **Announcements:** notification of upcoming chess events
- **Advertisements:** contemporary chess-related items for sale
- **Images:** chess-themed art or photographs of events, players, items

What Has Been Done to Preserve Chess Periodicals?

Creation of chess periodical collections

- John Donaldson, International Master: 1993 US Open
 - Gave a talk about the need to preserve chess magazines, to raise awareness about the White Collection and the need to ensure current publications reach the White Collection consistently so they can be preserved for the future
- Shannon Bailey and Emily Allred, Curators at World Chess Hall of Fame: early 2010's
 - WCHOF began a collection of state and regional journals

Preservation of print materials through digitization

- HathiTrust Digital Library: large-scale collaborative repository of digital content from research libraries including content digitized via Google Books and the Internet Archive digitization initiatives, as well as content digitized locally by libraries
- Many public libraries have begun to digitize collections to make them more accessible on-line

Creation of chess periodical collections

+

Preservation of print materials through digitization

+

CJA

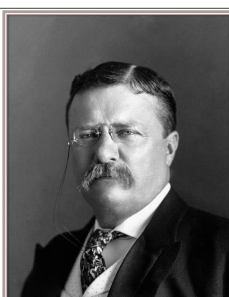
=

💡

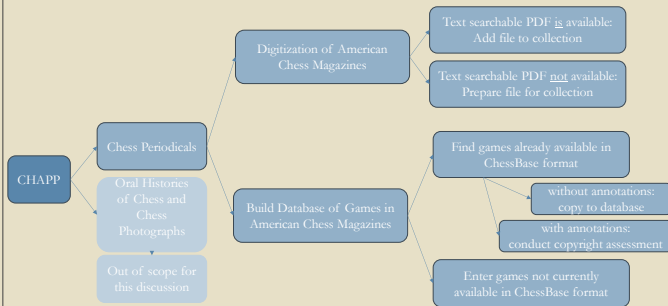
CHAPP

“Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure... than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat.”

-Theodore Roosevelt
26th President of the United States and noted historian



What is the Chess History of America Preservation Project (CHAPP)?



Where to Start Finding Content?

Outreach to the chess community

- Local chess clubs
 - Club publications
 - Pittsburg club magazine started in the 1940s
- State chess organizations
 - State publications
 - May have database with games from state tournaments or played by residents with titles
- Private collectors with potential interest
 - Kerry Lawless in California
 - Andy Ansel in New York
- Public chess collections
 - World Chess Hall of Fame willing to have newsletter collection scanned
 - Could we get Lund to do something similar?
 - White collection archivists will scan materials with expired copyrights as schedules permit

Collecting has begun

- Have identified over 600 magazines, with tens of thousands of issues, and millions of pages...

[Chess Newsletters - States and Organizations with AA and notes - Google Sheets](#)



Copyright caution

- Copyright does not apply to chess games
- Annotations may be copyrighted
- Copyright restrictions allow limited use for strictly educational purposes
- Hathitrust – will list if search item in copyrighted material, making it easier for the researcher to know where he has to look.

Technological Challenges:

- Intuitive organization of the individual files needed to make content easy to navigate
- Multiple processing steps required to digitize content for full accessibility
- Metadata tags required for reliable retrieval and optimization of data for research suitability
- Magazine pages are often bound so they need to be scanned a page at a time (can't use the faster auto-feed process)
- Using the old eradle scanners at White Collection, I got through roughly a year of Corsair: A Chess Periodical, one year of Michigan Chess, and a year of Virginia Chess Federation Newsletter in a little than a day, while certainly faster than transcribing, it's still time-consuming



Technological Solutions:

- Availability of adequate storage space constrains the size of collection
- Adequate storage space becoming more affordable- 100 TB drive (will incase several actual drives together) for less than \$3k, 10 TB Google drive space \$600 a yr; tech articles suggest 50 tb by 2027
- PDFs are getting smaller in Awards this year a 150+ page book was entered that was only 12 MB So, 83,333 type books on 1 TB of data. TCJ averages about 28 mb so when Mark Capron is roughly 8982 years old, he will have produced a TB of material assuming a constant 4 issues a year
- Using a phone app can be faster and more convenient than using a scanner, and with increasing frequency, the apps can scan at 300 dpi, which is the minimum quality standard for OCR performance to be reasonably accurate
- We learned from people with day jobs in big pharma, an industry managing tremendous amounts of data, that to make the scanned PDFs searchable, each file would need to have Optical Character Recognition (OCR) performed
- A best practices document is currently being written to provide guidelines for interested individuals when preparing files, such as, a representative from a state organization who would like their state's magazine to be more widely available and to contribute to the project

Who do we engage in the Chess Community?

- Time: tempus finitum est – will require a lot of time and contributions from many people
- Local chess clubs
 - Citizen Archivist volunteers
 - Club publications
 - Pittsburg club magazine started in the 1940s
- State Organizations
 - State newsletter/ magazine editors
 - State historians
- Non-chess Organizations
 - Young people routinely looking for hours for various projects, scholarships, etc.



Tri-Bridges Chess Club in Exton, PA

What is a Citizen Archivist?

National Archives program started in 2010 to recruit volunteers

- Members of the public with no special training required
- Contribute to improving accessibility to the library's vast collections
- By creating electronic transcripts of content and creating descriptive metadata tags which are used for indexing items
- Uses a web-based platform so volunteers can work anywhere



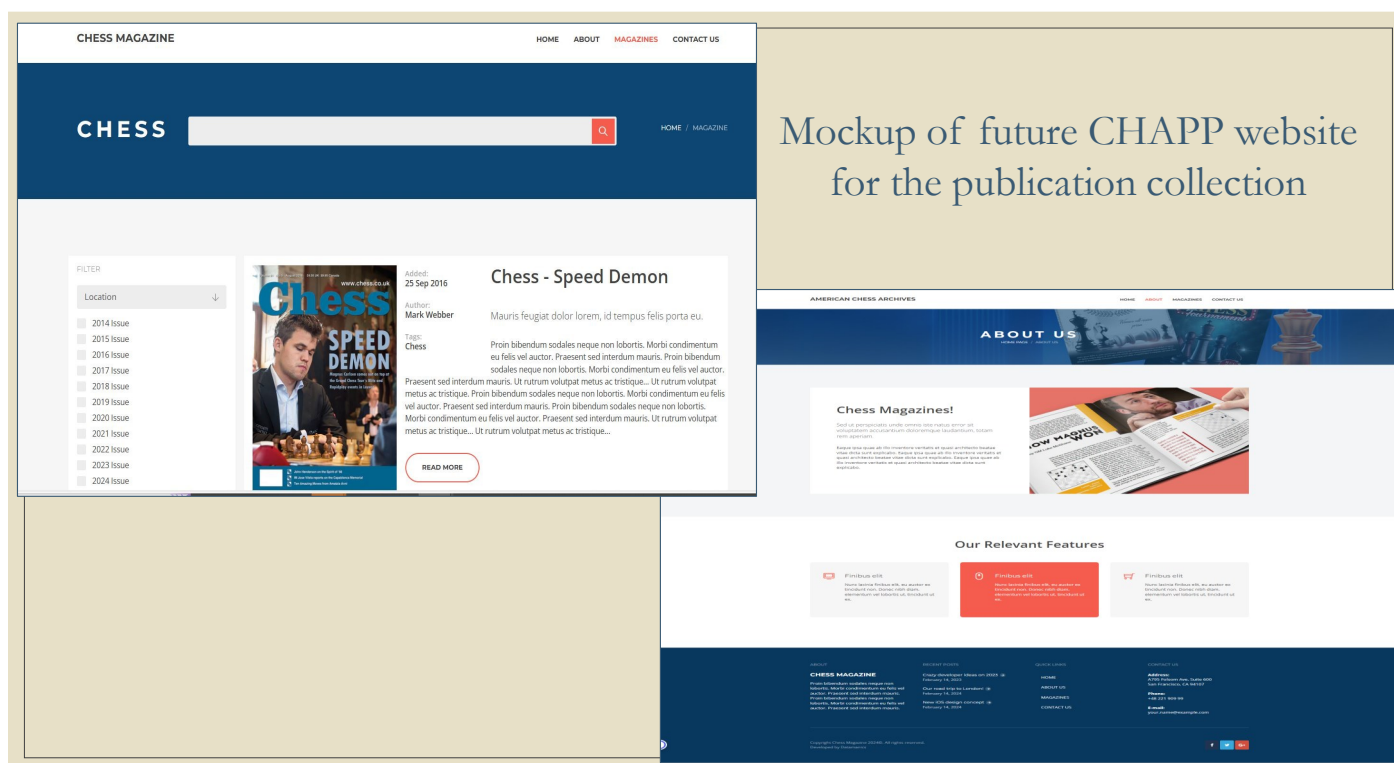
Advertisement for recruiting new citizen archivists

How Can Citizen Archivists Help CHAPP?

- First citizen archivists are members of the Tri-Bridges Chess Club
- Learning how to enter games into ChessBase
- Import files into our collection
- Scan materials.
- Digitize records for their state, providing easier access for everyone.



First volunteers (left to right): Cherry, Subhang, Samika, and Advik



Conclusion

By having many of us work together, we can preserve many rare and fragile magazines for all of us to be able to use and learn from

While led by people with extensive experience in history and chess, this project will be completed by a team of diverse people working together.

The hope is that most work will be done in our lifetimes, but there will always be new things to add, new “old” magazines found, and the like. Still, the expectation is that those who succeed us will continue to expand on our hopes to understand better and respect the great variety of Americans who have played the game and those who have written about chess over the last almost two centuries.

As we end this portion of the discussion, we hope the audience will not only be excited about a new research and teaching resource growing over the next decade but will also want to help and share our goals with those interested in helping.

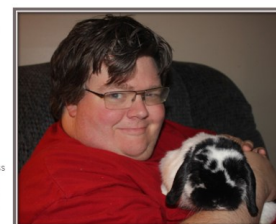
To learn more about the Cleveland Public Library's use of digital technologies.....

- The John G. White Collection at the Cleveland Public Library is the world's largest collection of chess literature and artifacts, encompassing items from the 14th century to the present day. Traditionally, this collection has been the domain of a small group of dedicated researchers, but now, the library is taking bold steps to broaden its reach. Through the use of innovative digital technologies, the Cleveland Public Library aims to make this rich historical resource accessible to a global audience—a challenge familiar to many museums striving to engage visitors in the digital age.
- <https://www.museumnext.com/article/how-the-cleveland-public-librarys-chatbot-initiative-could-inspire-museums/>

About Joshua Anderson

Joshua Anderson is the current President of the Chess Journalists of America (CJA), Vice President of the Pennsylvania State Chess Federation (PSCF) Eastern side, and founder of TnBridges Chess Club. Five years of graduate work in American history honed his research and archival skills. For most of the last decade, he has been working on a biography of the Byrne brothers for MacFarland while teaching for Shining Knights Chess and building the local scholastic chess community in Exton, PA.

My work in history and education made it clear that we cannot learn from our chess history if we do not preserve it. My experience in chess bureaucracies at the national, state, and local levels provides me with the expertise to speak on managing and setting up a sizeable multi-part project covering materials over hundreds of years and through many individuals.



American Chess Archives: An Update

By Joshua Andersson, Jon Edwards, & Mark Capron

The title itself may provide an inkling that changes are afoot.

The “Great American Chess Periodical Preservation Project” (GACPPP) is a mouthful and somewhat limiting in its scope. As we previously indicated, we have begun to scan and save and share American Chess Periodicals.

The effort actually began with the acquisition, scanning, and sharing of the Jeremy Gaige Archive. We turned to identifying all American Chess Periodicals, a truly critical step because the totality of the information is daunting: Journal names, their dates of publication, and most critically finding physical copies of each number. We have identified more than 650 chess periodicals, some with very long runs but most operating less than three years.

[American Chess Periodical List](#)

is a link to our list of periodicals. Please reach out if you have information that will improve this list.

It has become obvious to us that our preservation effort should involve more than just chess journals, as if that wasn't a tough enough endeavor. There are chess manuscripts, photographs, game scores, adjudication envelopes, and the like, all in need of scanning.

We have therefore changed the project's name to the “American Chess Archives.” Significant thanks go to Joshua's wife Brandy for this fine, far more memorable suggestion.



We have contracted with a firm, *TechMindsMe*, to perform the web development for the project. A month ago, we had a Zoom meeting to identify the scope of the effort. We mention one aspect of the project in order to provide a better sense of its scope. It is not enough simply to scan and OCR the contents of chess publications. It is also important to facilitate the search effort across multiple publications.

An interesting example is how to deal with scans of photographs that appear in the journals. We are not at the point that AI can automatically reveal the names of the players and organizers in these photos. Meta data is therefore re-

quired, with human intervention to identify the names. Game scores require imputing. Meta data will also involve the names of each publication's editors and officers. In other words, the effort is more complex than many of you may have anticipated.

Of course, if the work is performed correctly, the final product will be all the more useful.



Some of the things *TechMindsMe* has worked on:

Automated Data Capture and Indexing (Completed and in the testing phase now)

- The system will automatically extract and index data from uploaded content, including articles, magazines, newsletters, and journals.

- This indexing process will improve search accuracy, allowing users to find relevant materials more efficiently.

- Metadata such as publication date, author, and key topics will be systematically categorized for enhanced organization and accessibility. Advanced Search Optimization Completed and in the testing phase now)

- Enhancements are being made to the advanced search features to provide more precise and faster search results.

- Users will be able to refine searches using filters such as publication year, author, category, and keywords.

- The search algorithm will be optimized for better ranking and relevance of results. User Experience and Design Improvements (In Progress)

- The platform's design is being updated to offer a more intuitive and visually appealing user interface.

- Improvements in website navigation will ensure users can seamlessly access archives and resources. Advertisement Management System (To Do)

- A dedicated module will be introduced for managing advertisement banners on the portal.

- Features will include ad placement controls, scheduling, and performance tracking to optimize engagement.



We are learning much about advances in scanning technology.

We set the desired scanning resolution at 300 dpi (in pdf format) in order to enable optimal character recognition (OCR). Most of us have flatbed scanners, but that technol-

ogy is relatively slow. Jon carried out the scanning of the Gaige archive that way, a testament to his dedication, but few of us would be willing to follow that lead.

Amazingly, new software permits all of us at no charge to scan at 300 dpi using just our smart phones. Jon has begun to use DOCSCAN on his iPhone and reports that 300 dpi scans can be taken very much like taking a photograph! He used DOCSCAN recently to assemble scans of all of the issues in the first years of the Atlantic Chess News. It is worth adding that the NJ State Chess Federation is thrilled with the result, as it turns out especially with the sharing of all those old photographs.

Please feel free to contact Jon at jedwards.chess@gmail.com if you are willing to scan some back issues from your state or simply to inquire about or to offer some tips on best practices.

Here is an image of the spreadsheet that Jon assembled as part of that NJ preservation effort. As may be evident from this image, locating back issues is very much part of the challenge we face!

Atlantic Chess News									
	Volu Numb Format			Pages	Editor	Link	Physical Copy	Copyright holder	Scanning info
Atlantic Chess News									
1973	March	1	1 newspaper, oversized	8	Glenn Petersen and Peter Tamburro	https://drive.google.com	Jon Edwards	NJSCF	17-Dec-24 DocScan transferred to Google Drive,
	April		2	12			Jon Edwards		27-Dec scanned without the plexiglass (too n
	May		3	8			Jon Edwards		27-Dec
	June		4	12			Jon Edwards		27-Dec
	July		5	8			Jon Edwards		27-Dec
	August		6	12			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	September		7	8			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	October		8	12			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	November		9	8			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	December		10	8			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
1974	January	2	1	12			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	February		2	8			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	March		3	8			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	April		4	8			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	May		5	12			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	June		6	8			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	July		7	12			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24
	August		8	8			Jon Edwards		28-Dec-24

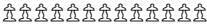
It is our hope to find at least one intrepid citizen archivist for each state... who will locate that state's back issues and begin the process to scanning them. We are thrilled to observe that many states have already begun the effort, and that many back issues are already available on in the internet.



Uncle Sam used to say, "I Want YOU!" In this case "We Want YOU!" To make this project a success your help is needed. Please inform Joshua, Mark or Jon if you are willing to help... If you are aware of publications that are not listed, please let us know so they can be added. Besides scanning, there are many collectors out there with rare or obscure items that will be required to complete specific runs of publications. For example, we may have access to all but two issues of a particular publication. You happen to have those two missing issues and are willing to either scan and send to us or loan the issues so we can scan. This project is a team effort, and we need your help to make it a reality.



Several private collectors have potential interest. Notably, the Cleveland Public Library is willing to scan material whose copyright have expired.



Copyright remains an issue. We are intent to preserving material both in and out of copyright. We intend to observe copyright laws scrupulously, and we intend to maintain a policy of not charging our members for access to the archive.

10th World Champion Boris Spassky Passes (January 30, 1937 – February 27, 2025)

By Mark Capron (quotes submitted by Awani Kumar)



Boris Spassky (right) playing Robert Byrne at the 1971 Alekhine Memorial with David Bronstein looking on. Photo courtesy of Maria Byrne.

Boris Vasilievich Spassky passed away on February 27 at age 88.

Spassky was born in Leningrad where he remained until World War II came to town. He and his brother were evacuated to the village of Korshik in the Kirov Oblast. It is said he learned the moves on the long train ride. Later he was taught by Candidate Master Vladimir Zak in his formative years. Later Spassky would employ Grandmaster Alexander Tolush as his mentor. And finally Grandmaster Igor Bondarevsky would “take Spassky home.”

In 1953 he was awarded the International Master title by FIDE. In 1955 Spassky won the World Junior Championship (See Book Review *How Spassky Won* later in this issue). In 1956 he was awarded the Grandmaster title after qualifying for the Candidates Tournament. At the time, Spassky was the youngest to receive the GM title.

He won two Soviet Championships outright and tied for first in two more. He qualified for the Candidates seven times. Three of which he played for the World Championship. The first against Tigran Petrosian in 1966 where he lost a close battle 11.5-12.5. Then in 1969, he defeated Petrosian 12.5-10.5 to become the 10th World Chess Champion. In 1972 he unsuccessfully defended his title versus Bobby Fischer, losing 8.5-12.5 in what was termed the Match of the Century.

An interesting fact is that in 40 games playing the King’s Gambit Spassky never lost. Here is a swashbuckling example:

Spassky, Boris Vasilievich - Bronstein, David Ionovich [C36]

URS-ch27 Final Leningrad (16), 20.02.1960

1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♖f3 d5 4.exd5 ♗d6 5.♖c3 ♖e7 6.d4 0-0 7.♗d3 ♖d7 8.0-0 h6 9.♖e4 ♖xd5 10.c4 ♖e3 11.♗xe3 fxe3 12.c5 ♗e7

13.♗c2 ♗e8 14.♗d3 e2 15.♖d6 ♖f8 16.♖xf7 exf1♗+ 17.♗xf1 ♗f5 18.♗xf5 ♗d7 19.♗f4 ♗f6 20.♖3e5 ♗e7 21.♗b3 ♗xe5 22.♖xe5+ ♖h7 23.♗e4+ 1-0

On the personal side he was skilled at the high jump, swimming and boxing. He had traditional Russian tastes in reading, but it is said (in private only) he enjoyed American jazz. This non-traditionalist attitude and curiosity sometimes got him into hot water with the Sports Committee, however, Dmitry Postnikov was able to “sweep most of it under the rug” early in his Spassky’s career. Later, he found himself in trouble for his words or actions several times, but mostly got away with it due to his good chess results.

Spassky was married three times and had three children: 1959 to Nadezda Latyntceva (daughter—Tatiana); 1966 to Larisa Soloviev (son—Vasily); 1975 to Marina Shcherbachova (son—Boris Jr.). Spassky about his first marriage: “We are opposite-colored bishops; we go on different diagonals, and we need to get divorced.” As it turned out Spassky ended up divorcing all three.

Spassky will forever be remembered as that player who lost to Bobby Fischer in the 1972 World Championship. Spassky was once quoted as saying, “When you play Bobby, it is not a question if you win or lose. It is a question if you survive.”

Due to all the pressures of being world champion and having to play Bobby Fischer, Spassky commented later: “You can’t imagine how relieved I was when Fischer took the title off me.”

Many years later, almost out of nowhere, a Fischer—Spassky rematch occurred. Coined as the “1992 World Championship: the rematch.” Spassky accepted lots of Fischer’s conditions and at one point said, “I looked on this match as a holiday. Fischer reappears from underground, no responsibility on my shoulders and a good prize fund (\$5 million—ed.). It was my pension plan.”

On October 1, 2006, Spassky suffered a minor stroke. Then on September 23, 2010, Spassky suffered a more serious stroke. Finally on February 27, 2025 Spassky passed away. No cause of death was announced. Spassky said of his final years: “I do not prepare for chess. I am preparing for death! It is a long and difficult endgame.”

Games by Spassky:

Spassky has called this his favorite game.

Spassky, Boris Vasilievich - Reshko, Aron G [B11]

Leningrad-ch32 Leningrad, 1959

1.e4 c6 2.♖c3 d5 3.♖f3 ♗g4 4.h3 ♗xf3 5.♗xf3 ♖f6 6.e5 ♖fd7 7.♗g3 e6 8.♗e2 ♗c7 9.f4 a6 10.b4 c5 11.b5 c4 12.♗b1 d4 13.♖e4 axb5 14.0-0 ♗xa2 15.d3 ♗xc2 16.♗d1 ♗a2 17.f5 ♖xe5 18.fxe6 f6 19.♗xf6 gxf6 20.♖xf6+ ♖d8 21.♖d5 ♗d6 22.♗g5+ ♖c8 23.♗g4 ♖xg4 24.e7 ♗xe7

25.♟g4+ ♖d7 26.♞e7+ ♜c7 27.♙f4 ♜e5 28.♟g7 ♜b6 29.♙e5 ♟f6
30.♙d4+

1-0

Watch the f-pawn breakthrough!

Spassky,Boris Vasilievich - Nikolaevsky,Yuri V [D27]

URS-ch31 Semifinal Kharkov, 1963

1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.♖f3 ♖f6 4.e3 e6 5.♙xc4 c5 6.0-0 a6 7.a4 cxd4
8.exd4 ♜c6 9.♜c3 ♙e7 10.♙e3 0-0 11.♟e2 ♜b4 12.♜e5 b6 13.f4
♜fd5 14.♙ad1 ♙f6 15.♜e4 ♙b7 16.f5 exf5 17.♙xf5 ♜xe3 18.♜xf6+
gx6 19.♟xe3 fxe5 20.♟xe5 h6 21.♙f6 ♜h7 22.♙df1 ♙d5 23.♟f5+
♜g8 24.♟g4+ ♜h7 25.♙xh6+

1-0

A nice bishop sacrifice.

Novopashin,Arkady - Spassky,Boris Vasilievich [C89]

URS-ch31 Final Leningrad (6), 11.1963

1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♜c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♖f6 5.0-0 ♙e7 6.♙e1 b5 7.♙b3 0
-0 8.c3 d5 9.exd5 ♜xd5 10.♜xe5 ♜xe5 11.♙xe5 c6 12.d4 ♙d6
13.♙e1 ♟h4 14.g3 ♟h3 15.♙e3 ♙g4 16.♟d3 ♙ae8 17.♜d2 ♙e6 18.a4
bxa4 19.♙xa4 f5 20.f4 ♙xf4 21.♙f2 ♙xe1+ 22.♙xe1 ♙e8

0-1

This game gave Spassky a psychological victory via a turnabout in the match.

Spassky,Boris Vasilievich - Petrosian,Tigran V [B42]

World-ch26 Spassky-Petrosian +6-4=13 Moscow (17),
28.05.1969

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♜xd4 a6 5.♙d3 ♜c6 6.♜xc6 bxc6 7.0-0
d5 8.♜d2 ♖f6 9.b3 ♙b4 10.♙b2 a5 11.c3 ♙e7 12.c4 0-0 13.♟c2 h6
14.a3 ♙a6 15.♙fe1 ♟b6 16.exd5 cxd5 17.cxd5 ♙xd3 18.♟xd3 ♙fd8
19.♜c4 ♟a6 20.♟f3 ♙xd5 21.♙ad1 ♙f5 22.♟g3 ♙g5 23.♟c7 ♙e8
24.♙xf6 gx6 25.♙d7 ♙c8 26.♟b7 ♟xb7 27.♙xb7 ♖f8 28.a4 ♙b4
29.♙e3 ♙d8 30.g3 ♙d1+ 31.♜g2 ♙c5 32.♙f3 f5 33.g4 ♙d4 34.gxf5
exf5 35.♙b8+ ♜e7 36.♙e3+ ♖f6 37.♙b6+ ♜g7 38.♙g3+ ♖f8 39.♙b8+
♜e7 40.♙e3+ ♖f6 41.♙b6+ ♜g7 42.♙g3+ ♖f8 43.♙xh6 f4 44.♙gh3
♜g7 45.♙h5 f3+ 46.♜g3 ♙xh5 47.♙xh5 ♙d3 48.♜xa5 ♜g6 49.♙b5
♙xa5 50.♙xa5 ♙xb3 51.♙a8 ♙a3 52.a5 ♖f5 53.a6 ♜g6 54.a7 ♜g7
55.h4 ♜h7 56.h5 ♜g7 57.h6+ ♜h7 58.♖f4

1-0

A crushing victory, almost assuring him of the title.

Spassky,Boris Vasilievich - Petrosian,Tigran V [B94]

World-ch26 Spassky-Petrosian +6-4=13 Moscow (19),
04.06.1969

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♜xd4 ♖f6 5.♜c3 a6 6.♙g5 ♜bd7 7.♙c4
♟a5 8.♟d2 h6 9.♙xf6 ♜xf6 10.0-0-0 e6 11.♙he1 ♙e7 12.f4 0-0
13.♙b3 ♙e8 14.♜b1 ♙f8 15.g4 ♜xg4 16.♟g2 ♖f6 17.♙g1 ♙d7 18.f5
♜h8 19.♙df1 ♜d8 20.fxe6 fxe6 21.e5 dxe5 22.♜e4 ♜h5 23.♟g6 exd4
24.♜g5

1-0

Spassky thought this the best game of the match and even stood and applauded Fischer after resigning!

Fischer,Robert James (2785) - Spassky,Boris Vasilievich

[D59] World-ch27 Fischer-Spassky, Reykjavik (6), 23.07.1972

1.c4 e6 2.♖f3 d5 3.d4 ♖f6 4.♜c3 ♙e7 5.♙g5 0-0 6.e3 h6 7.♙h4 b6
8.cxd5 ♜xd5 9.♙e7 ♟xe7 10.♜xd5 exd5 11.♙c1 ♙e6 12.♟a4 c5
13.♟a3 ♙c8 14.♙b5 a6 15.dxc5 bxc5 16.0-0 ♙a7 17.♙e2 ♜d7
18.♜d4 ♟f8 19.♜xe6 fxe6 20.e4 d4 21.f4 ♟e7 22.e5 ♙b8 23.♙c4 ♜h8
24.♟h3 ♜f8 25.b3 a5 26.f5 exf5 27.♙xf5 ♜h7 28.♙cf1 ♜d8 29.♟g3

♙e7 30.h4 ♙bb7 31.e6 ♙bc7 32.♟e5 ♟e8 33.a4 ♜d8 34.♙1f2 ♟e8
35.♙2f3 ♜d8 36.♙d3 ♟e8 37.♟e4 ♜f6 38.♙xf6 gx6 39.♙xf6 ♜g8
40.♙c4 ♜h8 41.♟f4

1-0

Beating Fischer in his favorite opening the "Poisoned Pawn" Najdorf!

Spassky,Boris Vasilievich - Fischer,Robert James (2785)

[B97] World-ch27 Fischer-Spassky, Reykjavik (11), 06.08.1972

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♜xd4 ♖f6 5.♜c3 a6 6.♙g5 e6 7.f4 ♟b6
8.♟d2 ♟xb2 9.♜b3 ♟a3 10.♙xf6 gx6 11.♙e2 h5 12.0-0 ♜c6 13.♜h1
♙d7 14.♜b1 ♟b4 15.♟e3 d5 16.exd5 ♜e7 17.c4 ♖f5 18.♟d3 h4
19.♙g4 ♜d6 20.♜1d2 f5 21.a3 ♟b6 22.c5 ♟b5 23.♟c3 fxg4 24.a4 h3
25.axb5 hxg2+ 26.♜xg2 ♙h3 27.♟f6 ♖f5 28.c6 ♙c8 29.dxe6 fxe6
30.♙fe1 ♙e7 31.♙xe6

1-0

At the time, this variation was relatively new. Spassky shows why he was a champion.

Karpov,Anatoly - Spassky,Boris Vasilievich [B92]

Candidates sf Karpov-Spassky, Leningrad (1), 12.04.1974

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♜xd4 ♖f6 5.♜c3 e6 6.♙e2 ♙e7 7.0-0 0
-0 8.f4 ♜c6 9.♙e3 e5 10.♜b3 a5 11.a4 ♜b4 12.♙f3 ♙e6 13.♟h1 ♟c7
14.♙f2 ♙fd8 15.♙d2 ♙c4 16.♜b5 ♙xb5 17.axb5 a4 18.♜c1 d5
19.fxe5 ♜xe4 20.c3 ♜xd2 21.♙xd2 ♟xe5 22.cxb4 ♟xb2 23.♜d3 ♜d4
24.♙a3 ♟b6 25.♟e2 ♙e8 26.♙xd5 ♙xb4 27.♙xf7+ ♖xf7 28.♟f3+
♜g8 29.♙xb4 ♟xb5 30.h3 ♙ad8 31.♙d2 ♜d5 32.♟f2 b5 33.♙a5 ♙d7
34.♜f4 ♙f7 35.♙f3 ♜c4 36.♙d2 b4 37.♟b6 b3 38.♜h2 ♜c2 39.♙c3
♟e4 40.♜d6 h6 41.♙b2 ♜c2 42.♜d5 ♟f5 43.♟c6 ♜d7 44.♟g6 ♙ee7
45.♟a6 ♟b7 46.♟xa4 ♙e4 47.♟xb3 ♙b4 48.♟e6 ♙xb2 49.♙g3 ♜b6
50.♟e8+ ♜h7 51.♟e3 ♙d6 52.♟c5 ♜c7 53.♟b4 ♜d7 54.♜h5 ♙g6
55.♙xg6 ♜xg6 56.♜g3 ♜d3 57.h4 ♜h7 58.h5 ♙d7 59.♟c5 ♙d4
60.♟e7 ♙g4 61.♟e5 ♙h4+ 62.♜g1 ♜d1+ 63.♜f2 ♜d4+

0-1

Zwischenzug!!

Spassky,Boris Vasilievich (2610) - Huebner,Robert (2600)

[B22] Match Spassky-Huebner +2-1=3 Solingen (2), 23.01.1977

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 e6 3.c3 ♖f6 4.e5 ♜d5 5.d4 cxd4 6.cxd4 ♜c6 7.♜c3
♜xc3 8.bxc3 d6 9.exd6 ♟xd6 10.♙d3 ♙e7 11.0-0 b6 12.♙e1 0-0
13.♙b1 ♙b7 14.♜g5 ♙xg5 15.♙xg5 ♜a5 16.♙e3 ♜d5 17.♙g3 f5
18.h4 ♙ac8 19.♜d2 ♙f7 20.♙f4 ♜d8 21.♙e1 ♙d5 22.h5 ♙c4 23.♙e5
♙xd3 24.♟h6 ♙cc7 25.♟xe6 ♙c4 26.♙xg7+ ♖f8 27.♙xc7 ♟xc7
28.♙xf7+ ♟xf7 29.♜d6+ ♜g8 30.♜d8+

1-0

Karpov said to Kasparov, "This is how Spassky fooled Korchnoi!"

Korchnoi,Viktor Lvovich (2645) - Spassky,Boris Vasilievich

(2610) [D58] Candidates f Kortschnoj-Spassky +7-4=7 Belgrade
(11), 19.12.1977

1.c4 e6 2.♜c3 d5 3.d4 ♙e7 4.♖f3 ♖f6 5.♙g5 h6 6.♙h4 0-0 7.e3 b6
8.♙c1 ♙b7 9.♙xf6 ♙xf6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.b4 c6 12.♙d3 ♙e8 13.0-0
♜d7 14.♟b3 ♖f8 15.♙fd1 ♙c8 16.♙b1 ♜e6 17.a4 ♙a8 18.♙a2 ♙c7
19.♟b1 a5 20.bxa5 bxa5 21.♟b6 ♙b7 22.♟xd8 ♙xd8 23.♜e1 ♙b6
24.♜d3 ♙db8 25.h3 ♙b7 26.♜e5 ♙xe5 27.dxe5 ♙b4 28.f3 ♙a6
29.♙d2 ♙c4 30.f4 ♜c5 31.♙d4 ♜d3 32.♙d1 ♜b2 33.♙c1 c5 34.♙xd5
♙xd5 35.♙xd5 c4 36.♜e4 ♜xa4

0-1

Rest in Peace Boris!

Former FIDE President and GM Friðrik Ólafsson Passes (26 January 1935 – 4 April 2025)

By Mark Capron



Borrowing a line from my favorite lyricist, Neil Peart, "We're only immortal for a limited time."

Friðrik (Fridrik) Ólafsson, Iceland's first grandmaster passed away earlier this month.

In 1952 Ólafsson won the Icelandic Chess Championship for the first time. He won the event five more times (1953, 1957, 1961, 1962, and 1969). In 1953 and 1971 he won the Nordic Chess Championship. Ólafsson received the grandmaster title in 1958.

Internationally he tied for first at the 1955-56 Hastings tournament with Victor Korchnoi, was joint third in the first Piatigorsky Cup 1963, and in 1976 he shared first with Ljubomir Ljubovjević at Wijk aan Zee.

Ólafsson was never a serious contender for the World Championship. His best was qualifying for the 1959 Candidates Tournament, but finishing only seventh out of eight. At the 1959 Candidates tournament in Yugoslavia, however, he famously defeated Tigran Petrosian in front of a crowd of 5,000 spectators, who – according to Harry Golombek – celebrated by carrying Ólafsson on their shoulders when he attempted to return to his hotel.

Petrosian,Tigran V - Olafsson,Fridrik [E42]

Candidates Tournament Bled/Zagreb/Belgrade (15), 03.10.1959
 1.c4 e6 2.♖c3 ♘f6 3.d4 ♙b4 4.e3 c5 5.♗e2 d5 6.a3 ♜xc3+ 7.♜xc3 cxd4 8.exd4 dxc4 9.♜xc4 ♘c6 10.♙e3 0-0 11.0-0 b6 12.♗d3 ♙b7 13.♙ad1 h6 14.♙fe1 ♘e7 15.♙f4 ♙c8 16.♙e5 ♘fd5 17.♘b5 ♙a6 18.a4 ♘f5 19.b3 ♙a8 20.♗f3 ♙b7 21.♗g4 ♗g5 22.h3 ♙fd8 23.♙d3 ♙d7 24.♗xg5 hxg5 25.♙xf5 exf5 26.♘d6 f6 27.♘xb7 ♙xb7 28.♙d6 ♗f7 29.♙c1 ♙d8 30.♙c6 ♙bd7 31.♙a3 ♙b8 32.♙e6 ♙bd8 33.♗f1 ♘f4 34.♙ed6 ♙xd6 35.♙xd6 ♘e6 36.d5 ♘d4 37.♙c7+ ♗g8 38.♙e7 ♙xd5 39.♙xa7 ♘xb3 40.♙b7 ♘d2+ 41.♗e2 ♘c4 42.♙b4 ♙e5+ 43.♗f1 ♙e8 44.♙a7 f4 45.♙c3 ♗h8 46.♙c7 ♘d6 47.♙c6 ♘e4 48.♙e1 ♙b8 49.f3 ♘g3+ 50.♙xg3 fxg3 51.♙c4 ♙d8 52.♗e2 ♙d5 53.f4 gx f4 54.♙xf4 ♙c5 55.♙b4 ♙f5 56.♙xb6 ♙f2+ 57.♗e3 ♙xg2 58.♗f3 ♙a2 59.♗xg3 ♙xa4 60.♙b3 ♗h7 61.♙c3 ♗h6 62.♙b3 ♗g5 63.♙c3 f5 64.♙c8 ♙a3+ 65.♗g2 ♗f4 66.♙c4+ ♗e3 67.♗g3 g5 68.h4 ♗d3 69.♙b4 ♗c3 70.♙b8 ♗d4+ 71.♗g2 g4 72.h5 ♙h3 73.♙h8 ♗e5 74.h6 ♗f6 75.♙f8+ ♗g6 76.♙g8+ ♗xh6

0-1

He was FIDE president from 1978 to 1982. During his time as president he presided over the 1981 Karpov–Korchnoi World Championship match in Merano, Italy. Ólafsson postponed the match for a few weeks in an attempt to convince the Soviet Union to release Korchnoi's son, Igor and his wife. This was one of the Soviet's retaliations on Korchnoi since he had defected in 1976. Ólafsson, from that point forward, was looked on very negatively by the Soviets. Ironically during his term as President, Olafsson focused on securing improving relations between the Soviets and the rest of the chess world. He also made good inroads at commercial sponsorship for FIDE.

Ólafsson was married to Auður Júlíusdóttir and had two daughters (Bergljót Friðriksdóttir and Áslaug Friðriksdóttir). In addition

Ólafsson leaves behind five grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Ólafsson graduated from Reykjavík High School in 1955 and graduated in law from the University of Iceland in 1968. He was a member of the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs from 1968-1974, president of the International Chess Federation 1978-1982, editor of the Icelandic Law Library 1982-1983 and director of the Althingi 1984-2005.

Friðrik was the director of the Friðrik Ólafsson Chess School from 1982 to 1984 and was a member of the Ministry of Education's committee in 1989 that worked on the preparation of a bill on the Icelandic Chess School and grandmaster's salary.

Friðrik published three books on chess. The book *Learn to Chess*, with Ingvar Ásmundsson, 1958, *The World Chess Champion Duel*, with Freysteinn Jóhannsson, 1972, and *At the Chess Table for a Quarter of a Century*, 1976.

In 2021, *The Chess Saga of Fridrik Olafsson*, written by Norwegian Øystein Brekke came out.

Ólafsson had an entertaining and attacking style. Ólafsson defeated four World Champions in classical chess: Petrosian (twice), Tal (twice), Fischer (twice), and Karpov.

Olafsson,Fridrik - Fischer,Robert James [D38]

Interzonal-04 Portoroz (11), 22.08.1958

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♖c3 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.d4 ♙b4 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♙g5 h6 7.♙h4 c5 8.e3 ♘c6 9.♙c1 c4 10.♙e2 ♙e6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♘d2 ♙e7 13.b3 g5 14.♙g3 ♙a3 15.♙c2 ♘b4 16.bxc4 ♘xc2 17.♗xc2 dxc4 18.♘b5 ♙b4 19.♘c7 ♙xd2 20.♘xe6 fxe6 21.♙xc4 ♗e8 22.♗xd2 ♘e4 23.♗d3 ♘xg3 24.hxg3 ♙f6 25.♗e4 ♙c8 26.♙b3 ♗d7 27.♙d1 ♙e8 28.f4 ♗h7 29.♗e5 ♗f5 30.g4 ♗xe5 31.dxe5 ♙f7 32.f5 ♙c7 33.♙d6 ♙c5 34.♙xe6+ ♗f8 35.♙b3 ♙cxe5 36.♙xh6 ♙xe3 37.♙g6 ♙e4 38.♙xg5 ♙g3 39.♙g8+ ♗e7 40.g5 ♙e2 41.♙d5 ♗d6 42.♙f3 ♙xa2 43.f6 ♗e6 44.♙e8+ 1-0

Olafsson,Fridrik - Karpov,Anatoly (2725) [A32]

Buenos Aires Buenos Aires, 1980

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.♘f3 cxd4 5.♘xd4 ♗c7 6.♗d3 a6 7.♙g2 ♘c6 8.♘xc6 dxc6 9.0-0 ♙e7 10.♗b3 e5 11.♙e3 ♘d7 12.♘c3 ♘c5 13.♗c2 ♙g4 14.b4 ♘d7 15.b5 0-0 16.bxc6 bxc6 17.♙ab1 ♙e6 18.♗a4 ♙fc8 19.♙fc1 ♘c5 20.♗c2 g6 21.♘e4 ♙f5 22.♙xc5 ♙xc5 23.♙b3 ♙e7 24.♙cb1 ♙ab8 25.h4 a5 26.♗h2 ♙b4 27.a3 ♙xb3 28.♗xb3 ♙d8 29.e3 ♗d7 30.♗c3 ♗c7 31.♙b2 ♙d1 32.c5 ♙e6 33.♙b6 ♙d5 34.♗xa5 ♗d7 35.♗a8+ ♗g7 36.♙b7 ♗e6 37.♗e8 ♙xe4 38.♙xe4 ♗f6 39.♗xe7 ♗xf2+ 40.♙g2 1-0

And finally one of his craziest games!

Rothuis,Vincent (2441) - Olafsson,Fridrik (2452) [B06]

Arnhem Euwe Stimulans-A Arnhem (7), 24.08.2007

1.e4 g6 2.h4 h6 3.f4 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘h5 5.f5 d6 6.e6 fxe6 7.fxg6 ♘g3 8.♙h3 ♘xf1 9.♗f3 ♗d7 10.♗f7 ♘c6 11.g7 ♙xg7 12.♗xg7 ♙g8 13.♗c3 ♙xg2 14.♗xf1 ♗g8 15.♘e2 ♙g4 16.d3 b6 17.♙xh6 ♙b7 18.♘d2 ♘d4 19.♘e4 ♘xe2 20.♗xe2 ♙xe4 21.dxe4 ♙xe4+ 22.♗d3 ♗g2 23.♗d2 ♗xh3+ 24.♗xe4 d5+ 25.♗f4 ♗xh4+ 26.♗e5 ♗f6# 0-1

Rest in Peace Friðrik.

In the *Limelight*: Jon Jacobs

Interview by Mark Capron



Please tell us a little bit about yourself.

I'm a Brooklyn native who grew up in a local chess scene that had been refashioned by Bill Goichberg shortly before I entered my first tournament in 1968. Within a few years of running his first tournament in 1964, Goichberg had shifted the center of competition from a handful of old-time chess clubs holding weeknight "ladder" games, league matches, and other club-centric events, to public, rated tournaments on weekends, often in hotel ballrooms.

My most active chess period was my high school years, from '68 through '72. I appeared in *Chess Life's* "Most Active Players List" at least once or twice during that period. I remained active in tournaments during college in Boston and up through 1978 when I departed to attend journalism grad school at Berkeley. Upon returning to New York in 1981, I focused on career and social life and mostly stayed away from organized chess for two decades – thus missing most of the Kasparov era.

In the present millennium I attempted two comebacks: from 2002 through roughly 2010, and then from 2017 until the pandemic hit in early 2020. Beginning the first comeback attempt as a rated Expert (a roughly 200-point retreat from my college-age peak), I played in some Under-2200 events and had an encounter with the famous cheater Alexandre Mirtchouk. That experience, detailed in an early post (<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/162PqjehFi/>) on my *A Pawn Made Flesh* Facebook page, spurred me to launch and lead an anti-cheating movement. My initiatives to combat cheating in open tournaments included organizing a petition to USCF and then a panel discussion at the Marshall Chess Club that attracted worldwide media coverage, including a *Chess Life* cover story ([Cheating: Blockading Chess Cheaters](#)) that I wrote.

The latest chapter in my personal chess saga began with my job layoff at the end of 2022. I reluctantly decided not to return to the job market. My second comeback attempt as a player had already derailed by then. So instead of returning to competition yet again (and forcing my disabled wife to fend for herself at home in view of the enormous time and travel commitment that would entail), I decided to turn to writing books. I'd been toying for some years with the thought of doing a biography of Bill Goichberg. Although I had already put 2+ years of effort into researching great upset games for *The Fish That Roared* book, Goichberg's advanced age convinced me to prioritize writing and publishing his biography. That remains my main chess project today.

You are retired right now, but what did you do for a living previously?

I was trained in journalism and worked as a reporter and editor for a series of trade publications for many years before switching gears and studying finance during the 1990s. My last job was as a bond analyst and writer at ICE (Intercontinental Exchange Inc., one of the world's largest providers of trading platforms and financial market data). I used to say "We're the good-guy ICE" because we don't deport people... but then I learned that a school for chefs uses the same acronym, so I have to concede the label of "the good-guy ICE" to them. ☺ (A related bit of acronym-irony: THAT ICE's main competitor is the CIA. Which stands for Culinary Institute of America, an accredited 4-year college on a 170-acre campus in Dutchess County, NY.)

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

My father taught me the moves when I was about ten. He was about 900 strength. During the year or two before I discovered tournament chess, I would play long games with him on the glass-top table in our small apartment kitchen every evening after he returned from working at the dress store he owned.

Late in seventh grade our teacher must have finished teaching the curriculum, so she let the class play games for most of the final week or so of school. I spent most of that time playing chess against her. I remember she was impressed to see a mere 12-year-old consistently holding his own against an adult. (Any readers younger than 50 or so will surely roll their eyes – yeah that was indeed the Paleolithic Era, where chess was concerned!)

But there was one chess-playing person in my circle I could never touch: my friend and neighbor Lenny Gross. He was three years my senior, but far more pertinent is that he had tournament experience. His rating was only in the 1100s, but he would beat me with nauseating regularity.

It was Lenny who exposed me to tournament chess. I remember accompanying him to a scholastic tournament – probably one of the earliest Greater New York High School Championships, in 1966 – and reverently observing a wall chart for the first time. I still recall the names of the #1 and #2 seeds: Sal Matera and Eugene Meyer! (In my wildest dreams I wouldn't have imagined seeing my own name top the wall chart at the end of that same event three years later ... and again the following year.)

Finally, I went to a library and sought out my first two chess books: *Chess Strategy and Tactics*, by Reinfeld and Chernev, and *The Art of the Checkmate*, by Renaud and Kahn. Cured of my early habit of going for Scholar's Mate, within a few months I had leapfrogged Lenny.

After a 55+ year chess career what are a few of your chess playing highlights?

As a player:

- No. 1 rated player in the U.S. under 16 years old (1970)
- Two-time Greater New York High School Champion (1969-70 and 1970-71)
- Tied 2nd-5th in National High School Championship (1971); top scorer for first-place team
- U.S. Junior Open Co-Champion (1972)
- Played in U.S. Junior Invitational (1972); finished tied-last, but beat Larry Christiansen
- Pennsylvania Open Champion (1974)
- Played Board One for tied first-place Pan American Intercollegiate Championship team (1975)
- Awarded Brilliancy Prizes in 1980 (for this win over Jay Whitehead: <https://www.chess.com/emboard?id=3518988>)

Jacobs, Jon (2150) - Whitehead, Jay (2441) [B00]

People's Chess Tournament Berkeley (6), 18.02.1980

1.e4 b6 2.d4 ♘b7 3.♔d3 e6 4.♔f3 c5 5.0-0 ♔f6 6.e5 ♔d5 7.♔e1 ♔c6 8.c4 ♔db4 9.♔e4 cxd4 10.a3 ♔a6 11.b4 ♔c7 12.♔bd2 d5 13.exd6 ♔xd6 14.♔b3 ♔d7 15.♔b2 0-0 16.♔bxd4 ♔fd8 17.♔xh7+ ♔xh7 18.♔g5+ ♔g8? [18...♔g6! 19.♔b1+ ♔xg5 20.♔h7 ♔xh2+!! 21.♔f1! Now Black can hold the game only through a series of "only moves" (21.♔xh2? ♔xd4!! 22.♔xd4 ♔h8 Black's much better; 21.♔h1 ♔xd4 22.♔xg7+ ♔f5 Black's much better; 21.♔xh2 ♔xd4 22.♔ad1 ♔c6 23.♔xd4 ♔xg2+! 24.♔xg2+ ♔xg2 25.♔xg2 ♔f6 Black is moderately better) 21...♔xd4 only move! 22.♔xg7+ ♔h5 only move! 23.♔c1 ♔xg2+ only move! 24.♔xg2 ♔f6 only move! – after which White has nothing better than giving perpetual check 25.♔e3 ♔f3!! only this and 25. ... e5 avoid mate; but White stays on top after the latter 26.♔xf3+ ♔g6 27.♔g4+ ♔f7 28.♔h5+ (28.♔b2 e5= (28...♔g8=)) 28...♔e7 29.♔h7+ (Losing is 29.♔xh2?? ♔h8 30.♔g3 (30.♔g2 ♔d1+ 31.♔e1 ♔d3+ 32.♔e2 ♔ag8-+) 30...♔d1+ 31.♔e1 ♔h1+–+) 29...♔e8 30.♔h8+ ♔e7 with a draw by perpetual] 19.♔h5 ♔xd4 20.♔xd4 ♔e8 [Or 20...♔xh2+ 21.♔xh2 ♔xd4 22.♔xf7+ ♔h8 23.♔e3+–] 21.♔h7+ ♔f8 22.♔h8+ [Still stronger is 22.♔xg7+ ♔xg7 23.♔h8+ ♔e7 24.♔xg7 ♔f8 25.♔xe6+–] 22...♔e7 23.♔g8 [23.♔h5+–] 23...♔db8 [Better (but still hopeless) is 23...♔xh2+ 24.♔xh2 ♔d6 25.♔xg7 ♔h8+ 26.♔g1 ♔ag8 27.♔f6+ ♔e8 28.♔f3+–] 24.♔ad1 ♔d8 25.c5 [Still stonger is 25.♔xb6+ axb6 26.♔xd6 ♔xd6 27.♔xf7+ ♔c8 28.♔e5 and if 28...♔a4 29.♔xe6+ and mate in 6] 27...♔d5 28.♔xf7+ ♔c8 29.c6 ♔xc6 30.♔c1 ♔c5 31.♔xc5 ♔xc5 32.♔xe8+ ♔b7 33.♔b1+ ♔a6 34.♔a4+ ♔a5 35.♔xa5+ ♔xa5 36.♔xb8 ♔xb8 37.♔xb8 ♔a4 38.♔d6 ♔b3 39.h4 g6 40.f3 ♔c6 41.♔e5 ♔e8 42.♔f2 1-0

and 2017 ("Perseverance Prize" in a Marshall Championship, for saving a lost position against GM Irina Krush: [Jacobs—Krush](#))

Jacobs, Jon (2294) - Krush, Irina (2509) [B22]

10th NY International Championship New York (3), 22.06.2017
[Jacobs, Jon]

1.e4 c5 2.d4 cxd4 3.c3 ♔f6 [I had begun studying the Morra Gambit in preparation for this tournament. But I didn't get as far as study-

ing the various methods of declining the gambit. So, what follows fell far outside my prep!] 4.e5 ♔d5 5.♔f3 ♔c6 6.cxd4 [Usual is 6.♔c4 ♔b6 7.♔b3 d5] 6...d6 7.♔c3?! dxe5! [Seems much better than 7...♔xc3?! 8.bxc3 dxe5 9.d5 Westbrook-Smith, U.S. Open Cleveland 1957, continued 9...e4 (9...♔a5?? would lose to 10.♔b5+ ♔d7 11.♔a4) 10.♔g5 ♔b8 11.♔xe4 with a big advantage for White.] 8.♔b5!? [Caught on my heels, I quickly decided that the routine recapture 8.dxe5 ♔xc3 9.♔xd8+ ♔xd8 10.bxc3 sticks White in an inferior endgame with no chance for counterplay. So in I decided to improvise in the Morra spirit, casting pawns to the wind in a bid for attacking chances.] 8...♔xc3 9.bxc3 exd4 [Since 10.cxd4 is unplayable (...♔a5+) and 10.♔xd4 seemed to leave White with nothing for his pawn minus, I concluded after a long think that my best chance was to continue developing...and pitching pawns.] 10.0-0! [Now it was my opponent's turn for a long think. She finally decided to play it safe and finish developing, rather than temporarily go 3 (!) pawns ahead.] 10...e6 11.cxd4 ♔e7 12.♔e2 0-0 13.♔d1 ♔b4 14.♔e5 a6 15.♔c4 b5 16.a3! [This lets me restore material equality, but my chances remain clearly worse in view of her 2 bishops, light-square dominance and my pawn weaknesses.] 16...bxc4 [Less convincing for Black would be 16...♔d5?! 17.♔c6 ♔c3 (forced) 18.♔d3 ♔d7 when after reciprocal captures on e7, c3, and c4 Black emerges with a better bishop and better pawn structure, but probably smaller winning chances than in the game.] 17.axb4 ♔b7 18.♔xc4 ♔c8 19.♔b3 ♔b6 20.♔g3 [Not 20.♔d7?? ♔c6] 20...♔fd8 21.♔h6 ♔f8 22.h4! [Played with both an aggressive and a defensive purpose: eyeing h4–h5, ♔xg7 and h5–h6; while from a defensive standpoint, in many lines it's useful to prevent any back-rank mates.] 22...♔xd4? [Gives White the opportunity for a surprising perpetual check. Stockfish suggests Black could have stayed on top with 22...f6; Or 22...♔e4] 23.♔e3 [During the game I considered 23.h5 to maintain tension and threaten ♔xh6 followed by h6. But Black can reply 23...♔d6 and the White forces will get pushed back. By this point we both had under 10 minutes to reach move 40. (Or 23...♔d8) 23...♔xd1+ 24.♔xd1 ♔xb4 [Black has nothing better. 24...♔b5 would allow the same drawing idea] 25.♔d4? [I missed 25.♔g4! setting up the perpetual-check "windmill" with ♔h6+ and ♔f7+, which Black has no good way to ward off. No Black piece can defend the f7 square since 25...♔e7?? loses immediately to (And if 25...♔h8 26.♔e5 renews the same threat and again Black lacks a way to defend f7.) 26.♔d7 ♔xd7 27.♔f6+] 25...♔b1+ 26.♔h2 ♔d5 27.♔g4 ♔f5 [Stronger was 27...h5+– kicking my rook off the g-file since 28.♔g5 would lose immediately to 28...f6. But Irina had less than 2 minutes left to reach move 40.] 28.♔g5 ♔b7 29.h5 ♔c3 30.h6 [Surprisingly, Black's advantage has completely vanished, according to Stockfish. Its top 3 choices are ...♔c7, ...♔xc3, and ...a5, but it sees chances as fully equal after each.] 30...a5 [And naturally, 30...g6 is suicidal: 31.♔xg6+ hxg6 32.♔xg6+ ♔g7 33.h7+ ♔f8 34.♔h6] 31.♔h4! [with the idea of reaching the back rank. Even if Black prevents that, the pressure on g7 gives White a wealth of tactical possibilities (see next note)] 31...♔xe3 [If 31...♔c8 32.hxg7 ♔xg7?? 33.♔xg7+ ♔xg7 34.♔h6+ with mate to follow; and if 31...g6 is still suicidal, this tie in light of 32.♔xg6 hxg6 33.♔h5 ♔f7 34.♔xg6+ ♔h8 (34...♔h7 35.♔g7+) 35.♔d4+] 32.♔xg7+ ♔xg7 33.♔d8+ ♔f8 34.♔g5+ ♔h8 35.♔f6+ ♔g8 36.♔g5+ ♔h8 37.♔f6+ ½–½

- Game published in Chess Informant 102: [Jacobs—Frumkin](#)

Jacobs, Jon (2289) - Frumkin, Ed (2000) [B09]

NY State Senior Open, 04.05.2008

1.e4 [188MB, DFritz8.ctg, DELL] 1...d6 2.d4 ♟f6 3.♟c3 g6 4.f4 ♠g7 5.♟f3 c5 6.♠b5+ ♠d7 7.e5 ♠g4 8.h3 [A known sideline leading to a positional pawn sacrifice, whose consequences have been less deeply analyzed than the main lines starting with 8.e6.] 8...♠xb5 9.♠xb5 dxe5 [9...cxd4!? 10.♟e2 ♠xe5 11.fxe5 dxe5 12.♠xe5 d3 13.♠xf7 dxe2 14.♠xd8 ♟xd8 15.♟xe2= Stockfish] 10.hxg4 ♟a5+ 11.♠d2 [11.♟d2 ♟xb5 12.dxe5 ♠] 11...♟xb5 12.dxe5 ♟xb2 13.♠b1 ♟xa2 14.♠xb7 ♟a6 [A novelty that was recommended in some opening books prior to this game. Grosar-Chernin, Austrian League 1955 went 14...♟d5 15.♟b1 0-0 16.♟b3 c4 17.♟b5, with balanced chances after either ...♟xb5+ or ...♟e4+ (the move played in the game)] 15.♟b1 ♠d7 16.♟f2 ♠c8 [Preparing ...♠b6. The immediate 16...♠b6 was better, although after 17.♠c7 ♠c8 18.♠xc8+ ♠xc8 (18...♟xc8 19.♟b5+ ♠d7 20.♠b1) 19.f5 Stockfish views White as having more than enough play for the sacrificed pawn] 17.c4 h5 [Black's best chance was 17...♟xc4, after which play could continue 18.♠e1 (18.♠xa7 also leads to equal chances) 18...e6 19.♠d1 ♟a4 20.♟a1 ♟xa1 21.♠xa1 ♠b8 22.♠g5 0-0 23.♠xa7 ♠c6 24.♠xe6 ♠xe5 25.♠xf8 ♠d4+ 26.♠e3 ♠xe3+ 27.♟xe3 ♠xa7 28.♠xh7 c4 29.♠xa7 ♟xh7 30.♠a2=; The other main alternative, 17...♠b6 18.♟b5+ ♟xb5 19.cxb5 is solidly in White's favor] 18.♠g5! ♠b6 19.♠xf7!! 0-0 [19...♟xb7 20.♟xg6 ♠d7 (20...♟c6 21.♟xg7 ♠f8 22.♠g5 ♠d8 23.♠e3 ♠d7 24.♠h7 ♠fe8 25.♠f6+-) 21.e6+ ♟c6 22.♟xg7 ♠hg8 23.♟h7 (23.♠e5+; and 23.♟e5 also wins); 19...♟xf7 20.e6+ ♟g8 (20...♟xe6 21.♟e4+ with mate to follow in a few moves) 21.♟xg6 ♠h6 22.♟f7+ ♠h8 23.♠xe7 ♠d4+ 24.♠e3 ♠xe3+ (and either 24...♟xc4 25.♟g3; 24...♟a2+ 25.♟g3 White will force mate in at most 9 more moves) 25.♟f3! and White will force mate in at most 12 more moves; Most testing is 19...♠c6 But White still comes out on top after 20.♠xh8 ♟xb7 21.♠xg6 ♠d7 22.♠e3 ♟xg4 23.f5 ♠xg6 24.fxg6 ♠xe5 25.♠h3 ♠xc4 26.♟b5+ ♠d8 27.♠f3 Stockfish] 20.♠h6+ ♠h8 [20...♟h7 21.♠xe7 ♟xh6 22.♠h5+ gxh5 23.g5#] 21.♟xg6 ♟xb7 22.♠h5 e6 23.♠f7+ ♠g8 24.♠h8# 1-0

- New York State Senior Champion (2008)
- Most Valuable Player, Commercial Chess League of New York, 2015-16 season

Aside from playing, I'm most proud of my nine CJA awards for *Chess Life* articles published since 2005 (several in the "Best Analysis" and "Best Instruction" categories), the anti-cheating movement described earlier, and my Q&A interview with Goichberg being the cover story in *American Chess Magazine's* December 2024 issue.

At some point I saw you have an even score vs. Sammy Reshevsky and John Curdo amongst others. What was it like playing them? Any stories?

I have a whole series of posts in the works for my Facebook page about famous chess and non-chess people I played against or otherwise met through chess. The most famous among them is probably Peter Thiel. Our contact was limited to a single online chess game around 20 years ago, probably on ICC. Neverthe-

less, there is an interesting story to that. At that point Thiel was not yet well known beyond Silicon Valley. But I had heard of him through my work on Wall Street... and had read some of his nutty writings, such as advocating for rich people to incorporate their own "offshore sovereign states" and then claim exemption from all laws in their actual country (especially obligations to pay taxes).

So, when facing an opponent whose chess handle was "peterthiel," I assumed it must be some admirer of his – the real Peter Thiel surely wouldn't waste his time on an online chess platform, I figured. But I didn't know that the real Peter Thiel not only had played tournament chess in his younger days but had been rated 2200+ OTB!

"Why are you using HIS name as your handle?" I messaged my opponent in the chat window. "HE is an asshole!" Thiel didn't reply. That is surely the only time I ever called a billionaire an asshole to his face while unaware I was talking to him!

But it's not my most amusing or most revealing personal chess anecdote involving a celebrity. After growing quite excited about my two best such stories, I had the sobering realization that it would be foolish to publish either without a defamation liability insurance policy. (One of them might also require life insurance... but that's another matter.) I looked into acquiring such a policy and discovered to my chagrin that meaningful coverage against defamation suits isn't available for self-employed journalists. You'd have to purchase an umbrella policy designed for employers running a newsroom. Defamation would be just a small slice of it, and it's by no means clear that an insurer would even step up, if I got sued for something I wrote about a chess figure. (As a veteran journalist yourself you probably are well aware of the aphorism that the best stories often can't see the light of print. The same is true of the two best personal anecdotes from outside my chess career... which I won't go into here.)

In my (only) game against Reshevsky, at the 1974 US Open, I was on the receiving end of his habit of phrasing a draw offer as, "Are you playing to win?" He was infamous for posing that question to an opponent and then denying he had meant to offer a draw! In my case, however, I am certain he would not have tried to renege, if I had accepted the offer. It was a Friday, and we had agreed to start our game a few hours ahead of schedule to allow him time to get back home to his northern suburb long before sundown to observe the Jewish Sabbath. When he asked the question around move 15, I liked my position, so I declined. Several moves later, feeling less confident about my chances, I offered a draw, and he accepted.

I'm convinced that Reshevsky had decided beforehand that due to his religious obligations (and maybe also because he had Black and had a 5/5 score coming into the round) a draw would be an acceptable, even desired, outcome despite his rating advantage. Coincidentally, much the same thing happened on the following Friday when the GM faced my near-namesake, FM John N. Jacobs from Texas. That final-round game likewise ended in a draw – in just 12 moves! (Some databases erroneously

credit BOTH those Reshevsky games to my namesake Jacobs... despite being played in the same Swiss System tournament!)

In 2004, the late Denis Strenzwilk told me another anecdote about my Reshevsky game, that I had long forgotten. Denis had handled the "demo board" (another locution that will need to be explained to any readers under 50!) for that game. "At one point you picked up one of your rooks and were about to place it on a square," he said. "But you had second thoughts about the move, so you held the rook hovering in the air a moment or two and then moved to put it on a different square. Then you stopped to ponder again, and back up went the rook." Denis mimicked my indecision process all the while, moving his colored-fabric "rook" toward one square on the wall-mounted demo board, then toward another, and finally hovering it in the air while I pondered some more. This had some spectators laughing out loud, Denis told me.

My Reshevsky game also had an aftermath that I learned of only decades later. Some years ago, a Google search of my name produced the stunning discovery that during that U.S. Open, no less than Vlastimil Hort had publicly complained to N.Y. Times columnist, GM Robert Byrne, about Reshevsky getting an easy pairing with me! (The other two perfect scores coming into that Round, Round 6, were GMs Hort and Benko, the eventual co-winners of the tournament. As the highest-rated of the four, Hort was paired with Benko – a situation he decried as a "handicap" imposed by the Swiss System, pairing method. To be sure, Hort did defeat Benko in that game, while Reshevsky got only a half-point from his pushover opponent.)

Celebrities aside, perhaps the most poignant as well as funniest episode of my chess career occurred in a game against a South American national champion named Cuartas. Keep an eye out for it on my *A Pawn Made Flesh* page.

I was friends with NM Hugh Myers, author of Myers Opening Bulletins and several books including *Reversed King Pawns: Mengarini's Opening* (1.e4 e5 2.a3), up till his death in 2008. You had the opportunity to play Dr. Ariel Mengarini a few times. How did those games go? Did his namesake opening appear in any of your games?

I faced Mengarini 5 times, I think, making two wins, two losses, and a draw. The draw probably came in our first game, which was quite a coup for me since I was in my first year of tournament play and my rating had only just climbed to the 1500s. I don't recall him playing 2.a3 against me, but he did use unorthodox openings. That first encounter in a "Tornado" tournament in January '69, for instance, began with 1.P-K4 (I had White; I'm intentionally relaying in Descriptive Notation to maintain historical fealty to the subject!) N-QB3; 2.P-Q4 P-K4; 3.PxP NxP 4.P-KB4 N-QB3.

I won't invest the time to enter the moves into a PGN but I am sending a screenshot of the scoresheet, which also may best convey the historical flavor. I will also hazard a guess that this might not be the original scoresheet. Although my typical notating

of my games might have been neater than some peers I remember, they were rarely as picture-perfect as this one. So, there's a good chance I recopied it onto a fresh scoresheet, to better preserve my achievement of drawing with a master.

CONTINENTAL CHESS ASSOCIATION SCORE SHEET			
Jan. 1969			
BE SURE YOUR RESULT IS POSTED ON PAIRING SHEET AFTER GAME			
CAN'T PLAY NEXT ROUND? NOTIFY DIRECTOR IN ADVANCE!!			
TOURNAMENT HIGHLIGHTS:			
February 7-9 NORTHEAST OPEN East Orange, New Jersey At the beautiful Hotel Suburban, 10 blocks west of Garden State Pkwy exit 145, 45 minutes by bus from N.Y. Port Authority Terminal. \$500 guaranteed prize fund.			
February 22-23 EASTERN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP At Hotel Biltmore, N.Y. City 5-round team match Swiss for 4-man teams; 2 reserves optional. In 2 sections: Championship (Open) and Reserve (Average rating below 1800.) \$300 anticipated prize fund. Your club, school, league, city, region, etc. should be represented - form your own team! Any group of 4 will be accepted.			
March 7-9 CONTINENTAL AMATEUR New Haven, Connecticut For players rated below 2000 or unrated. Guaranteed prizes \$300 1st, \$200 to top Under- 1800, \$120 to top Under-1600. \$1250 anticipated prize fund. At the New Haven Motor Inn, another fine hotel in a delightful country setting.			
March 14-16 WASHINGTON OPEN & BOOSTER Visit the Nation's Capital for another big one with a \$500 prize fund. The Booster is March 15-16. Note change of hotel - event now at the famous Sheraton Park Hotel. All other details as in Jan. CHESS LIFE.			
For details on these and many others - see CHESS LIFE.			
TOURNAMENT 2nd Metropolitan Tornado ROUND 1			
WHITE Jacobs BLACK Dr. A. A. Mengarini-2230			
WHITE	BLACK	WHITE	BLACK
1 P-K4	N-QB3	31 R-K1	P-KR4
2 P-Q4	P-K4	32 R-QN1	N-Q1
3 P x P	N x P	33 R-N5	P x P
4 P-KB4	N-QB3	34 P x P	R-R6
5 N-KB3	B-B4	35 R x QP	N-B3
6 R-B4	P-Q3	36 N-Q2	N x N
7 N-N5	N-R3	37 R-Q7 ch	K-K1
8 P-KR3	Q-O	38 R x N	N-K4
9 N-QB3	B-K3	39 R-KN2	R-R5
10 B x B	P x B	40 R-B3	N x P
11 N-R2	N-B2	41 R-K2 ch	K-Q2
12 N-QR4	B-N3	42 Drawn	
13 N x B	R P x N	43	
14 Q-O	P-Q4	44	
15 P x P	P x P	45	
16 P-B3	N-R4	46	
17 Q-B2	P-B3	47	
18 P-QN3	P-QN4	48	
19 R-Q1	Q-B3	49	
20 B-K3	KR-K1	50	
21 KR-K1	P-N5	51	
22 B-Q2	P x P	52	
23 Q x P	R-K5	53	
24 Q x Q	P x Q	54	
25 P-B5	N-Q3	55	
26 P-KN4	K-B2	56	
27 R-B3	P-B4	57	
28 P-N4	P x P	58	
29 R x R	N x P	59	
30 B x NP	N-B3	60	

Although proud of the results, I don't recall anything noteworthy about my games against Mengarini (the only one I remember replaying in the past 30+ years is the final one, when I lost to him in the final round of a 1983 international event, when I had been in norm contention a round or two earlier). I am proud of one or two of my wins against Marchand, and maybe against Curdo.

I was very proud of my game with Hugh Myers: I beat him with a double-rook sacrifice in one of my most memorable tournaments, the 1971 Continental Open. I had beaten Mengarini in the preceding round. In the next round after Myers, I outplayed GM Kavalek in the opening and middlegame, only to misplay a superior endgame and end in defeat. Two rounds later I suffered the same fate against Zuckerman, after being up a piece in the middlegame. I nevertheless finished with 4.5/7 against opponents averaging 2270, a performance just shy of 2400.

I read that you covered some chess for the newspaper, while a graduate student at UC Berkely. Specifically, it said you covered a game between Yasser Seirawan and Walter Browne. How well did you know Seirawan or Browne? Seirawan has been one of my favorite players for many years. Any stories?

I never knew Seirawan; never played or even spoke with him.

Browne I knew only very slightly. Mostly I observed him playing in a few New York tournaments and heard many a juicy anecdote about his behavior at and away from the board.

A third party once relayed that Walter was angry with me for letting Philippine Champion Ruben Rodriguez salvage a draw from a lost endgame just weeks after Rodriguez had upset Browne in some important tournament. Later, during my California years, I probably faced Walter once or twice in blitz tournaments at a club in San Francisco.

I was not comfortable writing about that tournament for the Daily Cal... indeed (incongruously, perhaps, given my very real chops in both non-chess journalism and chess journalism) I've never wanted to write about chess for a non-chess audience. I have little memory of how I wrote it up, and it was very likely my only chess-related story for the U.C. paper.

But I do have a strong memory of the Seirawan-Browne game, which turned into a famous sacrificial king-hunt brevity. (Browne seemed to anticipate Kasparov's future advice that annihilating an up-and-coming rival while they're very young can add years to the time for that rival to regain the confidence they'll need to surpass you.) If you're not familiar with that game, it's well worth looking up, although not necessarily in connection with this piece. I have faced roughly 100 other grandmasters, American and foreign, over my long career. With dismal results, I might add. Out of all those games I picked up just two victories (and 20 or so draws).

Other than the Reshevsky incidents I already detailed, few other anecdotes from encounters with GMs come to mind. One involved Bisguier. I got paired with him in the blitz tournament at the 1985 U.S. Open in Hollywood, Fla. In the first of our two games (it was a double-round Swiss), I had White in a Ruy Lopez and thought I had built an overwhelming attack. "There's got to be a mate somewhere," I quipped. He laughed and said something like, "Good luck finding a mate!" Sure enough, the time I poured into trying to calculate a forced win landed me in time pressure and I probably ended up flagging. In the second game I won a piece but failed to bring home the point: it ended in a draw.

You have had twelve *Chess Life* articles published and won numerous awards in the annual *Chess Journalists of America* competitions, including five awards in the "Best Instruction" category. Which articles were your favorites? And why?

My #1 favorite among my published *Chess Life* articles is "The Sense of Danger, Part III: Nature, Red in Tooth and Claw" (published December 2006). Largely for two reasons:

1. While most of my articles examined only my own games, this one dug deep into the greatest (or at least the most celebrated) brilliancy of an unforgettable American chess hero: the late, great IM Emory Tate. My article was the first to do justice to Tate's swashbuckling upset over the then-recent World Championship Candidate, GM Leonid Yudasin. Alt-

hough it was awarded the Best Game Prize in a U.S. Masters Championship (with 15 GMs and 13 IMs participating) and IM Jack Peters annotated it in his *Chess Life* coverage of the 1997 U.S. Masters, Peters' notes missed important resources that were picked up by the stronger engines available to me in 2006.

2. The literary and philosophical references I employed to connect chess-related emotions with wider facets of the human condition: the courage to face an "insurmountable" obstacle; the psychological edge that a David may enjoy over a Goliath; the danger that confidence can break from its moorings and turn into mania.

In that article, after quoting Gufeld on emotions' valuable role in chess intuition, I acknowledged my own emotions' contribution to an unsound sacrifice I had made, by raising an analogy between sacrificing your bishop and sacrificing your son: "(W)e amateurs can't escape one boring, brutally ugly fact: **Our** emotional associations are just as likely to lead us down false roads as true ones. Thus, the problem with trying to apply Gufeld's ideas in practice is the same as that posed by Soren Kierkegaard in his masterpiece, *Fear and Trembling*: If you hear a voice commanding you to sacrifice your son, is God speaking to you? Or are you going insane? How would you know the difference?"

Writing that was great fun! And then equating my depleted army's final desperate charge at the castled position of my opponent (the same GM Yudasin!) with "The Charge of the Light Brigade" was still more fun: "Forward, the Light Brigade! / Was there a man dismay'd? / Not tho' the soldier knew / Someone had blunder'd: / Theirs not to make reply, / Theirs not to reason why, / Theirs but to do and die: / Into the valley of Death / Rode the six hundred." (And, how thoughtful of Tennyson to place the chess-language word, "blunder'd", in his poem!)

My second favorite among my *Chess Life* stories is "Timing is Everything" (published December 2007). In part for my chess-player's ego: how often does anyone get to annotate THREE of their own queen-sacrifice games in a single article, when that isn't even the topic? In part because it gave me the chance to write (of my 26.hxg3!! in the Bercys game), "Playing like this will grow hair on your chest... even if you're a girl!" And in part due to 14-year-old, future IM Salvijus Bercys' dramatic reaction to seeing my move: his eyes suddenly bulged, and his jaw plunged halfway to the floor. That made for the most rewarding moment in my long chess career.

Do you still teach chess? If you could provide one piece of advice to help others improve their game, what would it be?

I am not teaching at the moment. I might return to it sometime after publication of the Goichberg biography and at least one subsequent book.

The New York area has strong demand for chess teachers/coaches, but there is a two-tiered market in which the best opportunities are controlled by a few outfits with connections to a small number of private and public schools that have competitive chess

teams... and all the other jobs involve teaching after-school classes with students who would rather be doing something else. And it's very difficult for anyone to break through from the second group to the first group.

Many years ago, I sketched out preliminary ideas for a chess coaching method that I can honestly say is truly unique. (At least, I could say it before I stumbled across this coaching site just weeks ago: <https://www.selbst.coach/mindchess/> Their self-description aligns closely with my way of thinking. And unlike me, they have real psychotherapy/counseling chops.) My special insight is the majority of any player's chessboard disappointments arise neither from an opponent's strong play nor from gaps in our own chess knowledge. Instead, we most often go astray by failing to utilize chess knowledge we already have.

So, I decided there is more bang for the buck to be had from optimizing your own capacity to retrieve and execute on your existing store of chess information, than from pouring ever more information into your inevitably limited memory. And I encapsulated the concept in a few words that I've long viewed as the title and subtitle of a future book: "Emotional Chess. (Fire your coach. Hire a shrink!)"

It's kind of the opposite pole from my late friend Danny Kopec's "knowledge-based approach" to chess training. The mission is to marshal all emotional and intellectual resources – and even physical ones such as nutrition, clothing, and bathroom visits – to support keeping one's attention 100% focused on the chessboard. An important part of that is understanding, anticipating, and countering all possible distractions, whether from external sources (ambient noise, poor or inconsistent lighting, a badly behaving opponent, etc.) or more important, a galaxy of internal ones.

The devil is in the details, of course. I didn't build out my idea very far. What I did for my own play was, I began running a "maintenance checklist" on myself during most every competitive game where time permitted. It couldn't be done in blitz and I'm not sure I attempted it in rapid play (although I can think of few times when it probably would have helped); it was largely confined to OTB games at classical time controls.

A few times a game, I would ask myself how I was feeling, both emotionally and physically. Asking the question would make me more aware, for example, of whether I was holding back from a need to use the bathroom. Or of other physical distractions like being slightly too warm or cold, that might have hovered below the surface of consciousness. Of greater value were insights into my emotional state: Am I feeling anxious? Antsy? Do I feel high or euphoric? Do I feel like "this game is in the bag?" (a feeling that even average-strength club players will recognize as an emotional pitfall, IF made aware of it). Is anything from my life outside chess (an upcoming date; job project; recent argument with a friend or partner) impinging on my consciousness?

I can't point to any concrete impact on my results from these self-check-ins. I didn't get to practice them very long, before my tour-

nament activity was stopped by the pandemic and never really resumed. Still, if I had to advise anyone about a technique for improving tournament results, this would be it.

You have several projects I am aware of going on right now. The first is you have started work on a book about Bill Goichberg. Recently you had an excellent interview with Bill published in *American Chess Magazine*, Issue #42, 2024, pp 10-27. Would you give us an overview of this project and an update on when you expect it to be published?

I'll start with two clarifications. My main focus is on Bill's work of starting, building, and running CCA, which quickly became and continues to be America's largest single driver of tournament participation, and consequently of US Chess membership growth. That's why he is fairly described as the principal crafter of U.S. chess culture during my lifetime. I will also cover in depth his life outside of chess – childhood, schooling, marriage -- and his history as a player (he showed great promise for 15+ years).

What I will not cover in depth is his USCF leadership career. That might disappoint potential readers hoping for insight into the many high-stakes controversies that surrounded him as federation president, Executive Board member, and (briefly) Office Manager and Executive Director. But a biography of a chess businessman who is neither a grandmaster nor a current power broker (like, say, Danny Rensch) appeals to a relatively narrow niche to begin with. Recounting the details of legal and budgetary battles and even computer forensics (a crucial factor in the Polgar lawsuits) would surely repel most of that modest market. I've put this point more colorfully by noting that at most 200 people ever cared to read those details – past USCF EB members and top staffers, and the like. And only 50 of them are alive today: hardly a sufficient market for my book!

The second thing I want to make clear is that this is an independent project – not an "authorized" hagiography. No one is paying me, and Goichberg has no influence over my editorial content, beyond ground rules we agreed to for my interviews with him.

I am about to reach out to prospective publishers to gauge interest in the topic. I expect to be able to submit a written proposal by late summer. If a publisher bites, a book could come to market in the second half of next year, at the earliest.

By last summer I had contacted and interviewed 40+ individuals: almost everyone I believe essential to quote in a Goichberg biography, and then some. A good deal of archival research (including reading several biographies of both chess and non-chess figures) still lies ahead. But I can write chapters while I do that.

At that point I began looking at publishers. I was disappointed to discover that even the best publishers barely lift a finger to attract attention to a book by a new author; all the work of finding an audience falls on the author's shoulders.

I also got my first insight into publishing timelines... which appear rather longer than I had assumed. Because of printers' advance scheduling needs and the like, a year or more can go by from when an author delivers the manuscript to when the printed product is available for sale.

Another crucial insight was that any biography's first chapter has one indispensable job: persuading readers why they need to invest time to learn about this guy. Goichberg's importance for present-day chess players and chess parents rests on two major planks: the father of rated, scholastic chess; and the creator of the World Open. Starting in 1969 with the first National High School Championship (which I competed in as a 9th grader), CCA introduced all the National Scholastic tournaments and nurtured them through their first decade of existence. Although CCA sold those events to the USCF in the early 1980s, "Bill Goichberg created and built all the National Scholastics from scratch" seems a potent elevator pitch for a contemporary chess parent asking why they should care about him.

With that in mind, I plan on attending this year's SuperNationals in Orlando to compile a first-hand "slice-of-life" verbal and visual portrait of the garden that ultimately sprouted from the seeds Bill planted 56 years ago. I will do brief interviews with as many players, parents, and tournament officials as I can squeeze into two days. Lacking a current chess academy employer or other sponsor, I will have to travel on my own dime. I will also visit this year's World Open and will likewise interview participants there to quote in my opening chapter.

Published coverage of past and recent National Scholastics and World Opens already exists that I could draw from. But having learned the essential mission of my book's first chapter... AND having learned that a draft of the completed first chapter is a mandatory part of any book proposal I will submit – and that first chapter could be the clincher for both a prospective publisher and prospective readers to buy my book – I know that second-hand narration cannot do the trick. I will pay for what it takes to produce original first-hand reports, and hope to use the fruits of my reporting to defray part of the cost. (If a reader of *The Chess Journalist* knows of a publication or vendor who could use an on-site reporter at either the SuperNationals or the World Open, please contact me.)

Any anecdotes or stories about Bill you would be willing to share here?

I'll limit this answer to material that did not appear in the ACM cover story.

Bill has avoided eating meat since he was a toddler. He never liked it and is still repelled by the smell of meat consumed near him. As a child he would not eat the meatballs his mother cooked, so she made him salmon croquettes as a substitute.

If you think eschewing meat means someone can't be a foodie, think again. In our extended interviews I heard Bill describe in reverent tones the creamed spinach and chocolate pudding his

mother made; and likewise for vegetable dishes he'd eaten at two now-defunct western U.S. restaurant chains, Soup Plantation and Sir George's.

Also, he grew up with pet cats and loved having them around for much of his life. The saddest moment of his childhood was when a local dog killed three kittens he'd been raising. (A fourth kitten escaped the massacre by climbing a tree and went on to live a dozen years in the Goichberg household.) And a cat that Bill and his wife Brenda had for 11 years died suddenly just weeks after Brenda's death – a further emotional blow in his time of greatest grief.

The next project you have is a long-term project collecting great upsets with the plan to make it into a book entitled *The Fish that Roared*. Beauty and Entertainment value is what it is all about not necessarily instructional. You created a Facebook group to collect more brilliant upsets ([The Fish That Roared | Facebook](#)). The "public" FB group is viewable by all (not only members), and posted games are not subject to the same criteria as the book: games displayed in the group can feature upsetters rated 200+, 2200+, etc., and there is no set minimum rating difference for a game to qualify as an "upset" for purposes of the FB group.) What made you decide the topic would make a good book? Have you found a publisher for the book? Is there specific timing for the book to be published?

There are several conceptually similar books such as Peter Zhdanov's "David vs. Goliath" Did these inspire you in any way?



The Fish That Roared idea came into my head a decade ago. After two years of work on it, I put it aside for reasons explained below. I intend to return to it after finishing the Goichberg book.

Chess upsets always fascinate me. Maybe Goichberg deserves credit for that too, since his efforts to promote chess (and especially among school-age players – "junior chess" as it was called then) included frequent shout-outs to upset-heroes in his steady stream of *Chess Life* tournament reports.

A personal experience at age 14 must have contributed, too:

Pincus, Alan (1933) - Jacobs, Jon (1192) [A04]

Brooklyn brooklyn, 10.05.1968

1.e4 c5 2.♠f3 e6 3.g3 ♘c6 4.♠g2 ♠g7 5.d3 g6 6.♠e3 ♠g7 7.c3 d6 8.0-0 0-0 9.♠h4 ♠b8 10.f4 b5 11.♠d2 f5 12.a3 a5 13.♠c1 ♠a6

14.♟d3 b4 15.a×b4 a×b4 16.♟g5 ♟d7 17.exf5 exf5 18.♟b3+ c4
 19.♟a2 ♟b5 20.d×c4 ♟a8 21.♟b3 ♟a4 22.♟a2 ♟c2 23.♟×a8 ♟×a8
 24.♟×c2 b×c3 25.b×c3 ♟a4 26.c5 d×c5 27.♟d2 ♟a7 28.♟d6 ♟a6
 29.♟fd1 ♟a1 30.♟c1 c4+ 31.♟h1 ♟×c3 32.♟hf3 ♟b4 33.♟d7 ♟×c1
 34.♟e5 ♟×d7 35.♟×c1 ♟×e5 36.♟e4 f×e4 37.f×e5 c3 38.♟×e4 ♟d2
 0-1

The game occurred in one of my first tournaments, with a 740-point rating difference. At the board my college-age opponent filled in cells on a wall chart with a felt-tipped marker for an upcoming tournament he was co-directing. Soon after the finish a friend of his saw the result and asked him what happened. Looking stunned, Pincus shook his head and muttered, “He found some shots.” Hearing that was my most rewarding experience in chess until the Bercys game 34 years later.

But the immediate impetus to compile an upsets book came from a pair of sacrificial brevities by club players that I had seen in *Chess Life*. One that I remembered from my earliest years in chess: Formanek-Oshana, Chicago 1970 (an Albin Countergambit, 19-move blowout that concluded with a pretty queen-sacrifice). The other is Davis-Fedorowicz, from Round 1 of the U.S. Open in 1980. Both can be easily found online.

A number of well-placed chess friends ratified my feeling that a book celebrating upsets by amateurs could be a best-selling chess book. A reader with a 1550 rating may strongly identify with a fellow club player who knocked off a titled opponent. An upset achieved by Master or even an Expert is less likely to stir them that way.

The “David versus Goliath” emphasis distinguishes my effort from many authors who lazily slap an “upset” label on anything they think they can get away with. The first such work I noticed, *Great Chess Upsets* by Samuel Reshevsky (1976), is filled with early World Champions’ losses to near-equally illustrious peers, including the author’s own impressively played 1935 downing of a late-career Capablanca. In recent years I’ve seen GM Daniel Naroditzky, GM Simon Williams, and even the usually fastidious IM Jeremy Silman take a similar tack in online articles that showcased alleged “upset” games. Naroditzky’s entry from 2014, for example, included GM Joel Lautier’s (2655!) win over Kasparov and Louis Paulsen’s only win over Paul Morphy.

But I knew better than to embrace “David versus Goliath” as my prospective book title. I’ve always remembered my grad-school, journalism professor Ben Bagdikian’s advice in a handout on the first day of class in 1978: “Use cliches in your writing the same way you would use nuclear bombs: NEVER!” In 2016, a weakness for cliché landed the authors and publishers of two separate and entirely unrelated upset books in an awkward spot. Released a few months apart by Batsford and Chess Evolution, respectively, the books by Andy Soltis (<https://www.amazon.com/David-Goliath-Chess-Stronger-Player/dp/1849943575>) and Peter Zhdanov (<https://www.amazon.com/Chess-Evolution-David-vs-Goliath/dp/8394536212>) sported the identical title, “David versus Goliath”!

Both are in essence manuals for rating underdogs looking to overcome the odds against them. Thinking about the thrills I got from replaying great upset games, I decided from the get-go to emphasize beauty, drama, and human interest: to produce an entertainment book and not a how-to book.

By late 2016 I had collected at least 50 publication-worthy games that met my upset criteria (minimum 400-point rating difference, and underdog rated below 2000) when something unexpected happened: the competition bug bit me. Largely out of tournament chess for the preceding few years, I had kept a hand in the game by playing in a local New York league. My league results were so powerful – performance in mid-2400s over three seasons, encompassing 25+ games and numerous well-played wins over FM and NM opposition – that I felt I owed it to myself to take my last conceivable shot at achieving IM norms while still in my 60s.

Since I was still working full-time then, there was no possibility of pursuing both *The Fish That Roared* book and another return to competition. I put the book on hold and poured all my free time into tournament prep, including a thorough overhaul of my opening repertoire. The results proved dismal, but I’m still glad I tried – even at the high price of folding on dozens of people who had contributed games for my book. Had I not jumped back into the ring, I would be forever tortured by the thought that I could have been a contender. 😊

Any advice for the person who is thinking about writing a book?

I’ll confine myself to the book-publishing intel in my answer regarding the Goichberg book. And note that the market challenges I face are likely very different from someone who aims to write an opening treatise or a “move by move” guide to the style of this or that grandmaster. I may have more useful advice after one or both my books have been published.

Lastly you have created another Facebook group called [A Pawn Made Flesh](#). This is devoted to capturing chess history. If possible, do you plan on capturing all of these stories and putting them into a book?

That’s a possibility; I definitely would like to eventually repurpose much of the writing I’m doing for *A Pawn Made Flesh* in one form or another. IM Mark Ginsburg, who wrote a terrific blog some 15 years ago (<https://nezhmet.wordpress.com/>), has toyed with possibly turning his old blog posts into a book. I’d probably ask him if I could help him do that before I’d consider putting *A Pawn Made Flesh* content in a book.

A note about social media and internet taxonomy: a Facebook “page” (which *A Pawn Made Flesh* is) differs from a “group.” Groups are autonomous collections of members who generally have posting privileges, and who may or may not require a group administrator’s okay to get admitted. Pages are intended as vehicles for either a business or a public figure. Only the page owner can initiate posts on the page. A page’s “followers” (there are no

members) can comment on the owner's posts but cannot post themselves.

I started the page after my research into book publishing convinced me that an author who wishes to sell more than a few hundred copies of their book needs a public following. So, the page will ultimately serve as my means of connection with prospective readers of the Goichberg book and others I hope to publish.

Of course, as a prospective author of printed books, my target audience excludes people who hate reading. Therefore, videos and their platforms -- Instagram, YouTube, Tiktok -- are of little use to me.

Still, after three months I'm starting to run up against the limitations of relying on Facebook as my principal online vehicle. I'm hearing that almost no one younger than 40 ever looks at or uses it. And even among my senior age peers, too many chess friends are not on Facebook at all. That hampers my visibility. So, I'm thinking of branching out and adding another online platform to display my full-text stories; I welcome any advice your readers might have about that. (If you're wondering why I didn't start with Substack instead, read this: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BTzwZMFYm/>)

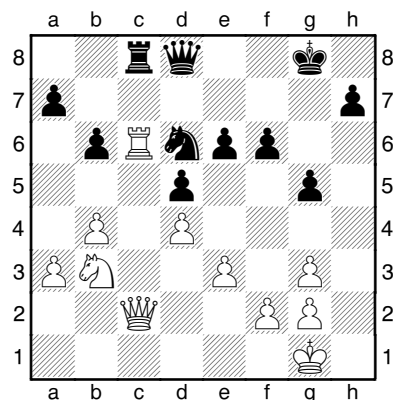
Would you be willing to give us a flavor of what is been posted on the page?

The page showcases first-hand chess observations, opinions and reminiscences from my decades of chess activity. With apologies to Arnold Denker, imagine my content as "The Bobby Fischer I Almost Met, and Other Stories."

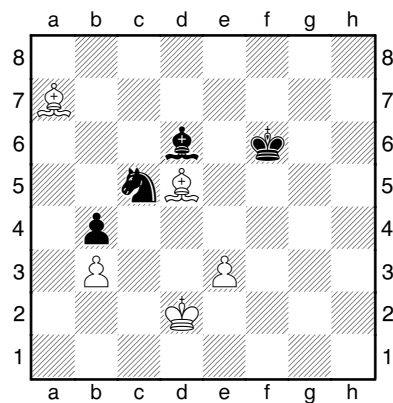
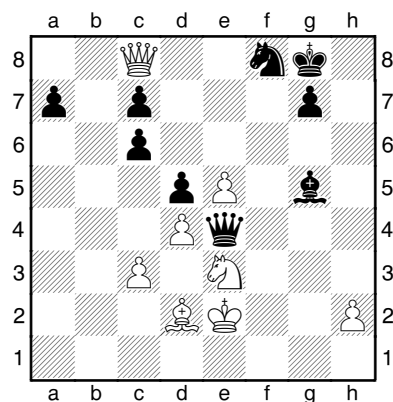
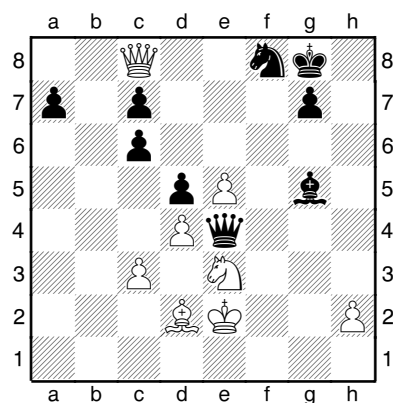
The stories can be viewed by anyone, with no restriction other than having to be signed into one's Facebook account (a requisite for viewing any Facebook page or profile).

A few highlights from what's already appeared:

- TD George Koltanowski's questionable final-round pairing change helped Pal Benko land a share of 1st prize in a U.S. Open 50 years ago. This detail from my interviews with Bill Goichberg was revealed for the first time anywhere on *A Pawn Made Flesh* and in *American Chess Magazine's* December cover story. (<https://tinyurl.com/7uyhxyhw>)
- An eyewitness account of the demise of New York's iconic Flea House chess club, relaying tragicomic details never published before. (<https://tinyurl.com/y8za63hu>)
- Pros and cons of the explosion of pretty-girl chess videos I labeled "chess-twerking" <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/162ieJ821y/>
- Ironclad proof that luck sometimes drives chess game outcomes (and NOT simply because someone blundered!) <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/17yemeosi4/>



- Three positions where a decisive continuation came to one of the players in a dream. (It happened once to Frank Marshall and twice to me):



- The at-the-board experience that spurred me to start a movement demanding action against chess cheaters back in 2005, when the issue was being mostly ignored by chess authorities at every level. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/18SSSk48Fn/>



- A well-received prize contest to identify everyone you can recognize in this photo, taken during the final round of the 1974 U.S. Open in New York City: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19GtGq7C2v/>



A Pawn Made Flesh is not aimed at people who consume chess information solely to improve competitive results. I neither stream my chess games nor publish chess lessons or annotated games. Rather than videos, the posts consist mostly of text -- a medium that plays to my strength as a successful professional writer and soon-to-be book author. I'm gambling that a menu of eyewitness (and often eye-popping) anecdotes, personal insights, quizzes about chess players and past chess events, and occasional links to audio snippets from my interviews with chess figures, will attract ongoing interest from the community.

Besides my personal observations of the tournament and club scene from the 1960s through the present, I am drawing from three other information streams:

1. Discoveries from my ongoing research for the Bill Goichberg biography book.
2. Musings about current chess issues that interest me (cheating, chess-twerking, chess players making headlines outside of chess, is there luck in chess?, etc.)

3. Historical and recent upset games with potential for The Fish That Roared.

I hope to recreate the spirit of the best online chess discussion forums I saw in the 2000s and 2010s: blogs run by Mig Greengard <http://www.chessninja.com/dailydirt/archives.html>, Mark Ginsburg <https://nezhmet.wordpress.com/>, Dennis Monokroussos <https://thechessmind.substack.com/archive>, and Michael Goeller <https://web.archive.org/.../kenilworthian.blogspot.com/>.

The rationale behind my content was elaborated in two early posts from December and January: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Ym27Z7vQQ/>, and: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1XXFqp5Mzz/>

Do you have a favorite player? If so who and why?

I don't follow high-level chess much. My favorite is Kasparov, both for his chess style and for his overall visibility, energy, and need to change the world beyond chess. (His larger-than-life impact reminds me of Muhammad Ali in sports, and Bob Dylan in music.)

I also admire Viktor Korchnoi, for reincarnating Emanuel Lasker at the board and for his provocative character both at and away from the board. And Anish Giri for his amazing sense of humor.

And I can't fail to add my favorite chess authors: Marc Esserman, who wrote the most wildly enjoyable chess book I ever read, *Mayhem in the Morra!*. (Angus Dunnington takes second in that department, for his *Blunders and How to Avoid Them*.) I also enjoy the writing of Andy Soltis and the late Jeremy Silman.

Do you have a favorite piece of chess history you would like to share?

A few (such as my account of the demise of the Flea House hustlers' emporium) were linked in my answer to your question about *A Pawn Made Flesh* content.

Here is one I will pose as a quiz for your readers. At which very important chess-history location is this plaque found today?



A Selection of Best Games played by Jon:

Jon calls this the “Jacobs Immortal”

Alan Pincus - Jon Jacobs [A29]

73rd US Open Atlantic City, NJ USA (2), 14.08.1972

1.c4 e5 2.♖c3 ♘f6 3.g3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♗g2 ♖b6 6.♗f3 ♖c6 7.d3 ♗e7 8.0-0 f5 9.♗d2 0-0 10.a4 a5 11.♖c1 ♗e6 12.♗e3 f4 13.♗xb6 cxb6 14.♖b5 ♗c5 15.♗d2 ♖d7 16.♗e4 ♗e7 17.♗a3 ♗xa3 18.bxa3 ♖d4 19.♖b1 ♖ac8 20.♖xb6 ♖c1 21.♖d2 ♖c2 22.♖d1 ♖xe2+ 23.♖h1 ♗h3 24.♗g5 ♗xg2+ 25.♖xg2 ♖d5+ 26.♖h3 ♖c5 27.♖xb7 f3 28.♖xg7+ ♖h8 29.♖xh7+ ♖g8 30.♖g7+ ♖xg7 31.♗e6+ ♖f6 32.♗xc5 ♖f5 33.g4+ ♖g6 34.♖xe2 fxe2 35.♖e1 ♖xc5 36.♖xe2 ♖f3+ 37.♖g2 ♖xd3 38.h4 ♖xa3 0-1

And Jon calls this the “Jacobs Evergreen”

Jon Jacobs - Salvijus Bercys (2312) [B20]

Marshall G-30 New York, NY USA, 29.01.2004

1.e4 c5 2.d3 d5 3.exd5 ♖xd5 4.♗c3 ♖d7 5.♗e3 e5 6.f4 exf4 7.♗xf4 ♗e7 8.♗f3 ♗f6 9.♖d2 0-0 10.0-0-0 ♗c6 11.♗e5 ♗xe5 12.♗xe5 b5 13.♖g5 ♗e8 14.♖g3 f6 15.♗f4 b4 16.♗e4 ♖d5 17.b3 f5 18.♗g5 ♖d4 19.♖e1 ♗f6 20.♗e5 ♖d8 21.♗f3 ♗b7 22.d4 cxd4 23.♗c4+ ♖h8 24.♗xd4 ♗h4 25.♗e6 ♗xg3 26.hxg3 ♗f6 27.♗xd8 ♖axd8 28.♖h4 h6 29.♗c7 ♖d7 30.♗f4 ♗e4 31.♖e2 ♖fd8 32.♗e5 ♖f8 33.g4 ♗xg4 34.♖xg4 fxg4 35.♖xe4 ♖e7 [White was forced to offer his opponent a draw many moves later while ahead by 2 Queens -- since the game was played at sudden death Game/30 using an analog clock and White would otherwise have flagged before delivering checkmate.] ½-½

Denied Larry a share of second place in his first US Junior Closed. (I doubt I could conduct a single game as well for as long today.)

Jacobs,Jon (2208) - Christiansen,Larry (2316) [B44]

US Junior Invitational 1972 Los Angeles, 25.06.1972

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 e6 5.♗b5 d6 6.c4 ♗f6 7.♗1c3 a6 8.♗a3 ♗e7 9.♗e2 0-0 10.0-0 ♗d7 11.♗e3 b6 12.f4 ♖a7 13.♖e1 ♖b8 14.♗c2 ♖d8 15.♖f2 ♖b7 16.a4 ♗e8 17.♖ad1 ♖c8 18.♖g3 ♖h8 19.f5 ♗e5 20.♗d4 ♗d7 21.b3 ♖g8 22.fxe6 fxe6 23.♗f3 ♖f8 24.♗g5 h6 25.♗h3 ♗e8 26.♗f4 ♗d7 27.♗g6+ [27.♗d4 was good for a still greater White advantage] 27...♗xg6 28.♖xg6 ♗e8 29.♖g3 ♗f7 30.♗d4 e5 31.♗e3 ♖e8 32.♖f2 ♗e6 33.♖d1 ♗d8 34.h3 ♖b7 35.♗c1? ♖c6? [Missing a chance for counterplay via 35...b5! and if 36.cxb5 ♗b6 37.♗e3 ♗a5=] 36.♖d3 ♗d7 37.♖xf7 ♖xf7 38.♖d1 ♗e7 39.♗f3 ♗c5 40.♖c2 ♗h4 [The tempting 40...♗xh3? could be met by 41.b4 ♗d7 42.♗h5 with a considerable advantage, i.e., 42...g6 43.♗xg6 ♖g7 44.♗d5] 41.♗e3 ♖h7 [Here or on his next move Black should play ...a5 to prevent White driving off his knight with b3-b4.] 42.♖h2 ♗c8 43.b4 ♗e6 44.♗d5?! [Stronger was 44.♖d3 and if 44...♗e7 45.b5 Black's pawn weaknesses and White's open lines amount to a near-decisive advantage. For example, 45...♖e8 46.♗d5 ♗d8 47.♗xb6 ♗xb6 48.♗xb6 ♗d4 49.♖f1 ♗b7 50.♗d5 g6 51.b6 ♖g7 (or 51...♖xa4? 52.♗d1 ♖d7 53.♗f6+ winning the Exchange) 52.a5] 44...b5 45.axb5 axb5 46.c5?! ♗g5? [46...dxc5 47.bxc5 ♗d4 48.♗xd4 exd4 49.e5+ ♗f5=] 47.♗e2? [The stronger 47.♗h5 was winning for White, i.e., 47...g6 (47...♖a7 48.g3) 48.♗xg6+ ♖xg6 49.♗e7+ ♖xe7 50.♖xd6+] 47...♗f2? [Again 47...dxc5

was the best way to stay in the game.] 48.♗h5 ♗xe3 49.♗xf7 ♗d4 50.♗g6+ [50.♖xd4 exd4 51.♗e7 (51.e5+ ♖h8 52.♗e7 ♖e4) 51...♖b7 52.e5+ ♗e4 53.exd6] 50...♖h8 51.♖f1 ♗e6 52.♗e7 ♖d7 53.♗xc8 ♖xc8 54.c6 ♗f4 55.♗f5 ♖c7 56.♗d7 d5 57.g3 dxe4 58.♖xe4 ♖d6 59.gxf4 ♖xb4 60.♖e2 1-0

Got myself a share of first place in a US Junior Open with a fine final-round win:

Jacobs,Jon (2230) - Winslow, Elliot (2130) [B71]

US Junior Open 1972 Minneapolis (8), 04.08.1972

1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♗c3 g6 6.f4 ♗c6 7.♗xc6 bxc6 8.e5 ♗d7 9.exd6 exd6 10.♗e3 ♖e7 11.♖d2 ♗g7 12.0-0-0 0-0 13.f5 ♗f6 14.♗d3 ♖b8 15.♗h6 ♖b7 16.b3 ♖b4 17.♗xg7 ♖a3+? [A seemingly natural move that hands White a decisive advantage. The queen was better left on b4] 18.♖b1 ♖xg7 19.♖h1 d5 20.♖f3 a5 21.♖df1 ♖d6 22.♖h3 ♖b7 23.♖h6+ ♖h8 24.g4 g5 25.♖xg5 [♗ 25.♖h5 ♖g8 26.h4] 25...♖g8 26.♖h6 ♖xg4 27.♖g3 [♗ 27.♖e2] 27...♖xg3 28.hxg3 ♖b4 29.♗e2 ♖g4 30.♗f4 ♗e4 [Also losing is 30...♖g8 31.g4 ♖xg4 32.♗e6 ♖e5 33.♗g5 ♖g8 34.♗xh7 ♗xh7 35.♖xc6 ♖b8 36.♖h1 f6 37.♗e2 ♖g7 38.♖xd5+ ♖f7 39.♗c4] 31.♗g6+! [The one move that keeps White on top!] 31...♖g8 [31...fxg6 32.♗xe4 ♖f6 (32...dxe4 33.f6 forces mate) 33.♗d3 ♖g7 34.♖d2 ♗xf5 35.♖xa5 ♖d7 36.a4 with a won position] 32.♗xe4 hxg6 [32...dxe4 33.♖h1 fxg6 34.♖xh7+ ♖f8 35.♖h8+ ♖e7 36.♖h7#] 33.f6? [Winning, but still better was 33.♖h1 ♖f6 34.♗d3 ♖xg3 35.fxg6 ♗g4 36.♖e1 ♗e6 37.gxf7+ ♖xf7 38.♖f1 ♖f3 (38...♗f5 39.♖h5+ ♖e6 40.♖e8+) 39.♖h5+] 33...♖f8 34.♖h2 ♖g5 35.♗f3 ♖d6 36.♗e2 ♖f5 37.♖h1 ♖xf6 38.♖h7+ ♖f8 39.♖h8+ ♖xh8 40.♖xh8+ ♖e7 41.♖xc8 ♖d7 42.♖a8 ♖e5 43.♗d1 d4 44.♖c1 f5 45.♖g8 ♖e6 46.♖d2 ♖d6 47.g4 fxg4 48.♗xg4 ♖f6 49.♖a8 ♖f4 50.♗e2 ♖f5 51.♖d3 ♖e5 52.♖d8+ ♖c5 53.♖xd4 g5 54.♗f3 1-0

Reciprocal queen-sacs, followed by “Overrun by an army of munchkins!” (see comment beneath the replay window):

Edward A Frumkin (2000) - Jon Jacobs (2200) [A62]

Under-2300 New York, NY USA, 1980

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.d5 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.♗c3 g6 7.♗g2 ♗g7 8.♗f3 0-0 9.0-0 ♖e8 10.♗d2 ♗fd7 11.h3 ♗a6 12.♖h2 ♖b8 13.a4 ♗c7 14.♗c4 ♗e5 15.♗a3 g5 16.♗e4 h6 17.f4 gxf4 18.gxf4 ♗g6 19.♗c4 ♗xh3 20.♗exd6 ♗g4 21.♗xe8 ♖h4+ 22.♖g1 ♖xe8 23.♗e3 ♖xe3 24.♗xe3 ♗d4 25.♖a3 ♖g3 26.♖xd4 cxd4 27.♗f5 ♖xa3 28.bxa3 ♗f5 29.♖h2 ♗h4 30.♗h1 ♗d7 31.♖d1 ♗f5 32.♗e4 ♗d6 33.♗f3 ♗xa4 34.♖xd4 ♗c2 35.e4 ♗cb5 36.♖b4 a5 37.♖b2 ♗d4 38.♗g2 b5 39.e5 ♗c4 40.♖a2 ♖f8 41.♗f1 ♗e3 42.♗g2 ♗b3 43.♖d2 ♗f3+ [Somewhere after move 35, as black minor pieces and pawns swarmed his queenside and center and bottled up his rook, Frumkin uttered the memorable lament: "I feel like I'm being overrun by an army of Munchkins!"] 0-1

The featured game annotated in my article, “The Sense of Danger, Part I: Stumbling into a Minefield”, *Chess Life*, October 2005. (The published article showed my opponent as “Anonymous,” because the editor feared that my friends laughing at his post-mortem comments could offend him.)

Jacobs,Jon (2184) - Salisbury,B. (2007) [A07]

HB Global Chess Challenge Minneapolis, 26.06.2005

1.b3 d5 2.♖b2 ♖f6 3.♖f3 ♖f5 4.g3 e6 5.♖g2 ♖e7 6.0-0 h6 7.d3 0-0
 8.♖bd2 c6 9.e3 a5 10.a4 ♖a6 11.♖e1 ♖h7 12.e4 ♖b6 13.exd5 cxd5
 14.♖e5 ♖fc8 15.♖df3 ♖c7 16.♖h3 ♖b4 17.c4 dxc4 18.♖xc4 ♖a7
 19.♖fe5 ♖d8 20.♖e3 ♖c5 21.♖f3 ♖e4 22.dxe4 ♖xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♖xe4
 24.♖d8+ ♖h7 25.♖xf7 ♖xf2+ 26.♖xf2 ♖xf7 27.♖d4 ♖xf2 28.♖a7
 ♖a2 29.♖xe6 ♖c6 30.♖g8+ ♖g6 31.♖d6+ ♖g5 32.♖e3+ ♖g4 33.♖d2
 ♖e5 34.♖e6+ ♖h5 35.♖xe4 ♖f3+ 36.♖f1 ♖xh2+ 37.♖e1 ♖f3+
 38.♖d1 g5 39.♖f5 ♖a1+ 40.♖c2 ♖a2+ 41.♖b1 ♖d2+ 42.♖xd2 ♖xd2
 43.♖f6* 1-0

And to maintain my brand as the author whose *Chess Life* articles analyzed almost as many losses as wins...

A long grueling battle with the tournament winner in my only U.S. Junior Invitational (never published anywhere!):

Jacobs,Jon - Chellstorp,Craig [C99]

US Junior Invitational 1972 Los Angeles (3), 21.06.1972

[By move 25 I had an extra pawn and was well on the way to snuffing out Black's counter chances. Then the difference in our strengths began to assert. I found myself gradually, inexorably outplayed. I rejected at least one draw offer, but by adjournment time Black, although still a pawn down, had enough counterplay (2 Bishops in an open position) that his chances were at least equal. I stayed up all night preparing various traps. To my chagrin, Chellstorp's sealed move differed from the one that all my adjournment analysis started from. Upon resuming after adjournment, Chellstorp's pieces grew ever more active, until my position finally collapsed.] 1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♖c6 3.♖b5 a6 4.♖a4 ♖f6 5.0-0 ♖e7
 6.♖e1 b5 7.♖b3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 ♖a5 10.♖c2 c5 11.d4 ♖c7 12.♖bd2 cxd4 13.cxd4 ♖c6 14.♖b3 a5 15.♖e3 a4 16.♖bd2 ♖b4 17.♖b1 ♖d7
 [If 17...a3 to prevent White's next move, then 18.♖b3 ♖a5 (if 18...axb2 19.♖xb2 Stockfish accords White a decisive advantage in light of Black's difficulty defending b5 and e5) 19.♖c1♠] 18.a3 ♖a6 19.♖d3 ♖ac8 20.♖e2 ♖b8 21.♖ab1 ♖e8 22.b3 axb3 23.a4 [♖ 23.♖xb3] 23...♖ec7? [Stockfish thinks Black should give go for 23...bxa4, giving up the ♖ for a pair of advanced passers: 24.♖xa6 ♖c3 25.♖d3 a3 26.♖c4±] 24.♖xb3 exd4 25.♖xd4 ♖c5 26.♖xc5 dxc5 27.axb5 ♖e6 28.♖c4 ♖f4 29.♖e3 ♖d6 30.h4 ♖e6 31.♖d3? [31.♖d3 ♖c7 32.b6 ♖b7 33.♖b1 would expand White's already crushing advantage] 31...♖d4 32.♖xd4 cxd4 33.♖f3? [♖33.b6 ♖b8 34.b7] 33...♖h8 34.♖bb1 ♖g4 35.♖xd4 ♖c5 36.♖d5 ♖xh4 37.g3 ♖d8 38.♖c6? [38.♖ec1 forcing a trade of ♖ for 2 rooks was the right course. Black's 2 bishops are outweighed by White's passed pawn and well coordinated pieces. Play could continue 38...♖xc1+ 39.♖xc1 ♖xc1+ 40.♖g2 ♖d1 41.♖a3! ♖g8 42.♖c6 ♖b1 43.♖e5 ♖h5 44.♖d7 ♖e8 45.♖a8 ♖b2 46.♖c6 with b6 to come] 38...♖b6 39.♖d2 ♖ce8 40.♖b3? [♖40.♖ec1, chasing Black's ♖ off the dangerous diagonal] 40...f5 41.e5 [Notwithstanding White's past missteps, Stockfish still sees White better by six(!) pawn-equivalents here] 41...f4 42.gxf4? [42.♖c1! was still the right idea. The black ♖ is trapped, and after the desperate 42...fxg3 43.♖xc5 gxf2+ 44.♖f1 ♖xc5 45.♖c1 ♖a8 46.♖c3 ♖a3 47.♖b1 White continues to have all the key squares covered (such as h3 and f1 in case of ...♖e2+)] 42...♖f5 43.♖g2?? [Finally White cracks, misstepping badly enough to erase his advantage] 43...♖xf4 44.f3 ♖f8

45.♖e2?? [45.♖h1=; 45.♖g3 ♖c8±] 45...♖h5?? [Now it's black's turn to overlook a decisive continuation 45...♖f5! was killing; Likewise 45...♖e6! The point is that after 46.♖g3 (46.♖xe6 ♖xe6 lifts Black's other rook into the attack) 46...♖xd5 47.♖xd5? ♖f5 the white ♖ can escape the coming checks on the g and h files only by returning an exchange on e3. But his king still won't evade the attack: Stockfish sees forced checkmate in at most 18 moves from that position.] 46.♖g3 ♖a4= 47.♖e4 ♖c5 48.♖e1 ♖ea8? 49.♖b2? [49.♖c3! ♖f8 50.♖g5! retreating the bishop would fail to ♖xh7! For example, 50...♖f7 51.♖xh7 ♖xh7 52.♖e7 g6 53.♖h1+ ♖h4 54.♖xh4+ ♖g7 55.♖f6*] 49...♖a1? 50.♖bb1?? [50.♖c2! ♖f8 51.♖xa1 ♖xa1 52.♖d6 forces the queens off, after which White's passed pawn will decide] 50...♖1a2?= [Far better was to do it with the other rook. 50...♖8a2-+ He needn't fear 51.♖xa1 ♖xd2 52.♖a8+ ♖d8 53.♖xd8 ♖xe5+ forcing checkmate] 51.♖b2 ♖xb2 52.♖xb2 ♖f7 53.♖b1 ♖g8 54.♖g2? ♖f8? [This time Black's winning shot was truly hard to see: 54...♖d5! What's so special about that? Can't White reply with 55.♖c2 threatening both mate on h7 and trading queens? Yes, but then comes 55...♖a2!! and wins!; 54...♖a3 also wins: 55.♖g3 ♖f8 56.♖e2 ♖e3] 55.♖f1? [55.♖c2 maintains the balance, since 55...♖xb5? 56.♖e7 g6 57.♖xg6+ hxg6 58.♖h1+ leads to checkmate] 55...♖e3-+ 56.♖c1 ♖e2+ 57.♖g3 ♖e3 0-1

No shame in forcing a strong GM to exercise his full strength...

Jacobs,Jon (2274) - Izoria,Zviad (2693) [B50]

Marshall Chess Club Championship 2006 New York, 03.12.2006

1.♖f3 d6 2.e4 c5 3.c3 ♖f6 4.h3 ♖c6 5.♖d3 d5 6.exd5 ♖xd5 7.♖e2 g6 8.♖c4 ♖d6 9.d4 cxd4 10.0-0 ♖g7 11.cxd4 0-0 12.♖c3 ♖a5 13.♖d3 ♖e6 14.♖b5 ♖d8 15.♖f4 ♖d5 16.♖e5 ♖c6 17.♖fd1 ♖xe5 18.dxe5 ♖f4 19.♖e3 ♖h6 20.♖h2 ♖g7 21.♖f1 ♖d5 22.♖c3 ♖a5 23.♖xd5 ♖xd5 24.♖b3 e6 25.♖d3 ♖b6 26.♖b5 ♖xb5 27.♖xb5 ♖ac8 28.♖d3 ♖a4 29.♖e4 ♖c7 30.♖d4 b5 31.♖e1 ♖fc8 32.♖e2 ♖c1 33.♖d3 a6 34.b3 ♖c3 35.♖c2 ♖a3 36.♖e2 ♖c5 37.♖xc3 ♖xd4 38.♖xc7 ♖xe5+ 39.♖xe5 ♖xc7 40.a4 ♖c2 41.♖d3 ♖c3 42.axb5 axb5 43.b4 f6 44.♖xb5 fxe5 45.♖d7 ♖f6 46.b5 ♖b3 47.f3 g5 48.♖e8 e4 49.fxe4 ♖e5 50.♖d7 ♖b4 51.♖c6 ♖f4 52.e5 ♖b3 0-1

My first Chess Life article published April 2005 ("Chess is a Game of Inches", adapting Branch Rickey's remark about baseball) was inspired by a final-round loss in a World Open Under-2200 section that cost me a first-place tie worth almost \$6,000. When I told IM Danny Kopec I had learned a valuable lesson from it, he replied, "Six thousand dollars is too much to pay for a chess lesson!"

Jacobs,Jon (2135) - Mooren,Albert C. (1752) [A49]

World Open 2004 (U-2200 Section) Philadelphia, PA (9), 05.07.2004

[I have a distinct memory of my opponent appearing on the World Open wall chart under a different name (Alberto Moreno) and with a much higher rating: 2170. It appears that was a mix-up with a Peruvian player with matching name and FIDE rating. It's also possible (though less likely) that the two were the same person, and that Moreno immigrated to the US in the early 2000s and Americanized his name. He had played in just a handful of small US rated tournaments, all but one in the six months preceding this World Open. His tied-3rd finish (behind future GM

Thank you. Anything you would like to add for our readers?

1. Occasionally people mention their degrees-of-separation numbers with World Champions – chains of connection analogous to an actor's Kevin Bacon Number. For my part I don't believe every pairing should count as a connection; I prefer to count only games won or drawn. By that criterion, I have a number of 2 versus every World Champion from Lasker up through Anand – i.e., I beat or drew with one or more opponents who beat or drew with the champs. I was long stuck searching for a No. 2 against Kasparov. Finally, a few years ago I accidentally learned that Jay Whitehead was my ticket to that. (Most or all my other WCC connections stem from having drawn Reshevsky and beaten Christiansen and Yudasin.)
2. A few years ago, I tried my hand at chess filmmaking for the non-chess public. Specifically, I made artful audiovisual presentations of the critical moves in historically important chess contests, concisely explained by means of stylized text that avoids chess notation. Two examples can be viewed [here](#):

Anderssen-Steinitz (Match, London 1866)

Piece Down/Under

By Dwight Weaver

Can you play with a piece down or pawn under?
Because of some overlooked blunder?

Do players ever gather around the board and wonder.
"Will he, will he ever recover?"

Watching a game at the club; the pieces scuffle
One man usually plays games at a park and hustles.

He looked at me and asked, "Do you speak any chess language."

I said, "Yes, Algebraic & English Descriptive."

He got up then and ordered me a waffle & chicken sandwich
Then he said,
Can you continue playing with a piece down or a pawn under?

Just because of some stupid blunder?

Do players gather around the board and ever wonder.
"Will he, will he ever recover? Oh, yeah!

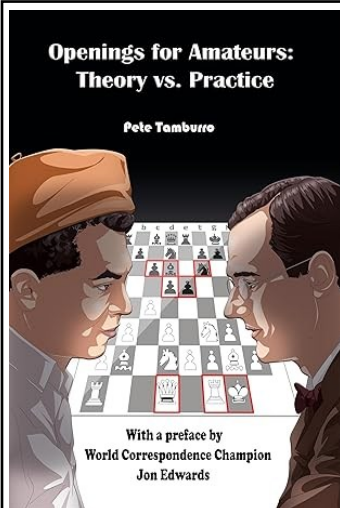


Back Before Clocks Were Mandatory

When Staunton was asked about the longest he ever had to wait for a move: "The longest time I ever had to wait was in playing a match with a man who wore out everybody – seconds, spectators, and myself. We had been playing many hours, and were left alone, when he coolly said, 'I'm a poor man and cannot afford to lose this match. I must sit you out.' That being the case, and no witness present, I had nothing to do but to give up the match and write him a cheque for the money."

The Chess Players Annual for 1856.

Openings for Amateurs: Theory vs Practice by Pete Tamburro,
published by Mongoose Press (2025) 300 pages list price \$24.95
Reviewed by Andy Ansel



This is the third book in the Chess Openings for Amateurs series. But to call it an opening book is a grave misnomer. It consists of well-annotated games (many never seen before) where the opening (and structure and ideas) is the basis for selection. However, the games are deeply and instructively annotated throughout helping to identify both strategy and typical mistakes that all club players can learn from.

The chapters are:

Section One – Theory and Tactics

Chapter 1: Chess Traps, Pitfalls, and Swindles

Chapter 2: That Fork-Trick Thing

Chapter 3: Nimzos Can Be Tricky, Too!

Chapter 4: Then There's the Really Sharp Stuff

Chapter 5: The Sneaky Sharp Philidor

Chapter 6: Nightmares in the Najdorf in Five Parts

Section Two – Positional Chess: Key Applications in Practice

The Spectrum of Positional Chess

Chapter 7: Positional Chess: The Symmetry Trap

Chapter 8: Positional Chess with a Flair: The Great IQP Lesson in the Caro-Kann

Section Three – Three Key Aspects of Positional Chess

Chapter 9: Positional Chess: The Minority Attack

Chapter 10: Positional Chess: Equal Doesn't Mean Drawn

Chapter 11: Positional Chess: The Ruy López

Section Four – Amateur Play in Practice At the World Team Tournament: Rough-and-Tumble Chess

Pete has selected 85 games, including many older and classic games (there are even two by Fischer) as well as over twenty games from recent Parsippany team events that have not been widely published. Unlike most opening books, the notes are more evenly spread throughout the game, and are heavily text-based, explaining concepts that will help one understand the ideas well past the opening. There are many personal aspects interspersed throughout the book such as meeting Erik Lundin during a student trip in the 70's, trading a beverage for US Open scores as well as his own experiences playing (or facing) similar lines. There are constant sprinklings of references to historical games and books that help explain many ideas and provide a good historical context to the game. However, it is an opening book, and Pete does delve into move transpositions as well as some deep concrete analysis. One very interesting game is by World Correspondence Champion Jon Edwards (who wrote the preface) and

his amazing TN (theoretical novelty) in the Najdorf that had been missed by top GMs.

Edwards, Jon (2528) - Lobanov, E. (2512) [B84]

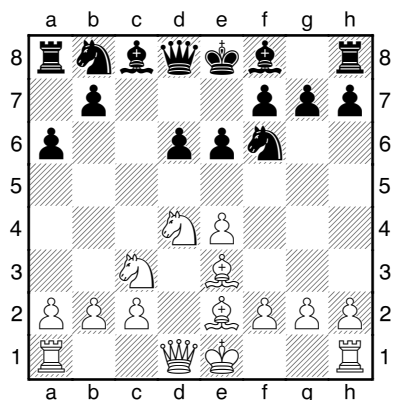
Spanish Masters-A corr, 2021

[This excerpt does not include all annotations found in the book, only a selection of them]

Nightmares in the Najdorf, Part III: The TN! One of the great "general chess public" misconceptions about correspondence chess is that the player with the stronger computer will win because you just let the machine do the work. It's not so simple. So many positions have more than one "best" move and the horizon effect varies with each of those candidates. My own experience in my last ICC 7-player tournament was that I learned to trust my positional judgment and used the machine for what it was good for. At the highest levels, as in the most recently finished world correspondence championship won by the American Jon Edwards, the games are mostly drawn. However, the games are not dull. They are incredible struggles with all sorts of key decisions made by the human factor. The following game won by Edwards was from an elite Spanish tournament where Edwards uncorks a TN in a position where GMs such as Anand had tread before. Thus, in this series on nightmares in the Najdorf, there are two possibilities: You have not really studied the lines you play and are thus not ready for new ideas or you don't follow correspondence chess updates, which can also be detrimental to your chess health. I believe T.D. Harding pointed this out years ago, and it's still true. As we note below, the positions that arise are beyond the scope of this book; however, please note that the critical move in this game was created by Edwards in opposition to the chess engines. The human element is still crucial.

1.e4 c5 2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♟f6 5.♞c3 a6 6.♞e3 e6 7.♞e2

The most popular line is 7.f3, which is known as the English Attack for the English players who popularized the f2-f3/g2-g4/h2-h4 pawn storm. As we have mentioned before, William Hartson, in his "Contemporary Opening Strategy" in *BCM*, called ♞e3 "Robert Byrne's anti-Najdorf" and showed how it could morph into all sorts of attacks other than the pawn storm. He noted that after 7.♞e2 "we really are in the realms of the old lines of the Scheveningen, but they are so old that everybody seems to have forgotten them." Not everyone. Edwards follows one of his countryman's ideas for a bit.



7...♘e7 8.f4 0-0 9.g4

White can try the more sedate 9.0-0, whereupon Black can exercise a thematic strategy well known to the Scheveningen: 9...e5 10.♗b3 ♗bd7 11.a4 exf4 12.♗xf4 ♗e5, and the position is dynamically equal. Both sides have isolated pawns in the center, but both are hard to capture. On the other hand, both have a great landing place for a knight in front of the opponent's isolani. The alternative plans go beyond the reach of this book, so, as usual, there is much to study here.

White can also forget about castling kingside altogether with 9.♗d2 and head for the queenside and then launch a pawn storm, but Black has shown that there is much counterplay using the c-file and pawn moves like ...b7-b5 or ...d6-d5. It's a good deal riskier than the other alternatives. Timing will be everything.

With 9.a4, White eschews castling queenside and tries to restrict Black's counterplay on that flank. It's a little slow. Black also has here an immediate ...e6-e5 as in 9.0-0 line above.

Another approach to limiting queenside play based on ...b7-b5 is 9.♗f3. Black may likely respond with 9...e5, but the game takes on a different character with 10.♗f5 ♗xf5 11.exf5 ♗c6 12.♗d2 exf4 13.♗xf4, when 13...♗e5 runs into 14.0-0-0 ♗xf3 15.gxf3 ♗d7 16.♗d3 and the d6 pawn is decidedly weaker than in other lines because there is no knight on e5 to shield it and the f4-bishop adds to the pressure. Also, a rook on g1 and h2-h4-h5 attack may be in the works. If the knight on e5 hadn't taken the f3-bishop, the pressure on d6 would still be there and the pressure along the h1-a8 diagonal would be felt.

9...d5

Since White has chosen to be aggressive—none of that "slow" f2-f3 with g2-g4 stuff—Black properly counters in the center. It's the time-honored way. White must push the pawn, as exchanging would free Black's pieces for all sorts of activity.

10.e5

One example of possible activity from an exchange: 10.exd5 e5 11.fxe5 ♗xd5 12.♗xd5 ♗xd5 and, whereas

Black is castled with the queen, rook and bishops springing into action, White won't be happy castling on an exposed kingside and has to take two important tempi to castle long and will be losing that extra pawn as well.

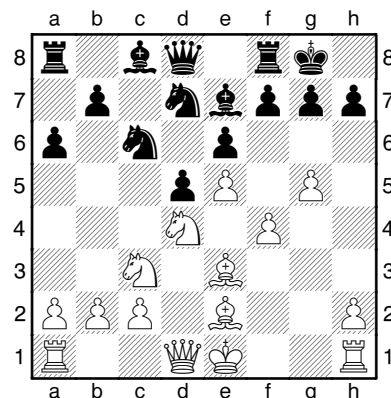
10...♗fd7

L'Ami pointed out in *New in Chess* that 10...♗e4 11.♗xe4 dxe4 12.0-0 ♗c7 13.♗c1 ♗c6 14.♗xc6 ♗xc6 15.♗d4 "followed by ♗b6 is very awkward for Black."

11.g5!

Both Anand and Topalov played this in this position. It seems to inhibit any ...f7-f6 ideas by Black because that would open the g-file.

11...♗c6



12.♗d3!!

This move, an extraordinarily important TN by Edwards, was apparently not found by GM teams around the world, including Anand's. The chess engines recommended either 12.h4 or 12.♗d2. Edwards, who wrote a whole book on ♗xh7+ (*Sacking the Citadel*), realized the potential in the bishop's inching forward to d3. Here we had a human leading a chess engine—and a very strong chess engine at that—onto the right path. Once shown the move, it was one of those, "Oh, yeah, now I see it" moments for the machines. This is our nightmare moment for Najdorf players. If you don't follow the World Correspondence Chess Championship and your opponent does, you will now be at a loss on move 12 in more ways than one. Chess engines keep advancing and now they find this move.

12...♗b6 13.♗a4 ♗a5+ 14.c3! ♗cxe5

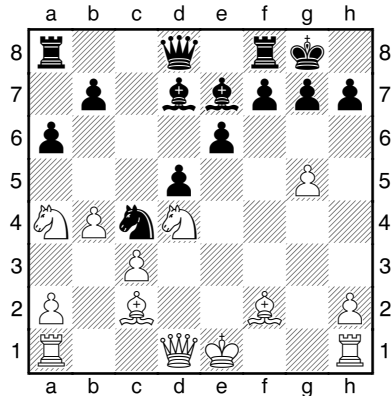
This is the moment of truth. Black now realizes that the initial engine lines with ...♗xd4 don't work.

Jon Edwards was kind enough to share these possibilities: 14...♗xd4 15.♗xd4 b5 16.♗xh7+ ♗xh7 17.♗h5+ ♗g8 18.0-0 bxa4 (18...♗xa4 19.♗f3 g6 20.♗h6 ♗e8 21.♗h3; 18...g6 19.♗h4 ♗e8 20.♗f3 ♗f8 21.♗h3 ♗g7 22.♗c5) 19.♗f3 ♗xe5 20.fxe5 ♗xg5 21.♗xg5 a3 22.♗h1 axb2 23.♗xg7+ ♗xg7 24.♗g1+ ♗h6 25.♗h3#

15.fxe5 ♗xe5 16.♗c2

White now has an extra piece at the cost of two pawns. In correspondence chess, the likelihood of Black pulling off a swindle would be slim to none; however, Black does have activity for his pieces along the c-file and the central pawns may have a role with the aid of the two bishops. Over the board or over the ether, you still have work to do.

16...♖c4 17.♙f2 ♙d7 18.b4 ♗d8



OK, now what do you do as White? You're not castled, your queen is not developed, your a4-knight is not in the game, and your rooks are not coordinated.

19.♖c5!!

This is one of those positions that remind me of Fischer's comment about how 9 out of 10 players would play....Indeed. It is so tempting to play the "natural" 19.h4 which not only defends the attack on g5 but threatens a kingside pawn assault; however, that would disregard Black's thematic counterplay on the queenside: 19...a5! 20.b5 ♖c8 21.♗f3 ♙d6 (or even 21...♗a3)

19...♙g5 20.♗f3 20...♙c8 21.♖g1 g6 22.♙b3 e5! 23.♖c2 ♖d2 24.♗xg5 ♖xb3 25.♗xd8 ♖xd8 26.♖xb3 ♙f4 27.♙g3 ♙h6 28.♙h4 ♖d3 29.♖g3 ♖xg3 30.♙xg3 ♙f5 31.♗a3 ♖c8 32.c4 ♙g4 33.c5 e4 34.♖c4 f5 35.♙d6 f4 36.♖e5 ♙h3 37.a4 ♙g7 38.♖d2 g5 39.♖dc4 ♖a8 40.♖d1 ♙f6 41.♖b6 ♖e8 42.♖bd7 ♖g7 43.b5 axb5 44.axb5 e3 45.c6 bxc6 46.b6 ♙xd7 47.♖xd7 ♙c3+ 48.♖e2 f3+ 49.♖xf3 e2 50.♖g1 e1♗ 51.♖xe1 ♙xe1 52.b7 ♖f7 53.b8♗ ♖xb8 54.♖xb8 ♖e6 55.♙a3 c5 56.♙xc5 1-0

Your columnist agonized over putting such a high-level game in this book or even attempting to annotate it. I was privileged to look at the 380 pages of notes for this game. It was akin to looking through an electron microscope into a chess game atom. However, whatever your level, you must learn the great lesson from this game: If you're going to play an opening exclusively, you owe it to yourself to turn the system inside out and perhaps create nightmares for your opponent.

A couple of chapters really stood out to me. Chapter 8 dealing with the IQP and the Caro highlights that this is more than just an opening book as knowing this structure is important and derives from many openings. Here is one example:

Levenfish,Grigory - Alapin,Simon [B10]

Vilnius All Russian-ch, 1912

[This excerpt does not include all annotations found in the book, only a selection of them]

The Levenfish Method. We are now going to look at the more popular 4. ... ♖f6 lines in response to 4.cxd5. I picked a great teaching game, which is the seminal encounter with this opening. The main point of the game for me was Levenfish's approach. It's especially valuable for amateurs because White has an attitude, reflected in his moves, that students of the game should think more about.

1.c4

Yes, you can get to the Caro-Kann through the English!

1...c6 2.e4 d5 3.exd5

One small note: You don't take with the c-pawn, because after 3.cxd5 cxd5 you can't play the Panov-Botvinnik Attack. Preserve your options.

3...cxd5 4.cxd5 ♖f6

Clearly better than taking with the queen. Minor pieces should be initiating the struggle in the center—unless, of course, there is some immediate tactical reason to make an exception.

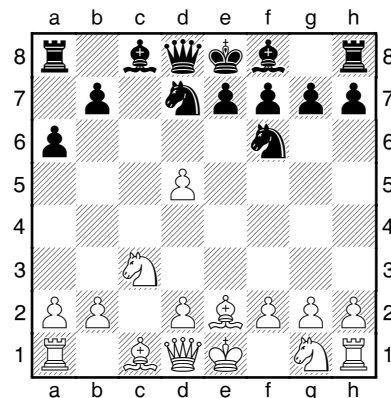
5.♙b5+

The other main alternative is 5.♗a4+, which we will get to in due time.

5...♖bd7

By a majority of about two to one, the move of choice in this position over 5...♙d7. It makes sense. Black would like to have White exchange the bishop for the knight, or, if not, then chase it with ...a7-a6 and ...b7-b5 and put his bishop on b7. Also, since fianchettoing often appears as a strategy for Black, the knights coordinate well together. The queen knight can also decide to go to b6 for the eventual recapture of the d5-pawn.

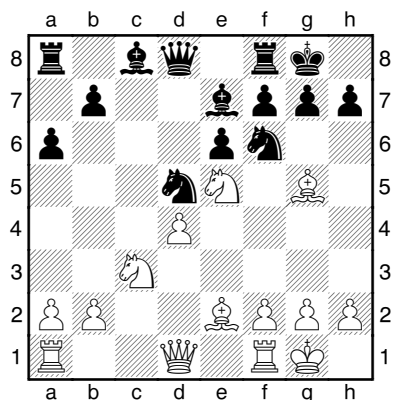
6.♖c3 a6 7.♙e2!



7.♗a4 is also played, as is the bishop exchange on d7.

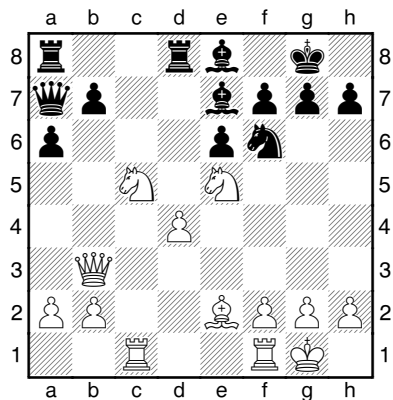
However, Levenfish's move fascinates me because I believe he's telling us something: The position is intrinsically good, so you don't have to do anything sharp. As you watch him develop, you see he is content to get active play for all his pieces. You don't have to go crazy to attack right away just because your opponent is somewhat cramped.

7...♖b6 8.♗f3 ♖b×d5 9.0-0 e6 10.d4 ♗e7 11.♗g5 0-0 12.♗e5



A very appropriate move for an isolated queen pawn opening. In 1975 in Norway, future GM Ron Henley drilled that into my head! It's an important outpost that attacks f7, opens the d1–h5 diagonal, and attacks other key squares like d7 and c6 if the need arises. Funny how these types of positions keep popping up. Anyone who wants to be a good chess player needs to understand the IQP themes—for both sides. I have a whole section on it in *Openings for Amateurs—Next Steps*. Let's be clear: The position is equal, but as they say in *Animal Farm*, some animals are more equal than others. White has developed naturally and freely. Black is behind in minor-piece development by a tempo and has not found the right square for his queen bishop.

12...♗b6 13.♗a4 ♗a7 14.♗c1 ♗d8 15.♗c5 ♗d7 16.♗b3 ♗e8! 17.♗×f6!? ♗×f6??



Very natural—and oh, so very, very wrong! For equality he needed to play 17...♗×f6 18.♗f3 ♗ab8 19.♗fd1 b6 20.♗e4 ♗e7, but White still has a free and easy game.

18.♗×e6!!

While focusing on the defense of f7, Black forgot the other common threat of IQP positions—the sac on e6. It's still not simple, though. Levenfish could not make this sacrifice unless he saw it right to the decisive moment. Can you? Don't peek!

18...f×e6 19.♗×e6+ ♗f8

Now, why did I give a thematic sacrifice two exclaims? For one, it was 1912! Also, and key, is that he had to have seen his move 24 and all its consequences.

20.♗c7

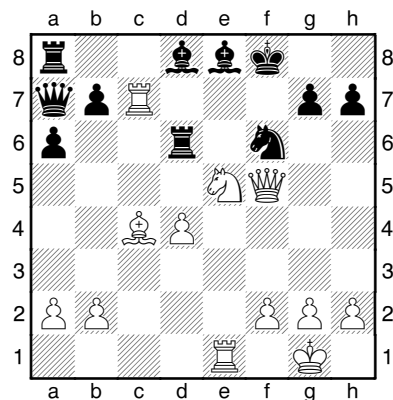
No-brainer. Do you see why? You will!

20...♗d5 21.♗c4

It's best to optimize all your pieces to make your attack work. The indirect mating attack on g8 is real.

21...♗d6 22.♗f5+ ♗f6 23.♗e1 ♗d8

It's at this point I like to stop and ask the student to look closely at this position. All of White's pieces are in their optimal positions. It's either now or never to find the closing combination. If you hesitate or pick a wrong, not precisely calculated, concrete series of moves, you will lose. Levenfish figured it out back on move 18.



24.♗c6!!

Every other white move loses! *Not infrequently, the margin between victory and defeat in a chess game is alarmingly narrow.*

24...♗×c7 25.♗×a7 ♗ad8 26.♗b3 ♗g6 27.♗f3 ♗b6 28.♗×b7 ♗d7 29.♗b8+ ♗d8 30.♗c8 ♗a5 31.♗a7 ♗d7 32.♗c5 ♗×e1 33.♗×d6 1-0

Alapin has finally had enough. This was an auspicious beginning for this line, but nobody rushed to pick it up. Why? People are so busy trying to find some analytical edge, they are forgetting what Levenfish had decided to value: an equal, freer position—the intrinsic character of the battlefield that tested Black's ability to find a whole series of best moves coming out of a slightly cramped position. Even though the position was approximately equal, Levenfish understood the

demands of the position better than his opponent and he won because of it. As you may have discovered from the previous two games, knowing potential attacking positions is very handy!

In this day and age, where people are obsessed by computer evaluations, Chapter 10 showed some great examples of how an equal evaluation does not equate to a drawn game. Openings in this chapter include the Exchange French, Bishop's opening as well as the Dragon. There are games by Fischer and Larsen here as well.

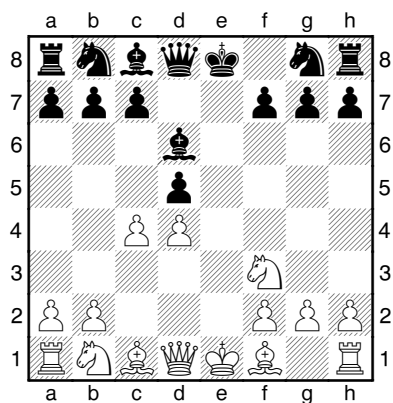
Perhaps the best section in the book are the games from the US Amateur Team East. For me, this was the most relatable section of the book. While the strength of players range from IM to lowly, class players, the moves best represent what most of us non-masters will face in actual play. Pete's notes shine in this section as they are very instructive, less theory oriented and highlight that knowing the ideas is more important than ten moves of theory and then guessing.

Here is another example showing the fabulous annotations:

Fishbein,Alex - Maxfield,George [C01]
Parsippany (NJ) USATE (1), 16.02.2019

I once asked Alex why he played a less-sharp opening like the Exchange French. He replied that he was confident that he could outplay his non-titled opponents in the endgame because endgame skills were not very well developed in most players. He write an award-winning endgame column for *American Chess Magazine*. They are phenomenally instructive, so he's doing his best to show players how to improve in that area.

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.♟f3 ♟d6 5.c4!



5...c6

Apparently worried about White playing c4-c5, but that wouldn't be so terrible. Black could play ♟f6 and then retreat to e7 if the pawn advances. Then Black could hit the c5-pawn with ...b7-b6. It's also worth pointing out that 5.♟b4+ would not be good here. Compare these two-move sequences: a) the check with Black losing a move with the bishop: 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.exd5 exd5 4.♟f3 ♟d6 5.c4 ♟b4+ 6.♟c3 ♟f6; and b) the early check after 4.c4 ♟b4+ 5.♟c3 ♟f6 6.♟f3. It's "just" a tem-

po, but White as the first player already has a one-move edge. It's not good for Black to make life easier for White.

6.♟c3 ♟e7?

Black is still playing the old ...♟e7 and ...♟f5 idea which is used in the Winawer Exchange Variation. This is different.: There's a pawn on c4.

7.♟d3

White could even have played the sharper 7.c5 ♟c7 8.b4 b6 9.♟d3 a5 10.b5!, but the way he chose is very simple and good. There was no benefit for Black in giving up the center.

7...dxc4 8.♟xc4 0-0 9.0-0 ♟f5

Another small inaccuracy. Better to prevent ♟g5 with 9...h6.

10.♟e1 ♟d7 11.♟g5

11.♟h4 is fine, too.

11...♟h8

One more little sin. At least try to get the king bishop with 11...♟b6 and unpin with ...♟d8-c7.

12.♟h4 ♟g6

12...f6 13.♟d2 ♟b6 14.♟b3 and White's still better, although the line chosen made things worse.

13.♟xg6+ f×g6 14.♟e4 ♟f6

If Black moved off the bishop off the a3-f8 diagonal, White could consider ♟e4-c5-e6.

15.♟xf6 g×f6

But, suddenly, the exchange is lost. It happens just like that. No grandiose attack. Just good solid moves.

16.Bh6 Qc7 17.Bxf8 Rxf8 18.g3 f5 19.d5 c5

To stop the deadly Qd4+; 19. ... f4 20.Qd4+ Kg8 21.dxc6+.

20.f4 a6 21.a4 a5 22.Qb3

To allow the rooks to double on the e-file.

22. ... b6 23.Re6 Kg8 24.Rae1 Qd8 25.Rxe7!

1-0

The seemingly effortless simplicity of taking a supposedly drawish opening and just overwhelming an opponent in 25 moves is the hallmark of a grandmaster. Having a plan wins over having no plan.

Every so often there is a classic book that transcends a genre. Very few opening books, due to the nature of the material, fall into this category. A few that come to mind include Fine's *Ideas Behind the Chess Openings* and RHM's *How to Open a Chess Game*. This book belongs with these classics, and will hold up over time. I highly recommend this book as a great opening and middlegame instructive book, but most of all... fun to read!

WOMEN VS MEN

The Battle of the Sexes as played out in Movie Chess Scenes

By Bob Basalla

If you work on something long enough you notice things. While gathering the material and subsequently writing my tome *Chess in the Movies* (2005) I made an interesting observation: in movies of the 1970s where a gal was playing chess with a guy the female almost always won! I chalked this up as an artifact of the era's women's liberation movement, "I am woman, hear me roar," as singer Helen Reddy put it on her iconic record. Film makers were responding to the times and giving the audience what they wanted, or at least what many of them expected. Several times in the book write ups for these movies I noted this fact, or what I took to be fact.

But is it really true? Did women in film win at chess with men more often in the 1970s or is this just one more misremembrance concocted in my info overburdened brain? We all are capable of recalling in good faith things that, if reliable evidence becomes available, prove to be not so. In my own case, for decades I thought I knew the members of the chess team (the Parma Granites) I captained to a championship in the Cleveland Chess Association's Club League, Division 1, in the 1982 season. But when I had occasion to look up other information contained in the *Cleveland Chess Bulletin* from that time, and for the fun of it flipping to the pages chronicling our team's exploits to bask once more in the big upset we pulled off that year, I discovered to my surprise that the roster of players I thought I had in that magical season was really the list of team members I captained *the following season*! While there was some overlap in the rolls it was clear that somehow in the intervening years I had conflated the (third place) 1983 team for my championship 1982 team. My certainty was such that had I needed to swear under oath that my memory was correct I would have instantly done so. Human memory, mine and yours, can be fallible, subject to degradation and erroneous reconstruction.

So, is my memory that women consistently beat men at chess in 1970s movies a real one or merely another mistaken conflation? Fortunately, because of my long-time hobby of chronicling cinematic chess moments, I actually have a way of deciding the issue. I can comb through my voluminous files, as of this writing nearing 6000 entries (the book had 2000), and see what is actually there.

Unfortunately, faulty memory is not the only corrupter of fact. As the owner of a standard issue human brain, I am subject to all the problems inherent in "meat computer" technology. I can be biased in a number of ways. This is true even if I am making a point of trying to be scrupulously honest in my investigation. I could be selectively biased, cherry picking the data in the movies I choose to include or exclude; or I could exhibit confirmation bias, cherry picking for results by preferentially accepting evidence that conforms to my thesis (that women in '70s movies beat the men much more than the other way around) and dis-

counting evidence that doesn't. Maybe even cultural bias or other biases could come into play to skew the objectivity of the results. The way to try to avoid all this: set up criteria for movie inclusion and exclusion *beforehand* and stick with it; and have as much openness in the process as possible so that others, if they wish, can duplicate and confirm (or disconfirm I guess) my work. In other words, apply *scientific method principles* as best I can without peer review or boasting about any PhD in statistics or other relevant fields. It is the best way we know, so far, to keep from fooling ourselves, let alone others. So here goes...

We start with some ground rules. For the purposes of this discussion, I am taking the definitions of "women" and "men," "female" and "male," in their traditional sense. To employ the modern formulations of multiple genders and gender fluidity to this issue and view the data through such prisms would quickly turn the topic of this investigation into ideological mush. Those who insist I must do so are free to stop reading now.

To attempt to test my thesis, I plan on dividing the data (individual movies and chess scenes) into their various decades. For ease of description, I am choosing to use traditionally identifiable decade designates such as the 1940s being Jan. 1, 1940-Dec.31, 1949, and the 1950s as Jan. 1, 1950-Dec.31, 1959, and so on. I am perfectly aware that these do not exactly conform to the fifth decade of the 20th Century (Jan. 1, 1941-Dec. 31, 1950) and sixth decade of the 20th Century (Jan 1, 1951-Dec. 31, 1960), but the former are what the average person generally thinks of when viewing decades. The one-year frame shift between these two viewpoints on calendrics is unlikely to alter the results in any case.

As for the data itself, of the nearly 6000 entries in my *Chess in the Movies* database at the time of writing, there were 339 accounted instances of women chessing with men in fictional or largely fictionalized films. (I am leaving out of consideration documentaries on the Polgar sisters and the like as our interest lies in how film makers treated the woman/man interactions on the 64 when they had some choice in the matter.) Depending on one's point of view, 339 could be seen as a relatively small or a whopping big number. Whatever, it is the data we have; I know of no larger, more comprehensive listing anywhere. By rules I set long ago my list contains not only theatrical release movies and short subjects but also TV movies and miniseries (now referred to as limited series), while leaving out most TV programs (*Seinfeld*, *Bewitched*, *Law and Order* and such) with only a few PBS shows and some Sherlock Holmes related items grudgingly allowed in.

Our data runs the gamut from the silent era to the time of writing. The earliest chronicled example is the silent film *Malombra* (1917) where the man predictably prevails. The only two instances before 1940 where the woman won were *Mistress of Atlantis*

(1932) in which beautiful but evil Queen Antinea (Brigitte Helm) toys with her male captives by giving them a chance at freedom by defeating her at chess, an impossible task; and *Pennies from Heaven* (1936) showing an orphaned girl (Edith Fellows) downing her troubadour drifter friend (Bing Crosby). At the other end of the time scale the latest salient entries are *The Queen's Gambit* (2020) and two holiday offerings, *The Christmas Doctor* (2020) (she loses) and *Time for Us to Come Home for Christmas* (2020) (she wins). So, we have over a century of information about men vs. women in movies to sift through.

Our chief interest, though, is clear instances where one side beats or at least is obviously beating the other. Many scenes are either brief, do not show, or in some other way (verbally perhaps) indicate who has the upper hand. In the interests of avoiding any "fudging", I am declining to speculate on which player, man or woman, is superior in a scene unless the evidence would be obvious to any reasonable viewer. This winnows the main items of investigation to a bit over two hundred. Why not an exact number? Well, for you bean counters out there, it must be mentioned that some movies can be on several sides of the issue at once. As an example, in the 2020 NetFlix miniseries *The Queen's Gambit*, the female prodigy main character both wins and losses against men during the program. That means the film's "testimony" cuts both ways.

So let us make a few lists by decade and see what shakes out.

The first is an overview of the whole 339. When broken down by decade an interesting anomaly comes into focus. There were 23 examples of women/men chess playing in films from the 1940s, 21 from the 1950s, 24 from the 1960s. But then a huge jump occurs. The 1970s have 47 examples! The 1980s drop back down to 29 before the more recent decades inflate their numbers into 50+ examples each. (I will endeavor to explain this latter fact later.) The key point is that the 1970s stand out, bracketed by much lower counts on either side. Why would this be?

Let us now sharpen our focus to only include instances where women win or are at least clearly winning against the men. (I am leaving out examples from before the 1940s and the stand-alone year of 2020 as having too few items to matter.) The first numbers are instances where she wins, the second in parentheses the ones she is winning, with the total at the end:

1940s---6 + (4) = 10
 1950s ---6 + (2) = 8
 1960s ---7 + (0) = 7
 1970s -15 + (6) = 21
 1980s ---5 + (5) = 10
 1990s -12 + (7) = 19
 2000s--13 + (7) = 20
 2010s -20 + (5) = 25

And now let us repeat the process with the men winning or on the way to winning and their decade totals:

1940s---1 + (2) = 3
 1950s---3 + (2) = 5
 1960s---4 + (2) = 6
 1970s---2 + (1) = 3
 1980s---4 + (1) = 5
 1990s---5 + (1) = 6
 2000s---8 + (4) = 12
 2010s--11 + (1) = 12

What is truly striking when one compares the women's list to the men's is that *throughout* movie history women are consistently the chess game winners! I had not anticipated this. The only truly narrow victories have the gals edging out their guy counterparts in the 1950s (8 to 5) and the 1960s (7 to 6). All the others are wipeouts. Especially notice the 1970s where the ladies have a 21 to 3 (man's *low* point of examples compared to woman's, until very recently, *high* point) advantage, seven times more!

Here is my analysis and explanation of the results. (Data is objective, but analysis necessarily requires interpretation. These are mine.) I think the comparison validates my intuition that woman/man movie chess in the 1970s had much to do with reflecting, or perhaps, even cheerleading, the women's liberation movement of the day, breaking down the stereotype barriers and all that. But that would hardly explain female dominance in the other decades. What does? I would posit that women often won against men in movie chess for the *surprise value*. When the scene began the audience would "naturally" expect the guy to win and then—boom! —checkmate, he loses! Upsets are inherently more cinematically interesting story lines than yet another victory by the status quo. As far as the more recent decades go the larger number of examples in the 1990s to 2010s is mainly due to the increased volume of movie product coupled with better availability, leading to more comprehensive coverage in my notebooks. A concatenation of a resurgence of women's rights movements, political correctness, and a lingering "surprise effect" for women winning accounts for the huge disparities of filmic chess success between the sexes as we hurtle forward into the 2020s.

Space aliens provided only with evidence from movie chess scenes would be justified in concluding that the "fairer sex" was decidedly dominant in this particular board game activity. So, do these results then also suggest that the (mostly male) film makers actually thought women to be superior at chess? I think not, and I can marshal evidence from our database to support my contention. If it was truly thought that women were the better players, they should almost certainly have been shown more often than men in the activity of *instructing* the other side in the game. But that is demonstrably not the case. There are 19 tabulations in the files of men teaching women chess compared to a measly two instances of women teaching a man. (For the record, these two films are: *Blood and Sand* (1941) where a femme fatale (Rita Hayworth) prepares to show the moves to an unsophisticated young bull fighter (Tyrone Power), and *The Sea Chase* (1955) where a ship's first mate (John Qualen) admits to his captain (John Wayne) that a wartime female passenger (Wayne's beau in the plot, Lana Turner) is teaching him chess, not the other way around.) This fact supports the "women can be intellectu-

move.

Picture Perfect Mysteries: Newlywed and Dead (2019), another TV mystery movie series (Hallmark) where a photographer (Alexa PenaVega) attempts to improve on the play of a police detective (Carlos PenaVega) deciding upon his next correspondence game move.

In sum, all three of these parameters (chess instruction, prodigies, and kibitzing) indicate strongly that men overall were being perceived as superior in the Royal Game arena despite the inordinate reverses meted out in movie play. And until such time comes when it will not be seen by film makers, and ostensibly the public, as somehow novel for a woman to beat a man at a brainy board game, look for scenes with such attitudes to continue in future cinematic battles of the sexes. QED (I hope.)

2025 update

Halfway into our most recent decade we have the opportunity to reassess the findings in the above inquiry. We cannot just add these results as if they were part of the original investigation, though. That could potentially introduce a selective bias to the report, sort of like stopping the recounting of votes at a moment when your preferred candidate edges into the lead. (That has never happened before, has it?) We can, however, compare our new data with the study to see how well the fresh findings comport with the original. In short, it does.

First, I report the discovery of another female filmic chess prodigy, the eleventh known. In Dy Here Mat (1986), a film of Albanian pedigree, a girl shows promise at a local chess club and fulfills it by beating a visiting master in his simul.

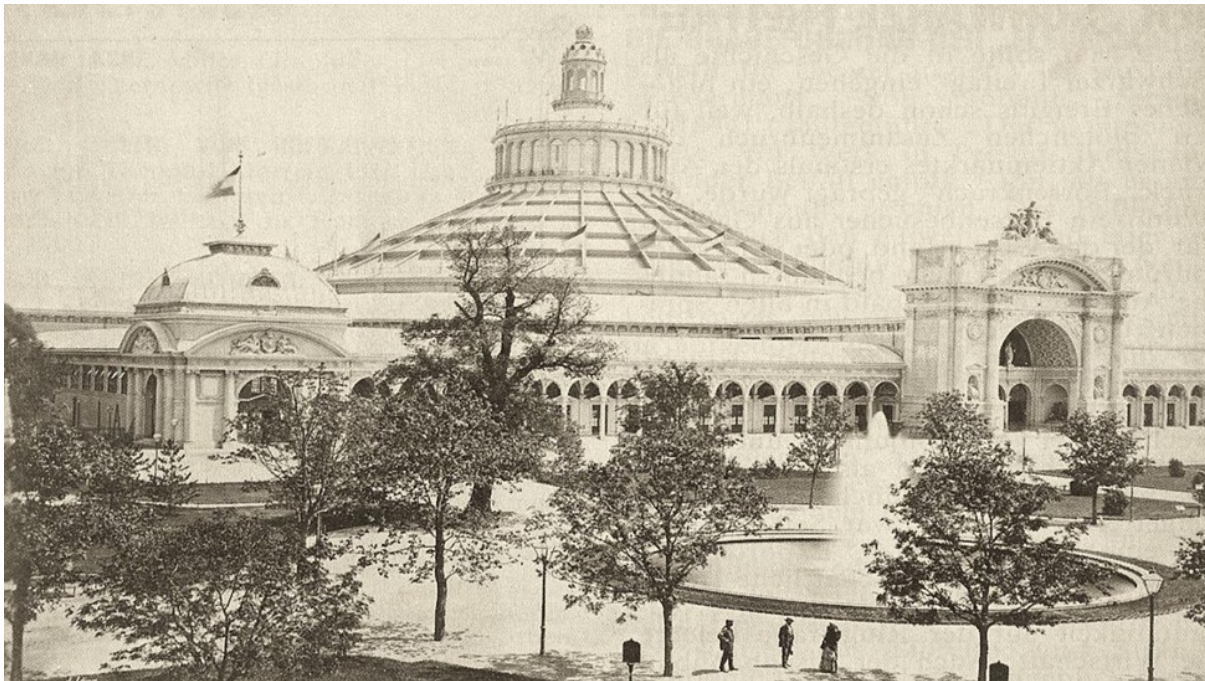
Three new entries from the 1980s all have the female winning (ambiguous outcomes not counting), increasing the distaff advantage in our tabulation from 10-5 to 13-5. Items from the 2010s also bolster the results: 8 more woman victories to 4 new men triumphs, making the totals when added to the original data change from 25-12 to 33-16, maintaining the 2-1 advantage neatly. As for the first half of the 2020s, it is more of the same. Women winners lead the men so far 15-8. Nothing in the new data indicates our original assessment was incorrect or somehow changing with time. QED again, I guess.

After seeing our tribute to GM Robert Hübner last issue, ICCF-World Champion GM Jon Edwards commented about Hübner's thoroughness. Hübner was the first person to crash *ChessBase* due to too many annotations. *ChessBase* then made the storage space much, much larger. Then a few years later, Jon himself, crashed ChessBase due to the length of his notes. *ChessBase* once again made the limit high enough that they don't believe anyone will crash the system again!

From Vienna with Love

by Agermose2 (Michael Agermose Jensen)

Originally published on February 18, 2025 at Chess.com, reproduced here with the author's permission

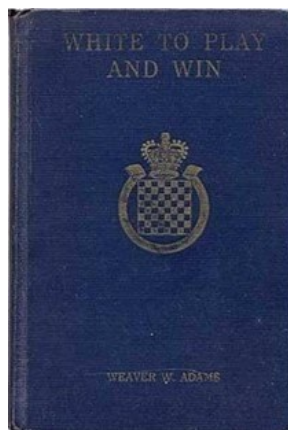


The Rotunda in Vienna

In May 1903 the first of a series of gambit tournaments were played in Vienna. The participants were most of the world's elite, including Chigorin, Marshall, Marco, Pillsbury, Marcozy and Schlechter. The theme was confined to the King's Gambit $1.e4 e5 2.f4$. The results were not encouraging for the gambit side, though not disastrous either. Later gambit tournaments in 1912 and 1914 did not reverse the sentiment, that the romantic era of chess had come to an end.

In this series of articles we are going to examine the King's Gambit delayed, which arises when White plays $2.\text{d}c3$ intending the King's Gambit move $3.f4$. Perhaps the inclusion of the knight moves favours White?

The main proponent of the Vienna in the 20th century was the American Master Weaver Warren Adams (1901-1963).



White to Play and Win (1939)

His book *White to Play and Win* was the first repertoire book, and Adams tried to prove an advantage with $1.e4$. Adams wanted to reach a position of the King's Gambit declined: $1.e4 e5 2.f4 \text{d}c5 3.\text{d}f3 d6 4.\text{d}c3 \text{d}f6 5.\text{d}c4 \text{d}c6 6.d3$, where he was virtually invincible, without incurring the risk of the gambit accepted. That opening he left to his good friend Anthony Santasiere.

While 2.f4 can already be found in early chess manuscripts of Ruy Lopez and Giovanni Greco, 2.♖c3 is a 19th century opening. First mentioned by Ponziani in 1760, it was championed by Viennese player Karl Hamppe (1814-1876). Often you will see his first name spelled with a C, but he signed his own first name with a K.



Karl Hamppe (1814-1876)

Hamppe is perhaps best known for playing the White pieces in the Immortal Draw game vs Philipp Meitner in Vienna 1872 but there are also two variations named after him, Hamppe-Muzio and Hamppe-Allgaier gambit, that we return to later.

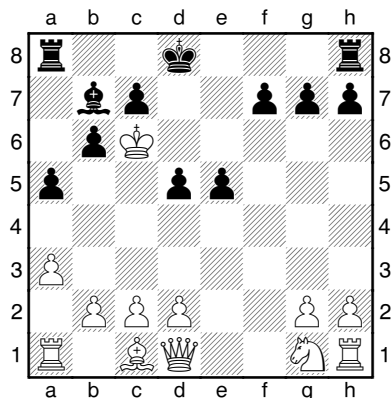
"The Immortal Draw"

Carl Hamppe - Philipp Meitner [C25]

Vienna Game: Hamppe-Meitner Variation (C25)

Vienna Vienna AUH, 1872

1.e4 e5 2.♖c3 ♘c5 3.♗a4 ♗f2+ 4.♙f2 ♖h4+ 5.♗e3 ♗f4+ 6.♙d3 d5 7.♗c3 ♗xe4 8.♙b3 ♗a6 9.a3 ♗xa4+ 10.♙xa4 ♖c5+ 11.♙b4 a5+ 12.♙xc5 ♖e7 13.♗b5+ ♙d8 14.♗c6 b6+ 15.♙b5 ♖xc6 16.♙xc6 ♗b7+ 17.♙b5 ♗a6+ 18.♙c6 ♗b7+



1/2-1/2

The opening commonly known as "Vienna gambit" is 1.e4 e5 2.♖c3 ♗f6 3.f4, which could also arise from the King's Gambit if Black declined, viz.: 2.f4 ♗f6 3.♖c3.

But here we are going to focus on the other Vienna gambit 2.♖c3 ♗c6 3.f4. So instead of playing the King's Gambit in Vienna, we are trying to merge the two openings and play a mix of Adams and Santasiere.

The gambit after 2...♗c6 is riskier as, opposed to 2...♗f6, Black has both ♖h4+ and ...g5-g4 available. It is also a lot more fun, as the selected games will hopefully show.

We begin with a correspondence game played in 1885 by the brit William Timbrell Pierce (1839-1922). Together with his brother James Pierce (1833-1892) they wrote their first article in British Chess Magazine, January 1886 and later the book: *Pierce Gambit, Chess Papers and Problems*, 1888. The game is given there on p.21-22, although the year of the game is not stated in the book. In BCM January 1886, it is revealed that the game was played in the "English Mechanic Tourney, November 1885".

PIERCE GAMBIT.

No. 15. BLACK.

<p>WHITE.</p> <p>5 P-Q4 6 B-B4 7 Castles 8 RxP 9 BxPeh 10 RxPeh 11 Kt-Q5 12 RxKtch</p>	<p>BLACK.</p> <p>P-Kt5 PxKt Q-Kt4 KtxP KxB(A) Kt-B3 Q-K4 K-Ktsq</p>
--	---

and White announced mate in 12 moves. (B) A diagram of the position is appended.

NOTES.

(A) K-Qsq is better.

(B) The mate is accomplished thus: 13 Q-Kt4ch, B-Kt2; 14 B-R6 (White can here mate in three moves, thus: 14 QxRch, KxQ; 15 B-R6ch, K-Kt4; 16 R-B8 mate), QxR1; 15 KtxQeh, K-B2; 16 QxRch, K-K3; 17 Kt-Kt1, RxKt1; 18 QxRch, K-Q3; 19 Q-Q5ch, K-K2; 20 B-Kt5ch, K-Bq; 21 R-Bqch, Kt covers; 22 RxKtch, K-Kt2; 23 Q-B7ch, K-Rsq; 24 Q-B8 mate.

WHITE.

White to play his 13th move.

Game 4.

Variation on Black's 7th move. (See diagram No. 2.)

5 P-Kt5	6 B-B4	7 Castles
	PxKt	
		7 Kt takes P
8 Q B takes P		

This is White's best play, but he may obtain a strong, though unsound attack, by 8 BxPeh. Thus: 8 BxPeh, KxB; 9 BxP, Q-B3; 10 B-K3, Q-Kt3; 11 RxPeh (if 11 Q-Q2, B-B3, &c., and if 11 R-B2, Kt-K3; 12 RxPeh, K-Ksq; 13 R-Kt3, Q-B2, with the best game), KtxRch; 12 QxKtch, K-Ksq; 13 Kt-Q5, B-Q3; 14 B-Q4, P-B3; 15 P-K5 (if 15 Kt-K3, BxPeh; 16 K-Rsq, Kt-B3; 17 BxKt, R-Bsq, &c.), B-K2; 18 Kt-B7ch, K-Qsq; 19 KtxR, P-B4!, and Black should win.

In this variation, in answer to 8 BxPeh, KxB; 9 BxP, Black may play the strong move of P-B4, establishing his Kt in the centre. For the consequences of this, see illustrative game between Messrs. James Pierce (White) and S. Balson (Black). Black may, however, also play 9 P-Q3, or Kt-K3, or B-B4, or B-Kt2, which we will consider here:

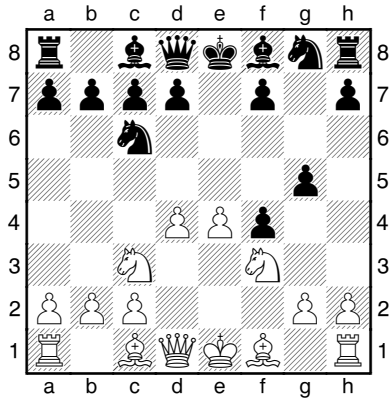
(1) 9 —, P-Q3; 10 QxKt, B-Kt2; 11 Q-Q5ch, B-K3; 12 Q-R5ch, K-K2; 13 B-Kt5ch, B-B3 (or Kt-B3; 14 QxRch,

Pierce Gambit, Chess Papers and Problems (1888)

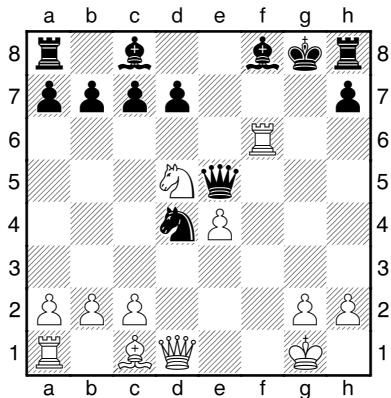
Pierce, William Timbrell – Nash, W. [C25]

corr, 1885

1.e4 e5 2.♖c3 ♘c6 3.f4 exf4 4.♗f3 [4.d4 is the Steinitz Gambit, which Wilhelm Steinitz had introduced at Dundee 1867.] 4...g5 5.d4 [The January 1886 BCM gives the move-order as 5.♗c4 g4 6.d4 as White accidentally switched move-order. In the book, the Pierces warn against 5.♗c4 on account of 5. ... ♗g7. After 5.d4 we enter what is now known as the Pierce gambit, named after the



Pierces. Black's reply must be considered critical.] 5...g4! 6.♗c4 gxf3 7.0-0 ♗g5 [Tempting as besides the mate threat on g2, ♗xd4 is a threat. But there is a catch and the immediate ♗xd4 is much better.] 8.♗xf3 ♗xd4 9.♗xf7+! [It does not get more King's Gambit style than this.] 9...♗xf7? 10.♗xf4+ ♗f6 11.♗d5 ♗e5 12.♗xf6+ ♗g8 [In the 1888 book, it is stated that the game ended here (see picture). 'White announced mate in 12 moves. The mate is ac-



complished thus: 13.♗g4 ♗g7 14.♗h6 (White can here mate in three moves, thus: 14.♗xg7+ ♗xg7 15.♗h6+ ♗g8 16.♗f8 mate.) 14. ... ♗xf6 15.♗xf6+ ♗f7 16.♗xg7+ ♗e6 17.♗g8 ♗xg8 18.♗xg8+ ♗d6 19.♗d5+ ♗e7 20.♗g5+ ♗f8 21.♗f1+ ♗f3+ 22.♗xf3+ ♗g7 23.♗f7+ ♗h8 24.♗f8 mate.' Indeed the shortest mate is:] 13.♗g4+ ♗g7 [13...♗g5 was thought by some to delay the mate by one move. In fact White mates one move faster. 14.♗xg5+ ♗g7 15.♗e7#] 14.♗xg7+ [The book improved on the announced mate in the game: 14.♗h6 ♗xf6 15.♗xf6+ ♗f7 16.♗xg7+ ♗e6 17.♗g8 ♗xg8 18.♗xg8+ ♗d6 19.♗d5+ ♗e7 20.♗g5+ ♗f8 21.♗f1+ ♗f3+ 22.♗xf3+ ♗g7 23.♗f7+ ♗h8 24.♗f8#] 14...♗xg7 15.♗h6+ ♗g8 16.♗f8# [A mating pattern known as the Opera mate after the famous Morphy game at the Paris Opera in 1858.]

1-0

The theoretical works and games of the Pierce brothers led to the position after 5.d4 to be named "Pierce Gambit".

Now we turn to another, arguably more famous, chess player, the German master Louis Paulsen (1833-1891).



Louis Paulsen (1833-1891)

In 1857 Paulsen lost the final at the American Congress to Paul Morphy, and for the next couple of decades he belonged to the world's elite players. After the loss to Morphy, Paulsen worked hard on the opening phase of the game and made many contributions to opening theory. The variation with pawns on a6 and e6 in the Sicilian opening is named after him, as well as the defence 5...♗g7 in the Kieseritzky Gambit (1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗f3 g5 4.h4 g4 5.♗e5 ♗g7). He was also a renowned blindfold player and held the world record for most games played concurrently. Interestingly, it appears that the first game Paulsen played with 1.e4 e5 2.♗c3 ♘c6 3.f4 is a game from a blindfold exhibition against 10 opponents at Rock Island in the United States in 1858.

Louis Paulsen's name came to be associated not with 3.f4 but with the variation 3.g3, which he essayed four times at the 1873 Vienna (!) tournament.

The tournament was played in the rotunda, that had been constructed for the World Exhibition, which took place concurrently. Paulsen finished out of the prizes at 6th place and the tournament belonged to Wilhelm Steinitz who famously won 16 games in a row.

Incidentally, Steinitz also played the 3.f4 gambit occasionally, but he had his own ideas, and after 2.♗c3 ♘c6 3.f4 exf4 Steinitz preferred 4.d4, which he introduced at Dundee 1867.

Paulsen was known as a defensive player, heralded by Nimzowitsch as one of the finest. Thus, his variation 3.g3 seems more logical than the King's Gambit style 3.f4.

Therefore, it is quite interesting that Paulsen later switched to the latter. One might see the swashbuckling attack in these games as the exception to confirm the rule, or an example of the old

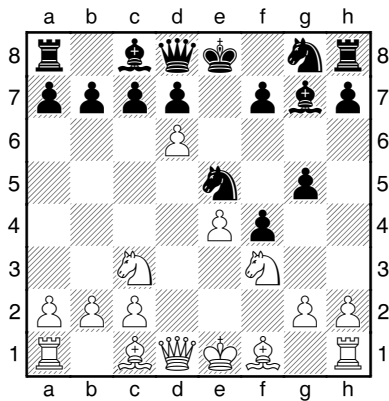
dictum that the best defence is a good offence. It might also be possible, that Paulsen just wanted some fun.

We examine three games from the twilight of Paulsen's career and begin with a game from the German congress in 1887. Paulsen's opponent had won the first German congress in 1879 and later, in 1896 drew a match in Vienna vs Pillsbury 2½-2½ (5 draws!).

Paulsen, Louis – Englisch, Berthold [C25]

DSB Kongress-05 Meisterturnier Frankfurt, 26-Jul, 1887, Round 12

1.e4 e5 2.♖c3 ♘c6 3.f4 exf4 4.♗f3 g5 5.d4 [As mentioned, this move came to be known as the Pierce Gambit.] 5...♗g7 [This move is bad as it allows White to advance the d-pawn all the way to d6.] 6.d5! ♗e5 7.d6! [With this move, White entombs the black



bishop on c8 for the foreseeable future.] 7...♗f3+ [7...cxd6 is rare but not worse. 8.h4 (8.♗xd6) 8...h6 (8...♗f3+ transposes to the game.) 9.♗b5 ♖f8 10.♗d2±] 8.♗xf3 cxd6 9.h4 [This is the standard way of attacking Black's kingside pawn phalanx. We shall see it in action in the Hamppe-Allgaier gambit as well. The alternative way of tackling the pawns is with g2-g3. This breaks Philidor's dictum that pawn chains are attacked at the base. Hence, we refer to h2-h4 as Philidor style, while g2-g3 is associated with the German player Wilhelm Hanstein, who was one of the Berlin Pleiades, a group of seven Berlin players in the 19th century.] 9...h6 10.♗c4 [10.♗d2! preparing 0-0-0 or ♗b5 is almost winning already. E.g.: 10...d5 11.♗xd5 ♗xb2 12.♗c3!] 10...d5! [A typical device. Black must escape the tomb and gives back material.] 11.♗xd5 ♗f6 12.hxg5 [This is premature. White should still play ♗d2.] 12...hxg5 13.♗xh8+ ♗xh8 14.♖c3 d6 15.g3! [The only move to secure sufficient compensation. Now Black's pawns become unstable, and he goes for a dubious tactic. It would have been better to finish development with ♗e6 and ♖b6.] 15...♗g7 16.gxf4 ♗h5? 17.♖f3 g4 18.♖h1! ♗f6 19.♗d2 ♗xd5 20.♗xd5 ♖b6 21.♗b3 [21.♖h5! hits f7 against which Black is defenceless, but does allow Black some checks with the queen. It turns out the king can run from it. 21...♖g1+ 22.♖e2 ♖g2+ 23.♖d3 ♖f3+ 24.♗e3 winning.] 21...♗xb2 22.♖b1 ♖d4 23.e5 ♗f5?? [With counterplay in sight, Black gets careless and leaves b7 undefended. 23...dxe5 is still complicated, but Black should survive.] 24.♖xb2 g3 [24...♖xb2 25.♖xb7 loses either rook or queen.] 25.♖h8+ ♖e7 26.♖f6+ [Black loses a lot of material and is probably mated soon.]

1-0

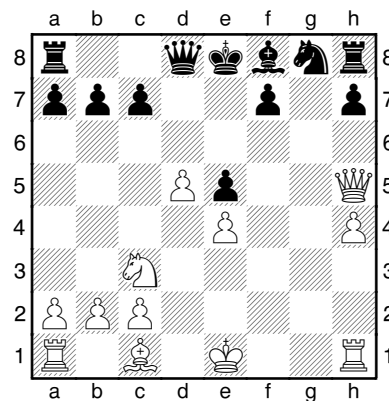
The next game was played a year before Paulsen played his last tournament in 1889. The opposition may not be world class, but at Frankfurt 1887, where the previous game was played, Harmonist beat both Gunsberg, Blackburne, and Schallopp.

Paulsen plays the opening phase very efficiently, and after 14 moves has a strategically won position.

Paulsen, Louis - Harmonist, Max [C25]

Bayerischer SB Kongress-02 Meister Nuremberg (8), 11.08.1888

1.e4 e5 2.♗c3 ♘c6 3.f4 exf4 4.♗f3 g5 5.d4 d6 [This blocks the d-pawn's advance and secures e5, and is probably preferable to ♗g7.] 6.d5 [Giving up the e5 square goes against every instinct of the King's Gambit, where control of the dark squares in the centre is a major axiom. In this case White gains some time as it turns out that Black's light squares in the centre are also weak. 6.h4 g4 7.♗g1 transposes to the Fischer Defence of the King's Gambit (1.e4 e5 2.f4 exf4 3.♗f3 d6 4.d4 g5 5.h4 g4 6.♗g1) but a line where Black has not played the best 6th move (6. ... ♖f6!) but rather 6. ... ♗c6 7.♗c3. However, this way of playing the position would only become fashionable a 100 years later.] 6...♗e5 7.♗b5+ ♗d7 8.♗xd7+ [Black now has a difficult choice: Move the knight away from its beautiful outpost or lose castling rights.] 8...♗xd7 [Taking with the queen loses g5 and ♖xd7 is examined in part 2.] 9.h4! [The only way to an advantage. White must attack the pawn phalanx, and now, before Black has managed ♗g7, is imperative. This is what Jan Markos calls a fast position and White must act accordingly, lest his initiative peters out.] 9...g4 [Still, Black considers giving up the pawn: 9...♗g7? 10.hxg5 ♖e7 with interesting play.] 10.♗d4 [This looks like a horrible Kieseritzky gambit from Black's point of view. Both f4 and g4 are ripe for picking, hence Black's next move.] 10...f3 11.gxf3 gxf3 12.♗xf3 [Paulsen probably avoided 12.♖xf3 due to 12...♗e5 but White is much better after the queen moves away, and ♗g5 and 0-0-0 follows.] 12...♗e5? [A terrible move. Yes, Black blocks e5, but it would be much better to control e5 with pieces than blocking with pawns. Consequently 12...♗g7 is logical.] 13.♗xe5! dxe5 14.♖h5



[Black is in deep trouble now. No development, and f7 is like the Titanic waiting for an iceberg to hit.] 14...♗g7 15.♖f1 ♖d7 16.♗d2 ♗f6 17.0-0-0 0-0-0 [Black managed to castle to safety, but the problem on the f-file did not disappear.] 18.♖f3 ♖e7 19.♖df1 [Material is equal, and Black has managed to put a plug in the worst leaks in his position, Paulsen now maneuvers the knight,

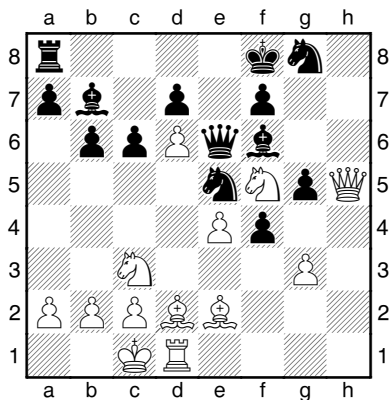
White's worst piece to the kingside, when Black's lack of development will decide the game.] 19...h6 20.♖e1 ♜b8 21.♗g3 ♠h7 22.♘d1 ♠g7 23.♙e3 ♠g6 24.♘g4 ♠e8 25.♠f5 ♜b4 26.♙e5 ♜xe4? 27.♠f4 [27.♘f6! would win immediately. 27...♘f6 28.♙xf6 After the text move, Black misses a simple tactic (after ♜e2 the game goes on).] 27...♜xd5?? 28.♙xc7+ 1-0

Let us finish this Part 1 with a game from Paulsen's final tournament in 1889. His opponent was editor of the Deutsche Schachzeitung 1865–1876 and 1879–1886 as well as several chess books. In 1889 both he and Paulsen were well past their prime. Still, the opening phase of the game was quite interesting.

Paulsen, Louis - Minckwitz, Johannes [C25]

DSB Kongress–06 Meisterturnier Breslau (14), 24.07.1889

1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.f4 exf4 4.♘f3 g5 5.d4 ♗g7 6.d5 ♙e5 7.d6 c6 [Deviating from Paulsen's game vs Englisch. Black accepts the pawn in his camp, but takes control of the d5-square.] 8.h4! [Once again, Paulsen is up to the task.] 8...h6 9.♘d4! [The f5-square is inviting to a knight. Moving it now is not a matter of avoiding exchange on f3, as much as White had no other obvious move to make.] 9...b6 10.♘f5 ♜f8 [White installed the knight like Bactus. Looking out from its balcony, high above the bad teeth in Black's mouth. But how to continue? The engine is at a loss and wants to move a random pawn on the queenside. Paulsen instead chose to release the tension on the kingside.] 11.hxg5 hxg5 12.♠xh8 ♙xh8 13.♜h5 ♙f6 14.♙d2 [Paulsen wants g3, but first arranges for castling.] 14...♙b7 15.♙e2 ♜e8 16.0-0 ♜e6 17.g3!



[A King's Gambit style move, that we already saw Paulsen go for in the game vs. Englisch (15.g3!).] 17...fxg3 18.♙xg3 ♙xg5+ 19.♜xg5 ♜g6 20.♜f4 [20.♜e3 was more accurate, since after 20...f6 21.♠g1 ♜g5 White now has 22.♠g3 which is not possible with the queen on f4.] 20...♠e8? [20...f6 with the idea of ♜g5 was preferred. White then needs to be careful as there is still a pawn deficit. 21.♠f1 ♜g5 22.♘xg3 ♜xf4+ 23.♠xf4 and White is better but not yet winning.] 21.♠g1 g2 22.♘d1? [A terrible mistake which should have been punished by the immediate ... c5. 22.♜h2 is greedy ... and good.] 22...♜e6 23.♘c3 [Acknowledging the mistake.] 23...c5 [too late.] 24.♠xg2 ♘g6 25.♜f1 ♙xe4 26.♘xe4 ♜xe4 27.♠xg6! ♜xe2 [27...fxg6 28.♘g3+ loses the queen.] 28.♠xg8+ ♜xg8 29.♜g1+ ♜h8 30.♜g7#

1-0

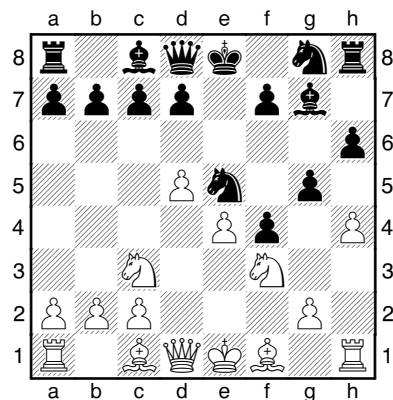
Conclusion Part 1

The Pierce Gambit is a formidable weapon but, Paulsen's successes notwithstanding, was still only employed occasionally and not at the highest levels.

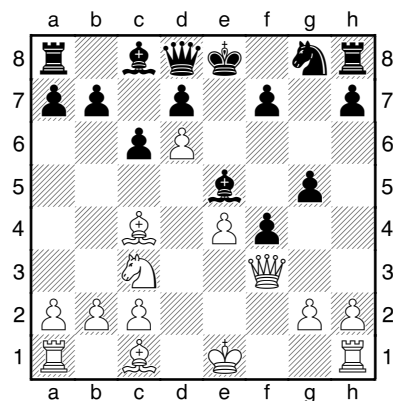
The gambit reached its prime from the mid-1980s until 1992, where we shall begin the next installment, as we travel to Manila. ([From Vienna to Manila - Chess.com](http://FromViennaToManila-Chess.com))

I hope this brief introduction to the Pierce gambit has vetted the reader's appetite, and I offer a few exercises to practice your knowledge:

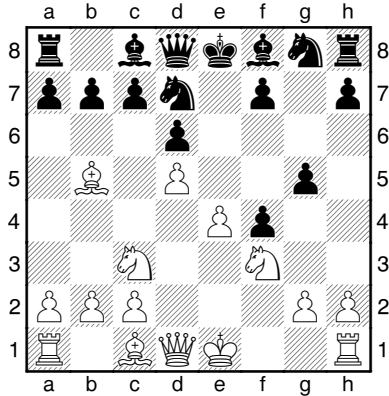
Exercise 1: White to move. Find the only way to an advantage.



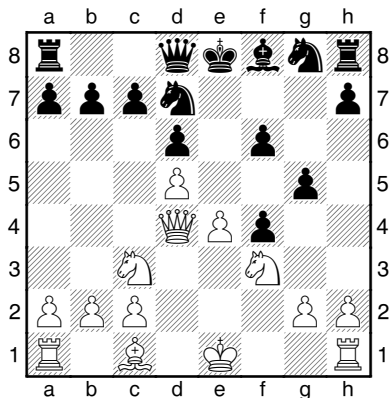
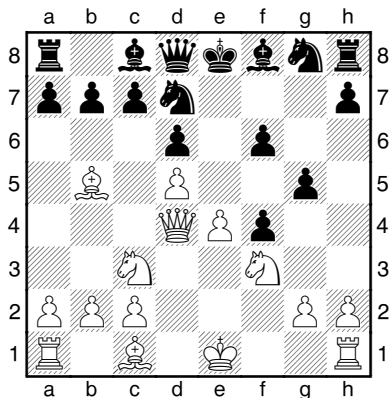
Exercise 2: White to move. Play it slow or fast?



Exercise 3: In this position, Black has just played the rare 7...Nd7. How should White proceed?



Exercise 4: In one of the two positions below, White can play Nxg5. In the other, not so good. You have forgotten theory and must now calculate which one.

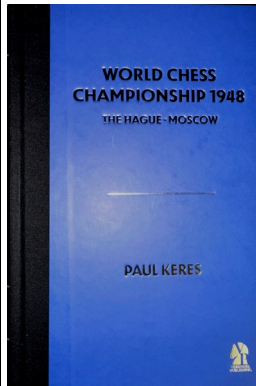


World Chess Championship 1948

The Hague—Moscow

by Paul Keres

Reviewed by Mark Capron



Verendel Publishing keeps coming out with fantastic books. The craftsmanship is second to none. Jan Verendel translated the book from Estonian to English after learning it was one of Garry Kasparov's favorite books. What better recommendation could you get? After four years of hard work it was released in 2016 on the 100th anniversary of Paul Keres birth. A second edition was issued in 2017, and now, at the end 2024, the third edition.

So what is new? Philip Jurgens of Canada went through it with a fine tooth comb to improve the grammar and syntax, the photos were colorized, and new photos were added.

What an important tournament! After Alekhine died while holding the crown it was decided to hold a tournament to determine the next World Champion. A qualification cycle was not feasible at the time as the world needed a new champion right away. FIDE invited the top players of the day and ended up with Mikhail Botvinnik, Machgielis "Max" Euwe, Reuben Fine, Paul Keres, Samuel Reshevsky, and Vasily Smyslov. There were some complaints that others were not included, but FIDE stuck to their list. At the last moment Reuben Fine withdrew, and it was too late to replace him.

The book consists mainly of the games from the tournament with Paul Keres' amazing annotations. The annotations seem like you are just sitting across the board from Keres and chatting about the position. I did get a kick out of the several times Keres wrote: "the remaining part of the game is no longer interesting." Ha, Ha.

The introduction provides the regulations for the tournament and a nice statistical section on each contestant. This is followed by a section summarizing the opening choices and how each opening fared. A section of color photos is another highlight of the book.

Each subsequent chapter consists of a very short intro to the round and then that round's games.

I did find a couple small errors in the book where one sentence was repeated and in another spot a "no" should have been a "not", but they were few and far between. I did find it strange that long figurine algebraic notation was used for the game text, but short figurine algebraic was used for the notes.

If you don't already own this book it should be the next book you purchase. 5 stars out of 5 stars!

Note:

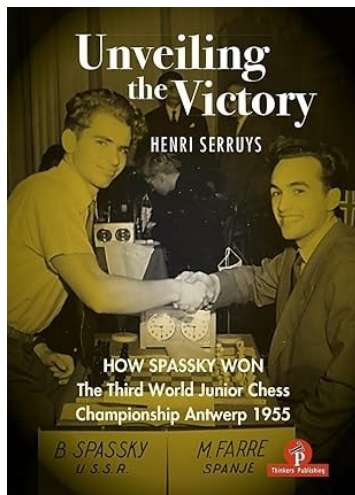
Pete Tamburro reviewed the 2016 version along with a couple other versions in *The Chess Journalist* XLVI-154, August 2023. pp 27-28.

Unveiling the Victory

How Spassky Won the Third World Junior Chess Championship Antwerp 1955

by Henri Serruys

Reviewed by Mark Capron



Author Henri Serruys and Robert (Bob) Baelen, the grandson of the late Hendrik Baelen, are friends and they go to the same chess club. Hendrik Baelen was the organizer of the Third World Junior Chess Championship. When Bob was emptying out his parents' home, he found a photobook and a red book. The red book was his grandfather's, and it contained information about the 1955 Third World Junior Chess Championship. In addition, the photobook contained many pictures from the event.

When Bob showed Henri the items, Henri said he was going to write a book detailing this tournament.

The author starts off by giving a short history of the World Junior Championships. The first being played in Birmingham, UK 1951. Boris Ivkov of Yugoslavia won it, followed by Malcolm Baker of the UK. Future GM Bent Larsen was fifth. The second championship was played in Copenhagen in 1953. Oscar Panno (Argentina) won on tie breaks over Klaus Darga (Federal Republic of Germany). Future GMs Fredrick Olafsson (fourth), Jonathan Penrose (fifth), and Bent Larsen (eighth!) played as well. A very strong junior tournament indeed. The author spends time discussing the rules and regulations in place for each of the first two events.

Next comes a description of some of the history surrounding the assignment of Antwerp, Belgium to the Third World Junior Championship. Interestingly Antwerp was not first choice, France was. However, the French let the deadline for confirmation lapse, so the bid went to Belgium very late in the process (January 6, 1955). It was decided on February 6 that the event would be held July 21-August 8 to avoid the FIDE congress and the Interzonal tournament that was to begin on August 10 in Gothenburg, Sweden. This left very little time to organize this event.

H. Baelen had many tasks to complete to make the tournament a success. Advertising, invitations, where to host the tournament (hotel Roxy on the Meir), lodging for the participants, financial aspects, referees, and time controls were just some of the larger items he had to figure out. The author covers each of these items, some in detail.

A long chapter follows with a short bio on each player and their seconds. Sometimes even including their home address at the time. The most notable contestants, besides Boris Spassky were: Edmar Mednis (USA), Lajos Portisch (Hungary), and Joop Van Oosterom (The Netherlands).

Boris Spassky (U.S.S.R.), Georgi Tringov (Bulgaria) and Miquel Farré (Spain) won the preliminary round. Spassky won the finals

followed by Edmar Mednis (USA) in second and Farré in third. Lajos Portisch from Hungary was fourth. More than 100 awards were handed out (24 players!!). The beginning of participation trophies?! Ha! Ha! Each participant received the book, *Cases Conjuguées en Opposition* by Marcel Duchamp and Vitaly Halberstadt. It sells for around 500 Euros in today's market. Spassky received the Scale of the British Chess Federation (a silver cup) for his first-place finish. Many other awards, including cash prizes, are listed and who received them.

The games section presents all the games, mostly without annotation. In the process of researching, the author was able to uncover two new Spassky games that were not in Chessbase at the time of writing the book.

The 247 page book contains many photographs and even pictures of the correspondence between the federations and Baelen. The publisher, Thinkers Publishing, has been putting out some very nice books and this hardback is no exception. The paper is of high quality and nice choice of fonts. It would have been interesting if some of the pictures were in color, but the book is fully black and white. Along the reading adventure you can use the built in book mark (ribbon); a nice touch!

The author includes short biography sections on Hendrik Baelen throughout the book. Many comments were published about Baelen in the press. For example:

"A few months ago, following France's withdrawal, Mr. Baelen stepped up to take charge of this competition. It must be noted that he received very little encouragement, because success seemed quite implausible, since we knew that without financial assistance from the public authorities there was no possibility of raising the thousands of francs necessary for such a budget. Yet Mr. Baelen, and this will be his eternal glory, had faith. This devil of a man managed to share his faith with others and this is how we all have had the pleasure of attending, in Belgium, the III Junior World Championship..." (Edmond Lancel)

A nice chapter on what the participants went on to do after this tournament was included. Some did not continue with chess, but most led normal lives that still included chess to some extent. A few made chess their livelihood.

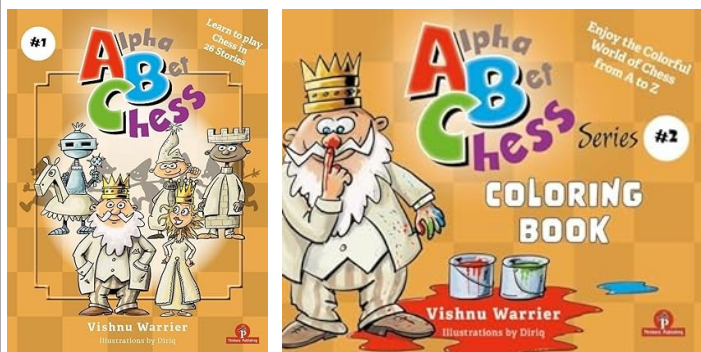
There is a small section detailing Spassky getting into hot water with the KGB after some of his comments were slanted the wrong way and the fact that he offended the Russian ambassador with his colorful language while playing a billiards game. Luckily several others including Yuri Averbakh, Victor Kamchatov, and Dmitry Postnikov helped bury the problem or Spassky might not have ever been allowed to travel to tournaments again.

Serruys successfully captures the essence of the 1955 World Junior Championship. He underscores the significance of the tournament as a steppingstone for Spassky's eventual rise as one of the greatest chess players in history. Overall a very informative, enjoyable read.

AlphaBet Chess Series Books 1 and 2 by Vishnu Warriar
Illustrations by Diriq; published by Thinkers Publishing (2024)

Reviewed by **Rachel Schechter**

Spin the new Wheel of Chess Fortune



In February 2023, while playing with his 2-year-old son, Vishnu Warriar, chess writer, coach, USCF candidate master, (and then some) had a great idea: why not ‘create a fun, illustrated chess book to teach chess basics using the ABCs?’ A book that would not only teach chess fundamentals but also inspire a lifelong love of the royal game. A book that youngsters can share with teachers, family and friends. Learn, laugh, color, and play.

What an idea. And what a result.

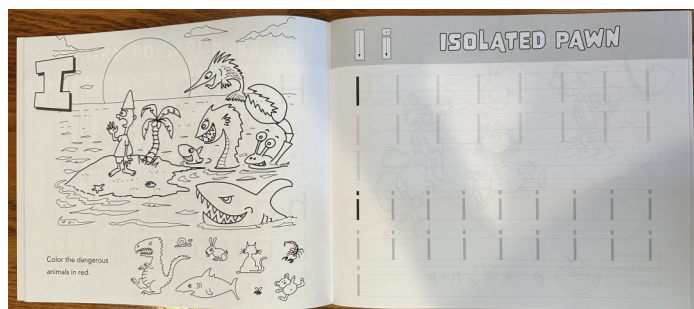
AlphaBet Chess (published by Thinkers Publishing) developed into two companion books: a beautiful 9x12 hardcover A-Z adventure book wherein each letter introduces a concept, and a brief explanation highlighted with bold, inventive and often zany illustrations; paired with a corresponding 10x9 softcover coloring book replete with mazes, match the King’s socks, identify the look-alike pictures, trace the letters, find the differences, word and math puzzles—numerous chess-related activities to teach and delight.



Age-appropriateness? As a long-standing chess teacher (yes, I also work with youngsters who simply don’t understand WHY pawns can’t move sideways) I decided to test it. First, with a private student, Leontyne—a smart, Swiss, 6 ½ year old female— then with a beginner’s class within the West Village, MN homeschool program: eight boys and girls ranging from ages 6-9. Overall, across-the-board, (no pun intended) results were positive.

The older children tended to utilize *both* books, gleaning what they could prior to working on the coloring book exercises. Children under eight flipped through a few pages in the hardcover storybook then beelined to the coloring book, immediately drawn into the adventures of Peter Pawn, Queen Quinn, and Bennent Bishop. Intrigue, discussion, laughter, enthusiasm.

While all children wanted *both books*, when asked to choose *just one*, the vast majority chose the chess coloring/activity book. In short, the testing was successful. Fortunate are the youngsters who spin into this ingenious series. *And* you don’t have to buy vowels!



As a chess educator, I see the value inherent in *both* books (warmly and eccentrically illustrated by Dirk Dewitte) and await the next AlphaBet Chess series currently in the works.

As a reviewer, I must also communicate what the youngsters *did not like*: 1) where are the answers? No one wanted to go to a website for puzzle answers and 2) what does *that* mean? Even with explanation and illustration, some of the terminology was too difficult to grasp. Specifically: attraction, deflection, fianchetto, overloaded piece, and wind-mill. Perhaps, in keeping with the letters, adjust or analysis, draw or develop, file or fork, opening, and win might have been easier for this age group (unless we’re talking prodigy). Hopefully Mr. Warriar will remember what an outstanding chess player he is and bear in mind that these are just young children when he creates his next series.

We heartily recommend the AlphaBet Chess books for preteen including preschoolers and look forward to their successors.

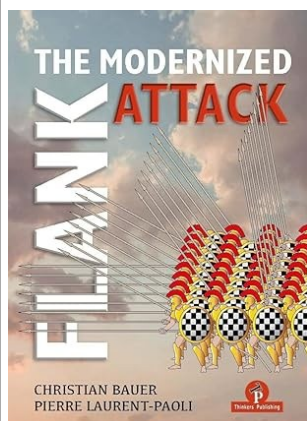
The Modernized Flank Attack

Grandmasters Christian Bauer and Pierre Laurent-Paoli

Thinkers Publishing, 2024, 359 pp.

Reviewed by National Master Randy Bauer

Randy's Rating: 6/10



In the chess publishing world, books can be grouped into certain categories. Foremost (in terms of sheer numbers) are those that are devoted to opening theory. Other notable categories are books primarily concerned with the middlegame, endgame, specific tournaments, and players. This book explores a sort of 'niche' topic: the use of the g2-g4 or g7-g5 pawn thrusts (hence the 'flank attack' mentioned in the title).

This is an interesting approach, and some of the silicon chess playing

behemoths trot out these moves more often than most human chess players (at least until they demonstrate their value). While the first book specifically devoted to these pawn thrusts, they are not revolutionary. The critical line against the very solid Sicilian Scheveningen variation is and has been 1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♕c3 e6 6.g4. Named after perhaps the greatest player to never win the world championship title, the Keres Attack was first played by Paul Keres against Efim Bogoljubov at the Salzburg tournament 82 years ago!

In fact, the g4 thrust has become commonplace in many variations of the Sicilian Defense, such as one of the main lines of the Najdorf Variation (1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxe4 4.♗xd4 ♘f6 5.♕c3 a6 6.♗g5 e6 7.f4 ♗e7 8.♞f3 ♞c7 9. 0-0-0 ♗bd7 10.g4). In fact, the authors note this history and do not cover these Sicilian g4 approaches in this book. It's also worth mentioning that several lines in the ♗g5 Najdorf find black playing ...g5 so that after white plays fxg5, he secures the e5 square for his knight.

Given that these Sicilian lines are well-paved chess highways, it makes sense to focus on more recent trends around these g-pawn actions. This explains the use of 'Modernized' in the book's title.

I was encouraged by the authors, both of whom are Grandmasters, and, in the case of Bauer, one who has flirted with a 2700 FIDE rating. He has also written opening books that I found useful, including 'The Philidor Files' and 'Play the Scandinavian.'

The book is organized into four chapters. The first deals with instances where the pawn thrust is meant to challenge the black knight on f6 (most frequently) or the white knight on f3. The second is titled 'Using a hook' (although this is never actually defined, it refers to situations where white/black has played h3 or h6 and the g-pawn intends to advance and force a trade of pawns). The third is 'space grabbing,' and the fourth is a miscellaneous chapter.

The first thing that I noticed is that there is far more discussion of opening theory than I expected – and much of it is early in the game, well before white or black plays the g pawn thrust. As an example, in the first chapter there are multiple discussions of

opening variations that stretch four or five pages that have nothing to do with the g-pawn thrust. A more extreme example is found in the annotations to the game Ponomarev-Godena, from Plovdiv 2003. The opening was a Scotch Game (1.e4 e5 2.♗f3 ♗c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗xd4 ♗c5). At this point, the authors spend nearly seven pages discussing the theory of this opening prior to getting to the point where black plays ...g5. Very little of that theory is concerned with the issue of the g-pawn thrust. These might be of use to some players, but I found them distracting.

The focus on openings might be acceptable if how the g-thrust fits into planning is organized into the discussion, but this isn't usually the case. In fact, this is primarily a collection of annotated games that, at some point in the game, feature the g-pawn thrust. Granted, the annotations are generally good, but they do little to assimilate the material into common themes: when does it work, when doesn't it, and why. This is what I had hoped to glean from the book, but ultimately it does not deliver.

As a result, this functions more as a book of annotated games (including significant opening discussions) with a g-pawn thrust. There is far less explanation of when this thrust works, when it does not, and how this plays out in practice than I would have expected.

There are places where I wonder if translation or editing was an issue. For example, the last chapter deals with the most extreme use of the g-pawn thrust of all – 1.g4. Grob's Attack has generally not found favor with strong players and has been called one of the worst of white's possible opening moves. That said, more than one enterprising player has been willing to take it up. It is notable that the games provided are all blitz games, including a couple by Hikaru Nakamura. The first game, Gareev-Duda, St. Petersburg 2018 is an example of my concerns about the final product. After 1.g4 d5 the authors write 'This is the best and most popular reply.' However, they then provide a note that begins with 1...e5! and analyze it out to a winning advantage for black. Huh? Now, clearly, there are other ways for white to play in the given variation, but it points to the somewhat haphazard feeling the book presents in some of its opening analysis.

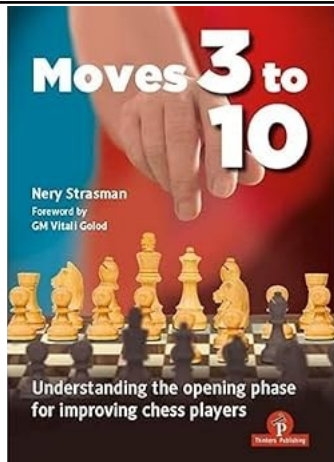
Thinkers Publishing puts out books with high production values. This is a hardcover, and the book lies flat, the paper is substantial, the print and diagrams are clear. My one complaint would be that the organization, particularly in these opening variation discussions, can make it hard to follow. In general, I believe that this book, with better editing, could have been about half as many pages and better focused on the book's topic.

In summary, there is a lot of interesting material here, and if a player is willing to pore through its 359 pages, my guess is they will learn a lot about the topic. However, there is no grouping of games by, for example, a specific opening variation, to make it easier to find relevant material. Nor does the index provide this sort of guidance. As a result, it seems like a lot of time investment for most players who are looking to improve their game.

Moves 3 to 10 by Nery Strasman

Thinkers Publishing, 2024, 256 pp.

Reviewed by Akshaj Bodla



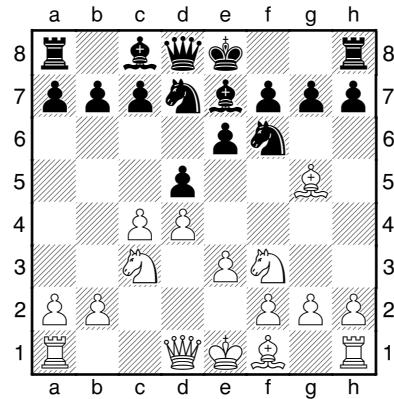
Have you ever wondered, “Hmm, what should I accomplish in the first few moves of a chess game?” Then this book is for you. Nery Strasman’s *Moves 3 to 10* is an impactful book that helps chess players understand the opening phase of the game (the first few moves), hence the name.

Nery’s primary intention in writing this book is to help chess players understand openings without going through the many variations and lines, but rather learn from mistakes, theirs or anyone else’s. The book begins with a deep explanation of what the opening is and how an opening is classified. It highlights the importance of the opening and encourages players to have a rich understanding of openings, as the chosen opening alters the game completely! Nery informs the reader about the purpose of an opening and what should be accomplished in the first few moves. He then explains how to achieve specific tasks in the opening, such as developing your pieces and castling.

Besides openings, the book also considers other chess terms, like bishop pair, open file, double pawns, etc., to enhance the readers’ knowledge of chess vocabulary. Also, a few illustrations help the readers visualize ideas better. For example, an illustration of a chessboard is shown with the four most essential squares outlined, highlighting that having control of the center is a significant asset in the opening. Another helpful quality the author provides is that excessive notation is not included in one big chunk. But instead, going step by step ensures the readers learn to their fullest, and it is not hard for them to visualize.

To give an insight into how the first few moves of a chess game could go, the book provides 150 positions of openings. For example, a queen’s gambit declined position is shown below (Position 139). White is doing great with space and development, whereas Black is ready to castle and is surprisingly not far behind in development. However, Black still has to deal with the c8 bishop being hemmed in by the e6 pawn. These positions make the readers think, “What went wrong in this opening and how can it be fixed?” and “How can I capitalize on the advantage in this position?” The book then shows different continuations for every position and how that can help either side. It also highlights why one side is bad in the

opening and what they should have accomplished instead. This explanation helps the reader understand openings better and helps them play better moves in a certain opening. The book then ends with each position’s type of opening and the moves that led up to the position.



A few other considerations from me include the overall quality of this book and any aspects that could be improved. To start, the physical look of the cover page, with a real display of an opening being played, is excellent. The book is hardback, adding to the classy look, and the smooth paper allows for flawless turning of pages. The illustrations and diagrams in the book are pleasing to look at and are a good size for the reader to see. I do feel that the lack of illustrations to represent various chess vocabulary misses an opportunity. For example, when the author includes what an open file is, adding an illustration would help readers understand the concept better.

In conclusion, *Moves 3 to 10* is an excellent book for people who want to expand their knowledge of openings. This book helped me find more accurate moves to play in the opening and really called my attention to the significance of the opening phase of the game. It helped me increase my knowledge of what to accomplish in openings and informed me about different positions that could be reached due to playing a specific opening. A quote by Confucius, which was in this book, “...thinking without learning is dangerous,” taught me that you have to learn while thinking, and brainlessly studying will never help you solve problems and think critically, in chess and life. Overall, *Moves 3 to 10* is an invaluable resource for anyone looking to deepen their understanding of chess opening strategies and enhance their knowledge of openings in general.



GM Boris Spassky – a tribute



by Awani Kumar, Lucknow, India

Boris Vasilievich Spassky born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) on 30 January 1937, was the 10th World Chess Champion. He won the Soviet Chess Championship – one of the toughest events in the second half of 20th century – twice outright and twice lost in playoffs. He played three world championship matches and was a World Championship candidate on seven occasions. In spite of facing immense hardships during World War II, his talent was manifested at an early age when he defeated Soviet champion Mikhail Botvinnik in a simultaneous exhibition at age 10. He became Grandmaster in 1956 and was then the youngest to hold the title. He became the first person to win both the world titles – World Junior Chess Championship in 1955 and later World Chess Championship in 1969. [Only three other players, namely, Anatoly Karpov, Garry Kasparov and Viswanathan Anand have repeated the feat.] Fischer – Spassky World Championship 1972 was the most widely covered match in the history, reported by mainstream media throughout the world and is popularly dubbed as the Match of the Century. The match gave a big boost to chess popularity and chess was at its apex. Prize fund was more than the combined prize fund of all the previous World Championship matches since 1886. It was at the height of the Cold War and politicians from both the countries, USA and USSR, were no less involved than the players. It was seen as political confrontation between the two superpowers over chess board. Although Spassky lost the match (+7-3=11), he won the hearts of admirers for his accommodating behavior with Fischer's eccentricities and antiques, including moving the third game in a side room and his dignity in defeat. Spassky was a gentle person and his sportsmanship was legendary. He joined the audience in giving Fischer a standing ovation when the latter won the 6th game. Spassky and Fischer again played a match in 'first to win 10 games format' in Yugoslavia 1992 which the latter won (+10-5=15). It was an unofficial rematch of their 1972 encounter. Yugoslavia was under US sanction and miffed US government issued a warrant of arrest against Fischer. Fischer was on run to avoid arrest but was detained in Japan in 2004 to be deported to USA. Spassky wrote a personal letter of appeal to the US President George W. Bush asking to be locked up in the same cell as Fischer – as he has also committed the same crime – and said "give us a chess set". Spassky has been described by many as a universal player and excelled in middlegame and in tactics. He has featured in over a dozen postage stamps issued by various countries. [By the way, over 140 nations have issued stamps with a chess motif but The United States has not issued any stamp with any chess motif.]



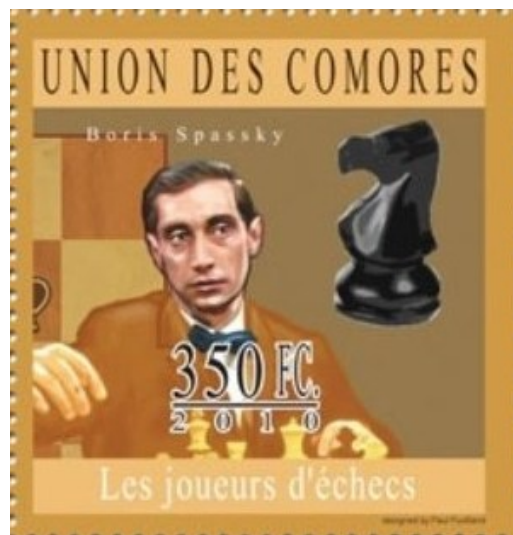
Republic of Chad (L) and Kingdom of Kongo (R) postage stamps honouring Boris Spassky.

85th anniversary of Boris Spassky



Sierra Leone issued a 4-stamp sheet celebrating 85th anniversary of Boris Spassky.

It is not only grandmasters that commit mistakes but postal authorities also do so much to our bewilderment and amusement. In 1998 Republic of Guinea issued a postage stamp which misidentified Boris Spassky as Paul Morphy. Union of Comoros, a country located in Southeastern Africa, issued a 6-stamp sheet themed 'chess players' in 2010. It misidentified Vladek Sheybal, a Polish actor, director and singer who played the role of Kronsteen in the 1963 film *From Russia with Love*, as Boris Spassky.





Spassky died in Moscow on February 27, 2025, at the age of 88 and the author wishes to pay his tribute by composing few interesting knight tours on 8×11 (=88) cell board. Knight tour is a mathematical composition on a board. The challenge is to move a knight on an empty board so that it visits all the cells only once. Figure 1 is a semi-magic tour. All the consecutive move numbers from cell 1 to cell 88 are in knight's path and sum of the move numbers in each row is 356. Figure 2 has the move numbers in multiples of 11 along the middle row. Both the figures are open tours as cell 1 and cell 88 are not at knight's move. It is more challenging to compose a closed (or re-entrant) tour.

1	44	87	46	33	12	59	74	356	26	47	8	3	74	49	72	1
86	47	34	11	58	75	32	13	356	7	4	27	48	69	2	75	50
43	2	45	88	31	14	73	60	356	46	25	6	9	30	73	68	71
48	85	10	35	76	57	30	15	356	5	10	23	28	43	70	51	76
3	42	55	78	29	16	61	72	356	24	45	42	31	52	29	54	67
84	49	36	9	56	77	28	17	356	11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88
41	4	79	54	27	18	71	62	356	84	41	20	65	32	53	18	57
50	83	8	37	70	63	26	19	356	21	12	85	34	19	56	87	78
5	40	53	80	25	22	67	64	356	40	83	64	61	86	35	58	17
82	51	38	7	66	69	20	23	356	13	62	81	38	15	60	79	36
39	6	81	52	21	24	65	68	356	82	39	14	63	80	37	16	59

(1)

(2)


Figure 3 has the square numbers $1^2, 2^2, 3^2, \dots, 9^2$, that is, 1, 4, 9, ..., 81 and cube numbers $1^3, 2^3, 3^3$ and 4^3 , namely, 1, 8, 27 and 64 arranged in square formations. In 2006, Spassky described himself as an orthodox Christian. Figure 4 has the square numbers arranged in a holy cross formation.

87	68	13	38	85	40	11	30
14	7	86	69	12	29	84	41
67	88	37	8	39	10	31	28
6	15	80	65	70	27	42	83
79	66	1	36	9	82	71	32
2	5	16	81	64	35	26	43
17	78	49	4	25	44	33	72
50	3	24	63	34	73	54	45
21	18	77	48	53	62	57	60
76	51	20	23	74	59	4	55
19	22	75	52	47	56	61	58

(3)

6	19	2	11	32	21	34	13
3	10	5	20	15	12	31	22
18	7	50	1	48	33	14	35
51	4	9	16	25	36	23	30
8	17	88	49	28	47	26	37
87	52	43	64	61	24	29	46
78	65	62	81	44	27	38	59
53	86	79	42	63	60	45	72
66	77	82	85	80	71	58	39
83	54	75	68	41	56	73	70
76	67	84	55	74	69	40	57

(4)

We show respect to departed soul by laying flowers. The line joining the square numbers in Figure 5 delineate a flower. Figure 6 has the consecutive square numbers in knight's path and the line joining them make a beautiful  shape, the universal symbol of love.

7	74	15	32	17	76	23	34
14	3	6	75	22	33	18	77
73	8	31	16	5	24	35	38
2	13	4	21	36	39	78	19
11	72	9	30	25	20	37	40
28	1	12	81	46	49	54	79
71	10	29	26	53	80	41	48
88	27	70	45	82	47	50	55
69	60	67	64	57	52	83	42
66	87	62	59	44	85	56	51
61	68	65	86	63	58	43	84

(5)

17	28	15	54	19	6	3	12
56	53	18	29	10	13	20	5
27	16	55	14	7	4	11	2
52	57	26	9	30	71	40	21
25	32	37	44	23	8	1	72
58	51	24	31	70	39	22	41
33	36	45	38	43	88	73	68
50	59	34	77	46	69	42	87
35	78	49	62	81	84	67	74
60	63	80	47	76	65	86	83
79	48	61	64	85	82	75	66

(6)

We love, adore and admire you, Boris Vasilievich. Physically you are no more with us but will always remain in our heart and memories. RIP.

"He was not only one of the greatest players of the Soviet era and the world, but also a true gentleman. His contributions to chess will never be forgotten."

—Arkady Dvorkovich, FIDE president

Oddities and Peculiarities (and Obscurities)

The Pion Coiffe

The following specimen of this remarkable game was played some time ago, between Mr. T—— and Mr. Staunton. It is, as far as we know, the only one at these peculiar odds which has ever been printed.

In this game Mr. Staunton, White, places a ring or a cap (from whence the term *Pion Coiffe*) on his KNP, and undertakes to Checkmate his adversary with that Pawn. The reader, unacquainted with games of this description may form some idea of the difficulty of mating with a particular Pawn, when told that the Pawn in question is never allowed to be made a Queen or other piece, but must effect the Mate as a Pawn only—that if the adversary (Black) by skill or the sacrifice of his pieces, can win the said Pawn the game is his. In like manner, if he can compel White to give Checkmate with any other piece or Pawn, or can himself, while White is intent upon the preservation of the all-important pawn, Checkmate him—he of course wins the game.

Before playing the over, a thimble or some distinguishing mark should be put on the KNP of White.

1.N-QB3 P-K4 2.N-K4 P-Q4 3.N-N3 To cover the marked Pawn and render it less assailable by the enemy's pieces. **3. ... P-KB4 4.P-K3 B-Q3** He feared to attack the Knight with his KBP on account of the check with White's Queen at KR5. **5.P-QB4 P-KR4 6.NxRP** This Pawn was thrown forward as a lure—Black thinking that if his adversary took it, by playing 6. ... Q-N4 he should presently win the Knight. **6. ... Q-N4 7.N-N3 P-B5 8.PxP** If White, instead of this move, had played 8.N-B3, Black would have left the Queen en prise, and won the game off-hand by moving his Bishop to KR6. **8. ... PxP 9.P-Q4 Q-N3** He would clearly have lost the queen by taking the Knight. **10.B-Q3 Q-R3** If Black had checked with his queen on either of his last two moves, White would have interposed the Queen, in hopes to effect an exchange, and to do so would willingly have left his Knight to be taken. Black now threatens to win THE Pawn immediately by moving his Queen to KR6 next move. **11.Q-R5+ QxQ 12.NxQ RxN 13.B-N6+ K-K2 14.BxR N-KB3 15.B-B3 P-KN4 16.P-B5 P-N5 17.PxB+ PxP 18.BxNP** He would have lost the game if he had not taken the Pawn. **18. ... BxB 19.BxP N-R4** A weak move. **20.B-KN3 N-QB3 21.P-KR3** 21.P-B3, for the purpose of bringing the King to KB2, appears a stronger move, but in reality it would lose the game: 21.P-B3 B-K3 22.N-K2 R-KN1 23.K-B2 B-R6 24.PxB NxB and play as White can, his adversary by moving ... R-R1 must win the Capped Pawn. **21. ... B-K3 22.N-K2 R-KN1 23.R-QB1 B-B4 24.R-B3 B-K5 25.R-K3 N-N5 26.K-Q2 NxP 27.R-R1 N-N5 28.RxP N-QB3 29.RxP+ K-K3 30.R-KR7 R-N4 31.RxB+ PxR 32.RxN RxR 33.N-B4+ K-K2 34.NxR NxP 35.K-K3 N-B7+ 36.KxP N-K8** Attacking the "game Pawn." **37.B-R4+ K-Q2 38.P-KN4 K-B3 39.P-B4 N-B7 40.P-B5 P-Q4+ 41.K-B4 P-Q5 42.B-B2 P-Q6 43.B-K3 N-Q5** Well played. If 43. ... BxN the Pawn goes on. **44.K-K4 P-Q7 45.BxP N-N6 46.B-K3 K-Q3 47.N-**

B6 K-B3 48.P-R4 N-R4 49.P-R5 N-B5 50.B-B4 NxP 51.P-R6 N-R5 52.P-R7 N-B4+ 53.K-K3 K-N4 54.N-K4 N-R3 55.P-R8(Q) K-R4 56.Q-B3+ K-N4 57.Q-N3+ K-R4 58.N-B3 N-B4 59.B-B7+ K-R3 60.Q-N5+ K-R2 61.QxN+ K-R3 He purposely lays himself open to Mate. **62.Q-R5+ K-N2 63.K-K4 K-B1 64.Q-R7 K-Q2 65.Q-N7 K-K2 66.Q-B8 K-B3 67.B-Q8+ K-N2 68.Q-K6 K-B1 69.Q-K7+ K-N1 70.N-Q5 K-R1 71.P-N5 K-N1 72.P-N6 K-R1 73.K-K5 K-N1 74.N-B6+ K-R1 75.P-N7 mate.** This is not a very favourable specimen of these singular odds. The same parties played many games of this description, and the present is perhaps the weakest, but being also the shortest, it was remembered, while the longer and more stubborn combats were forgotten.

Howard Staunton 1810—74. D.N.L. Levy. *The Chess Player*, Nottingham. 1975, pp 137-8.

Recently the computer program *Leela Chess Zero* has been testing out odds games and supports the following:

- Knight;
- Rook;
- Queen for knight;
- Two knights;
- Two bishops;
- Rook and knight;
- Two rooks;
- Queen;
- Two bishops and knight;
- Rook and two knights;
- Rook and two bishops;
- Queen and knight;
- Two bishops and two knights;
- Queen and rook;
- Queen and two knights;
- Queen and two bishops;
- Queen, rook, and knight;
- Queen and two rooks.