Charlotte, NC
May 25-26, 2024
CCC CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
(5 rounds, 33 participants)

1 James CHIRILOV		5
2 Dina BELENKAYA (ISR)		4
3-5 Vishnu VANAPALLI, Alexandre HOUHOU (FRA), Thomas FANG		3½
6-15 Emmanuel CARTER, Andrew WU, Hugo NAM, Sri BONDALAPATI, Karthikeya MALIREDDY, Patrick SCIACCA, Dereck L AUREANO, Brian ZHANG, Jay GARRISON, Anvay PHADKE		3
16-20 Benjamin SNODGRASS, Vihaan PENDSE, Vignesh SEKAR, Shawn BALE, Anagha SINKAR		2½
21-26 Advaith KARTHIK, Krishna RALLABANDI, Kishan KARTHIGEYAN, Ishaan BALLAL, Harshil JAGGA, Freya AUSTIN		2
27-29 Patrick McCARTNEY, Lokruth PATIL, Celine ATASS		1½
etc.		

Austin, TX
May 24-28, 2024
AGCA SPRING GM INVITATIONAL
(10-player round-robin)

1 Ryo CHEN		7
2 Guillermo VAZQUEZ (PAR)		6½
3-4 Kamil DRAGUN (POL), Robert SHLYAKTENKO		5
5-6 Sai KRISHNA (IND), Harshid KUNKA		4½
7 Vladimir BELOUS (RUS)		4
8 Lucius MELILLO		3½
9-10 Ethan SHEEHAN, Ryan AMBURGY		2½

Scoring a GM Norm can never be considered a light task, but it must be said there are some circumstances where it's harder than others to achieve, even with a breakout result. Namely in Round Robins with a 7/9 score required, such as it was in Austin – usually one player has to take apart the rest of the field, from start to finish, and even then, it's possible to fall short when the overall strength is so high (usually 2400+ rating average).

In the AGCA's second GM Invitational it seemed IM Ryo Chen was well on his way to doing just that after a blazing 4/4 start that already left most of his fellow Norm seekers mathematically out of contention(!). A tough loss against GM Guillermo Vazquez brought him back down to earth though –


▲ Austin, TX

even with an outlandishly strong start under his belt, to achieve the aim a 3/4 finish was also required.

Showing mental fortitude beyond his years, Ryo did just that, scoring a bounce back win and two further draws against dangerous rivals. It all came down to a last round showdown as Black with IM Sai Krishna where only a win would do, and he came through when it mattered most.

No stranger to these pages (ACM#25, p.66-69), Ryo is one of many frighteningly young talents emerging from all over the world today. After achieving the IM title, he struggled for a time, but there's little doubt his first GM Norm will prove impetus enough to propel Ryo on to bigger and brighter achievements!

G V Sai Krishna	2404
Ryo Chen	**2342**

AGCA Spring Invitational – GM A
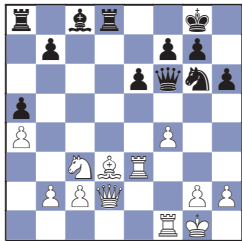
After a shaky opening phase White has managed to escape the worst of it. His position is a little more loose, but objectively it's nothing substantial.
**20.♖g3** A bit overaggressive, but still okay in principle. 20.♕f2!? ♗d7 21.♖ee1=, intending f5 or perhaps ♔b6 next, would have been a stronger maneuver.
20...♗d7 21.♕e2?! Natural enough, but it seems White misunderstood the position. His play doesn't really lie on the kingside, where Black is rock solid. 21.♗xg6! fxg6 22.♕e1 wasn't an easy concession to agree to, but with ♖e3 coming next it's hard to see how Black stirs up

much trouble. 22...♗c6 23.♖e3! ♕d4 24.♖f2 ♖f8 25.♖xe6 ♖xf4 26.♕e3=, for example, sucks all premise of life out of the game, though White's clumsy knight on c3 still allows Black to try in the endgame.
21...♘e7 The knight escapes an early demise – later on its full potential will be revealed!
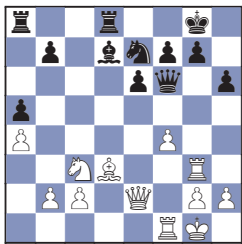
22.♕h5? Consistent with White's overall strategy, but the utter futility of his kingside action isn't hard to surmise. 22.♕e5! ♕xe5 23.fxe5 ♗c6 24.b3 keeps an unpleasant but defensible endgame.
22.b3!? ♖ac8 23.♖d1 ♘f5 24.♖h3= would also limit the damage to an absolute minimum. Black has a nicer structure but it's hard to capitalize on.
22...♗c6!? Straightforward enough – Black prepares for invasion with a potential ...♖d4/...♘f5.
22...♘f5!? at once may have been even stronger, but Ryo's move was too natural to condemn. 23.♗xf5

exf5 24.♘d5 ♕d4+ 25.♔e3 ♕c5†.
23.♔h1?? An out and out blunder. White's position was too fragile for slow play to be permitted. 23.f5?? is a break White's last moves have seemed to prepare, but 23...♕e5–+ tactically falls apart.
23.♕e5! was the only way for White to keep fighting, with reasonable drawing chances still, but it's understandable how either player could have rejected it! 23...♕xe5 24.fxe5 ♖d4 25.b3 ♖ad8‡ is a different story than before, of course. White has a hard defense ahead in the endgame – a tempo matters, considering all the strategic pluses are with Black.
23...♖d4 24.♖g4 24.♕e5 ♕xe5 25.fxe5 ♗xa4 loses a pawn in clear daylight, as 26.♘xa4 ♖xa4 27.♖gf3 ♖f8–+ fails to bother Black.
24...♘f5! The most efficient way of making White's rook appear ridiculous on g4. One look at the pieces says it all, and **Black won** in ten more moves.

Saint Louis, MO
May 28-June 4, 2024
SUMMER CLASSIC – A
(10-player round-robin)

1 Ray ROBSON		6
2-3 Awonder LIANG, Andrew HONG		5½
4 Grigoriy OPARIN		5
5-6 Nikolas THEODOROU (GRE), Christopher YOO		4½
7 Ante BRKIC (CRO)		4
8 Mikhail ANTIPOV (FID)		3½
9 Benjamin BOK (NED)		3
10 Temur KUYBOKAROV (AUS)		2½

Westford, MA
May 25-27, 2024
92ND MASSACHUSETTS OPEN
(5 rounds, 56 participants)

1 Alexander IVANOV		5
2-7 Denys SHMELOV, Mauro AMPIE, Mikayel MKRTCHYAN, Iris MOU, Eric FENG, Christopher CHASE		4½
8-11 Lawyer TIMES, Kelsey LIU, Justin LI, Ethan KOZOWER		4
12-19 Roger ZHANG, Anton BARASH, Joaquin CARLSON, Shawn XU, Kevin ZHAO, Michael CAREY, William SMIRNOV, Royce ZHANG		3½
20-27 Henry TERRIE, Timothy SAGE, Franklin LEWIS, David KATSMAN, William WU, Kevin STERN, Jacob WU, Rayansh CHAKRABORTY		3
28-40 Xiaoman CHU, Oskar ZOFFER, Charlie CRESWELL, Holden CHALFANT, Rayhan FRANK, Zhongtian CAO, Zachary PAN, Felix WU, Jerry CHEN, David MASHKOV, Noah VUGT, Jericho CARLSON, Albert DONG		2½
41-48 Michael UWAKWE, Michael KANG, Kaustubh KISLAY, Krishna MUTNURI, John		

ARCHIBALD, Arthur ZHOU, Karim NABA, Andrew LIU 2
etc.

Niagara Falls, NY
May 31-June 2, 2024
4TH ANNUAL NIAGARA FALLS OPEN
(5 rounds, 31 participants)

1 Jianchao ZHOU (CHN)		5
2-5 Facundo PIERROT (ARG), Sharath RADHAKRISHNAN, Priyansh GARG, Christian STEVENS		3½
6-14 Justin SARKAR, Sam LUGER, Joshua MENG, Kutay KARATAS, Vidyuth KAMESH, Lefan YANG, Aiden LI, Irene XIE, Eric QIAN		3
15-18 Junchen HE, Marzouq CHOWDHURY (BAN), Inbhavenkat RAJAN (CAN), Ashley QIAN		2½
19-24 Jifan ZHAO, Royce ZHANG, Frank CAO, Christopher COLE, Zhuoyuan XU, Robert CORMIER		2
25-28 Brian FIEDLER, Erik LUBAS, Anson LEONG, Rishab BALAJI		1½
etc.		

Ray Robson

May 28-June 4, 2024
SUMMER CLASSIC – B
(10-player round-robin)

1-2 Andy WOODWARD, Steven ZIERK		6½
3-5 Harshit RAJA (IND), Brewington HARDAWAY, Gulrukhbegim TOKHIRJONOVA		5½
6 Akshat CHANDRA		5
7-8 Alice LEE, Irina KRUSH		3
9 Josiah STEARMAN		2½
10 Melikset KHACHIYAN		2

After playing around with some mixed time control experiments for their seasonal "Classics," the SLCC returned to a tried-and-true Round Robin format for this year's Summer Classic. Following tradition there were two groups, A and B, the latter a clear step down in strength. That didn't detract from its quality at all, but one step at a time!

Group A pitted many of the country's strongest young GMs against each other and similarly imposing, if more established, members of the 2600+ club. In such a consistently high-level atmosphere a certain level of solidity is unavoidable for success, and this led to a number of fairly quiet draws as is customary. Fighting chess was still seen aplenty though, and a number of "cellar dwellers" provided the top finishers with a steady supply of points. As is to be expected, even heading into the last day it wasn't in any way clear who would eventually emerge triumphant.

A surprise frontrunner in bottom seed GM Andrew Hong had burst ahead of the field with 5½/8. Despite taking an early loss he had won twice as many games (4) as any of his contenders in the tournament so far! Close behind were GMs Awonder Liang, Christopher Yoo, Ray Robson and Grigoriy Oparin on 5/8, the latter two of which were set to face off in the final round.

In a dramatic turn of events Yoo and Hong were both given few chances in brutal, convincing takedowns, while Liang survived early difficulties to hold out and secure a draw. It seemed as though

a four-player tiebreaker could be imminent, but the picture was ruined by Robson who won an important game, unexpectedly finishing at the top on his own! Consistency won out in the end, as the top two finishers both ended up undefeated.

Ray Robson	2695
Grigoriy Oparin	**2676**

Summer Classic – A, St.Louis 2024
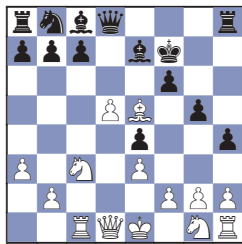
15.♕b3! A good start. After a complex opening debate White already needed to show some care. 15.♖d4?! c5 16.dxc6 ♘xc6 turns the other way, as Black gets very good compensation after a grab on e4, e.g. 17.♘xe4 ♕d5!? 18.f3 ♗f5♖.
15...♔g6 The king needs to step away from a discovery. 15...fxe5? 16.d6+ ♗e6 17.dxe7 ♗xb3 18.exd8♕ ♖xd8 19.♘h3!+– was not the way to go for Black.
16.♗d4 c5! With the e4 pawn in danger Black was in the same quandary – activity at all cost! But now he's doing fine.
17.dxc6 ♘xc6 18.♘ge2 Both sides have handled the early middlegame in exemplary fashion. The position is objectively around level, but tricky – neither king is exactly enjoying a life of luxury.
18...h3!? A logical try, forcing White to weaken his king position. But it's hard to get at the White monarch, safe and sound on its initial square.
18...♗g4!? would have been more quiet, completing development and preparing to enact piece

trades. And 19.♖d1!? (19.h3 ♗xe2 20.♘xe2 ♕xd4 21.♖xd4 ♖c8=, for example, leaves White with too few pieces to create much trouble.) 19...♕g8! 20.♕c2 ♗f5 21.♘xe4 ♕e6 22.f3 ♖ac8♖ gives Black full compensation for the pawn.
19.gxh3
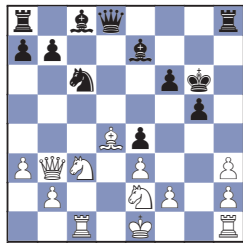
19...♕h4? But now Black allows his opponent to take control. Is it possible Oparin had already reached out to grab on h3, before noticing the flaw? 19...♖xh3?? 20.♘f4+! gxf4 21.♖g1+ strips open the king and mates His Highness in short order. It's hard to imagine surviving 21...♔f5?! (21...♔h6? 22.♕f7 ♗f5 23.♕g7+ ♗h5 24.♘e2! brings in a final piece to the attack. And 24...♗f3 25.♖c5!!+– is a final piece of artistry. The f6 pawn is loose, so Black has no time to take on c5.; 21...♗g3 22.hxg3+– is relatively best, but hopeless.) 22.♕c2 ♗e6 23.♖xe4+ ♔f7 24.♕g6+ ♗e6 25.♖d1+–.
19...♖xh3, developing his final piece, would have given Black a sound position with good counter play. 20.♖d1 (20.♖g1!? ♕h4⇆) 20...♕c8! 21.♘xe4 ♕e6 22.♖e1 ♗xe6♕ Black's compensation in the endgame is quite full – for the moment it's hard to imagine White's extra pawn on h2 making a difference in the final result.
20.♖d1! Black's rook on h4 does serve one crucial function – defending his advanced pawn on e4. White needs to create immediate threats to take advantage of his momentary opportunity, but now Black isn't in time to coordinate.
20...♕e8 20...♗xh3 21.♗xf6 ♕e8 22.♗d4±.
20...♕f8!? may have been the best attempt, though it's far from a free ride for Black after 21.♖g1! ♕h7 22.♖g3±.
21.♖g1! The check on f4 means Black has to slide his king over to the h-file. There are no happy choices.
21...♕h7 Upon 21...♔h6, the problem is 22.♘f4!, with g8 left unprotected. 22...♗f5 (22...gxf4? 23.♖g8+–) 23.♘fd5±.
22.♘d5 22.♖g3!? first may have been a bit stronger, simply covering the pawn on h3 and preparing for ♘d5 soon. 22...f5 23.♖d2 ♖h6 24.♘d5 ♗e6 25.♗c3 ♖d8 26.♕d1±.
22...♗e6 23.♘ec3 ♖d8! A nice idea, though Oparin didn't manage to follow it up properly. The knight on d5 needs to be undermined.

24.♗xf6

24...♗xd5?? Going in for an imbalance of two minor pieces vs. rook usually makes sense, but as will soon become clear Black's king is too open. The rooks are better able to do their job here than in a normal closed middlegame. 24...♕f7!, putting more pressure on the d5 knight, leaves White with a ton of pawns for the piece after 25.♗xe7 ♘xe7 26.♘xb7 ♖bd5 27.♗xf7+ ♗xf7 28.♖xg5 ♔h6! 29.♗e5 ♖h5 30.♖xh5+ ♗xh5 31.♘xe4±, but as of yet problematic winning chances.
25.♘xd5 ♖xd5 26.♖xd5 ♗xf6 27.♖g1 ♗b7+ ♗g6 28.♕b5! With a capture on g5 imminent Robson was winning, and managed to convert despite a slight scare. **White won** in 14 moves.

Group B, on the other hand, proved to be a rather different story altogether. With a number of strong GMs supplanted by a quartet of promising IMs it seemed the question of overall victory would mainly be a matter of who could most efficiently take apart the less predictable contingent. Interestingly though, the eventually winners took a rather different path to the same end result.

GM-elect Andy Woodward – no longer a young underdog but simply the top seed! – started off powerfully and achieved two early wins against GMs who seemed likely to be his main contenders. An unexpected upset but well-deserved loss to IM Brewington Hardaway (who would finish tied for third) kept him from running away with it though. Andy's fast start gave him some cushion, but that soon ran out, and he needed a vital last round win to join the tie for first at 6½/9.

GM Steven Zierk, on the other hand, started the tournament a bit sluggishly, including a loss to Woodward, but picked up the pace when it mattered most, recording a 4/5 finish. He was especially dominant against underperforming adversaries, scoring three wins against the bottom contingent, but also took important points from two of the third–place finishers.

At the end of the day the two leaders proved each other's equal, a point ahead of the rest – that meant it was time for blitz playoffs. I wonder why Rapid games weren't

contested first before resorting to faster time controls, but as it went the "chess roulette" fell Zierk's way. After a near-loss in the first game he used a frisky Jobava London to take over the initiative and soon exploit his (presumably tired!) opponent's decisive blunders in an otherwise level position.

Las Vegas, NV

May 31–June 4, 2024
1000GM LAS VEGAS INVITATIONAL – GM A
(10-player round-robin)

1 Robby KEVLISHVILI (NED)	7
2 Emilio CORDOVA (PER)	6½
3–4 Cristhian CRUZ (PER), Varun KRISHNAN	6
5 Joseph LEVINE	5
6 Grayson RORRER	3½
7–8 Isaac WANG, Martin CERVENY (CZE)	3
9–10 Pranav SATHISH, Vishva NANUGONDA	2½

I had great aspirations to start the summer on a high note. 1000GM, in partnership with the Las Vegas Chess Festival, organized Invitational Round Robins before and after the flagship National Open, and after a couple of months without the opportunity to compete I was more than ready to show the fruits of my labor. On my itinerary was first a GM Invitational and, starting a day later, the National Open, where I intended to score the final IM Norm I need from a Swiss – and subsequently the title. Right from the start, though, it was clear as day that the 1000GM Las Vegas GM Invitational was not to be my tournament.

Nominally I was by far the highest rated Norm seeker, but after a hard landing with three losses out of the gate, I was left aghast at what could have possibly gone so wrong. From the middlegame positions I would have expected to reasonably score 2/3 or so, but grisly blunders were creeping in and ruining otherwise fine games. I finally got on the board with a win the next day but was appalled at how even then I gave away a winning position and would have taken another loss, had my opponent shown proper opportunism.

It was a gift, but not enough for a full revival – two weak losses with the Black pieces followed, leaving me at a miserly 2/7 heading into the final day of play. An unexpected resurgent last day gave me a nice win as Black and a near-miss against GM Emilio Cordova, where I had a winning endgame but gave it away in one careless moment. It helped my overall mood but didn't do too much to wash away the bad taste.

I recovered enough to finish top of the bottom half, but no better than that. FM Varun Krishnan earned an IM Norm with 6/9 and touched 2398 live before sadly losing rating later in the month. Otherwise, the invited GMs were dominant, occupying the first three places as expected.

Varun Krishnan	2340
Grayson Rorrer	2409

1000GM Las Vegas GM Norm Invitational 2024
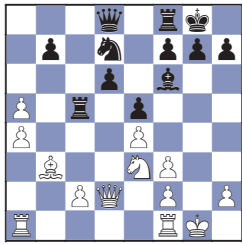
Coming from a sharp, theoretical Najdorf my opponent and I have traded mistakes, but eventually ended up in a difficult position to judge at the board. Black has been forced to give away a pawn, but seeks compensation in the crippled kingside and potential for play on the dark squares.

19...♗g5! A good start – counterplay desperately needs to be generated.

20.♖fd1 Natural enough. But Black's doing fine in more than one way.

20.a6!? would have been an interesting attempt too, trading the extra pawn for an improved structure, but Black keeps sufficient counter chances with energetic measures. 20...♔f4! 21.♖fd1 ♕h4 22.♔f1 (22.♖xd6 ♕xh2+ 23.♔f1 ♗xe3 24.fxe3 ♕g3∞) 22...bxa6 23.♘g2 ♗xd2 24.♖xh4 ♗c3 25.♖a2 ♘b8! 26.♖xd6 ♘c6∞.

20.♖xd6!? could be strongest after all, but it's very hard to determine during the game. 20...♖c6
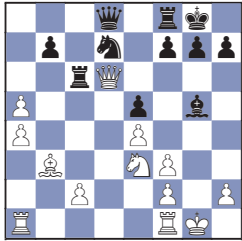
A) 21.♕d5?! ♗f4 gives Black very good compensation, since putting the knight on g3 runs into a ...♘f6–h5 tempo. 22.♖fd1 (22.♘g2 ♖g6 23.♖fd1 ♕g5 24.♔f1 ♕xg2+ 25.♔e2 ♗g5! 26.♕xd7 ♕h4 27.♖f1 ♖f6∞ is a crazy line where White isn't able to consolidate.; 22.♘f5? ♕g5+ 23.♘g3 ♖f6 24.♕d3 ♘h5)

22...♕g5+ 23.♔f1 ♘c5∞.

B) 21.♕d1! The best square, for subtle reasons, but it wasn't an easy find. 21...♗f4 22.♘f5! Right on time to defend. But surprisingly Black keeps close to full compensation with the unnatural 22...g6!? (22...♕g5+!? 23.♘g3 ♘c5 24.♗d5 ♖h6 25.♔g2 ♕h4 26.♖h1 ♘e6! isn't totally clear either, but White is closer to consolidation.) 23.♘g3 ♕c7 24.♗d5 ♖a6∞, when Black will remain down a pawn but with strong compensation on the a file. White's split queenside structure seems the most important factor, and potential for opposite-colored bishops play of course.

20...♕f6?? An inexplicable oversight that ended the struggle at once. Black is on the verge of simply dead lost in the endgame, with far less active pieces.

20...♖c6!? 21.♗d5 ♖c7 22.♖ab1 ♘c5∞ is strangely keeping full compensation too, but it's not a very natural sequence.
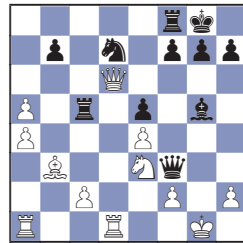
20...♗xe3!? was actually an idea I had seen during the game, only through a different move order... Inexplicably I didn't pick up on its immediate application.
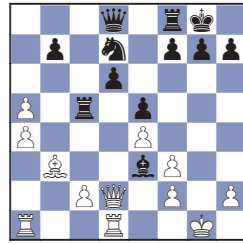
A) 21.♕xe3 ♕c7 22.♕d2 (22.♖d5 ♖a8!) 22...♖c6 will win the pawn back soon, with a fine game.

B) 21.fxe3 ♕f6! is the entire point, and Black snatches a perpetual. 22.♖xd6 (22.♔g2?! ♖fc8!; 22.♖f1 ♖fc8 23.♖ad1 ♖8c6∞) 22...♕xf3 23.♕xd7 ♕xe3+=.

21.♕xd6 ♗xe3 21...♕xf3

A) 22.♕xd7?? ♗xe3 23.♖xf7+ (23. fxe3 ♕xe3+) 23...♖xf7 24.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 25.♖d8+ ♖f8 26.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 27.fxe3 ♖xa5= gives full compensation in the endgame.

B) 22.♘f5! was part of what I had missed. 22...♕g4+ 23.♘g3+– White's pieces have come to life.

22.♕xf6 22.fxe3?? ♕xf3 was my idea, getting back to 20...♗xe3 at once...

22...♗xf2+ Otherwise Black suffers from a material deficit on top of the positional defects.

23.♔xf2 ♘xf6 24.♖d6 ♖xa5 25.♖g1! A powerful move I had completely overlooked in advance. White's forcing an important concession, and I wasn't able to put up much resistance.
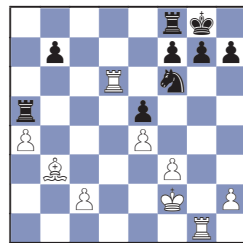
25...♖a6?! 25...♔h8 26.♖b6 ♖b8 is winning for White in more than one way, but at least he has to make a choice. (26...♖a7 27.♖d1+–) 27.♖xf7 ♖xf7! (27.♖d1!?+–) 27...♖xa4 28.♗b3 ♖d4 29.♘e6 ♗d7 30.♖e7+–. **26.♖xa6 bxa6 27.♖d1 a5?** Black has very little hope anyway, but now all the pawns are dropping. 27...♖a8 28.a5 ♔f8 29.♖d6 ♗e7 30.♖c6 ♖a7 31.♘e3+– does nothing

besides prolong the inevitable. **28.♖d6 ♖a8 29.♖c6 h5** 29...♘e8 30.♖c5+–. **30.♖c7!** Enough is enough.

Black resigned

A good effort from my opponent in an important theoretical game, but it's easy to see I didn't make it very hard on him.

New York, NY

July 9–14, 2024
1000GM NY SIX DAY SUMMER INVITATIONAL – GM A
(10-player round-robin)

1 Safal BORA	7
2 Djurabek KHAMRAKULOV (UZB)	6
3 Vojtech PLAT (CZE)	5½
4–5 Oliver BARBOSA (PHI), Raja PANJWANI (CAN)	5
6–7 Grayson RORRER, Nico CHASIN	4
8 Aleksandr OSTROVSKIY	3½
9 Akira NAKADA	3
10 Gus HUSTON	3

July 9–14, 2024
1000GM NY SIX DAY SUMMER INVITATIONAL – GM B
(10-player round-robin)

1 Azer MIRZOEV (AZE)	6
2 Aleksandr LENDERMAN	5½
3–5 Maximillian LU, Liam PUTNAM, Aaron JACOBSON	5
6–7 Gabor NAGY (HUN), Robert SHLYAKHTENKO	4½
8 Sohum LOHIA (ENG)	4
9 Aaron MENDES (CAN)	3
10 Tanitoluwa ADEWUMI	2½

July 9–14, 2024
1000GM NY SIX DAY SUMMER INVITATIONAL – IM C
(10-player round-robin)

1 Levy ROZMAN	8
2 Danila POLLIANIKOV	7
3 Maxim NOVIK (LTU)	6
4–5 Aleksandar SAVANOVIC (BIH), Eugene YOO	4½
6–9 Megan LEE, Logan BRAIN, James NGUYEN, Vikram RAJMOHAN (ENG)	3
10 Alexander KRETCHETOV (RUS)	2

New York has historically not been a happy location for me – I had two of my worst performances of all time there, and only had one modestly decent result to speak of. Heading into the NY Six Day Summer

Invitationals – their first event at that length – I was more than ready to erase past failures, and also show what I believe to be my true potential after a disastrous, heartbreaking conclusion to my stay in Las Vegas.

I took part in GM A, in an unexpected role – for the first time in recognizable memory I would be the bottom seed. It's likely only by a couple of points, it was still great motivation to prove that wasn't a deserved placement at all! Especially as I didn't (and don't) consider myself inferior in strength to any of the participants. Call it hubris or healthy confidence.

The start was on point, with a shaky full point, but after that for the second time in a row I inexplicably suffered three losses in a row – incidentally, to the eventual top three finishers, but it does nothing to lessen the severity of the blows. I was playing better than before and creating good chances, but still letting them slip away. 1½/3 would have been quite reasonable, but as it was, I once again had to make up for an early deficit.

After using the White pieces to force a quick draw and stabilize (the only time I've ever done such), I was able to recover my form and finished respectably with three draws and a solitary win. I missed one win in time pressure and could have played for an edge in the last game too, but overall, I have to be happy with my play after an initial disaster. The final result of 4/9 wasn't what I had hoped for but was nonetheless far from a disaster. I even gained a marginal amount of rating, having played a number of interesting games that provide great material to learn from.

As is standard, one player took over from start to finish, even

exceeding the GM Norm score by half a point – IM Safal Bora showed an extremely steady hand throughout and could have even won two games that ended up drawn. Even so, he scored a superb 7/9, entering the last round needing a draw but even beating experienced GM Oliver Barbosa as Black when his opponent became over ambitious! It's his third Norm and fulfills FIDE's GM title requirements for a Six Day Norm – precisely why the tournament was six days long. Now he just needs rating – very well done!

Oliver Barbosa	2482
Safal Bora	2466

1000GM Six Day Summer GM Invitational, New York 2024
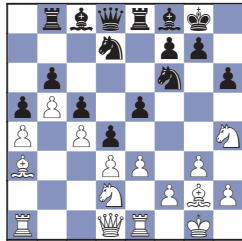
The opening hadn't gone very well for Black up to this point, but **15.♗d5?** was a massive oversight that turned the tables around.

15.♗c6! was the right way of carrying out White's planned operation. Once the knight on h4 makes its way back into the game he'll have a small but clear edge, e.g. 15...♗b7 16.e4 g6 17.♗xb7 ♖xb7 18.♘g2±, planning ♘e4 soon. Even more importantly, though, the cramped nature of Black's position and one-sided play would have been uncomfortable indeed for a player needing to draw on demand.

15...dxe4 16.fxe4 ♘xd5 17.cxd5 e4! The idea behind Black's exchanging operation. e4 from White would have consolidated a strong passer on d5, but he isn't given time.

18.♗b2 Keeping Black's knight away from f6 isn't an unreasonable try. 18.dxe4 was probably the best try, but even so 18...♘f6 19.♕c2 ♕e7 20.♗b2 ♘xe4 21.♕xe4 ♘xe4 22.♘xe4 ♖xe4 23.♘f3 ♗b7 24.♘d2 ♖b4! 25.♗e5 ♖c8 26.e4 ♖f‡ leaves White with an unpleasant defense ahead.
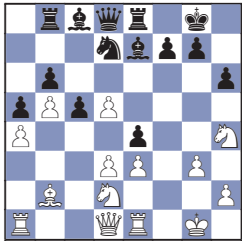
18...♗e7!? Trying to simplify the position is a natural impulse, given the circumstances!

18...exd3 19.♘c4 ♘f6 would seem to give White more activity than he's entitled but should also be nicer for Black. It complicates the game though, and requires exact calculation to be sure of. 20.e4!? (20.♗xf6?? ♕xd5 might be hard to spot from afar too, point being 21.♗e5 ♕xc4 22.♗xb8 ♗g4–+)
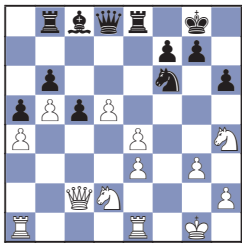
| Las Vegas, NV ... |

Lewisville, TX

June 7–9, 2024
3RD ANNUAL GOLDEN OPEN
(7 rounds, 43 participants)

1 Christopher REPKA (SVK)	6
2 Sharvesh DEVIPRASATH	5½
3–5 Brian ESCALANTE (PER), Barret WINCHELL, Advay SINGI	5
6–12 Harshit RAJA (IND), Atharva BIST, Saathvik DASARI, Harish CHANDRAN, Rahul MYNALA, Nandini PRAKASH, Shaurya MAZUMDAR	4½
13–16 Andrew ZHANG, Rusheel NIGUDKAR, Aarav THILOP, Lawrence ZHANG	4
17–26 Devin MARTINS, Alfonso VIRGEN, Julian JOSEPH, Shawn ADAMS, Rishi KOLLI, Rithul DHANEKULA, Evan BATES, Srihas MADDIPATI, Miransh VYAS, Surya KUNDURTHI	3½
27–30 Ellery ZHANG, Jason WANG, Deven SOMAYA, Victor ORTIZ	3
31–36 James UKOLI, Asha KUMAR, Ben AUSTIN, Dhruva RAVISHANKAR, Vidhun GANESAN, Viraj MAZUMDAR	2½
etc.	

Middleburg Heights, OH

June 7–9, 2024
17TH ANNUAL CCA CLEVELAND OPEN
(5 rounds, 32 participants)

1 Bryan SMITH	4½
2–3 Anant ADURY, Ralph TAN	4
4–6 Justin STORN, Sharath RADHAKRISHNAN, Jesse REN	3½
7–12 Jay BONIN, Michael TAKAHASHI, Anshul SHETTY, Nabil FELIACHI, Peter GILRUTH, Zane EISEN	3
13–18 Dalton PERRINE, Henri ZANDWEGHE, Charles TROUTMAN, Lerui ZHENG, Freyr WANG, Aryan SHRIGADI	2½
19–26 Brett PASSEN, Marcus ZHENG, Rocky WANG, Vidyuth KAMESH, Abhinav PULLABHOTLA, Arjun SONI, Lambjon SALIHAJ, Andre YANG	2
27–29 Amogh TRIPATHI, Minghao GU, Lucy GAO	1½
etc.	

Windsor Locks, CT

June 7–9, 2024
32ND ANNUAL EASTERN CLASS
(5 rounds, 28 participants)

1 Nathaniel MOOR	4
2–5 Daniel GIRSH, Qi PANG, Iris MOU, Roman RYCHKOV	3½
6–12 Maximillian LU, Ansh SHAH (IND), Maxim FARBEROV, Jasmine SU, Sameer MUJUMDAR, Michael UWAKWE, Matthew SHIH	3
13–17 Bryan WETSZ, Robert NEWBOLD, Henry HE, William WU, Alexander MENG	2½
18–24 Danila POLLIANIKOV, Jordan GROFF, Luc HOFFMAN, Sahana ARAVINDAKSHAN, Dattasai KILARI, Ryan YOUNG, Chenxuan LING	2
etc.	

Charlotte, NC

June 7–10, 2024
CAROLINAS CLASSIC
(5 rounds, 52 participants)

1–2 Minh LE (VIE), Sergey ERENBURG	4½
3–6 Julio SADORRA, Julio BECERRA, Hersh SINGH, Thomas KUNG	4
7–11 Sabina FOISOR, Dina BELENKAYA (ISR), Advaith KARTHIK, Matthew DIAO, Roman RYCHKOV	3½
12–19 Joseph TRUELSON, Jacorey BRYANT, Samuel COPELAND, Nitesh CHERUKURI, Andrew JING, Will MOORHOUSE, Roger SHI, Owen LEVINE	3
20–33 Naveen PRABHU, Alex CHEN, Neo ZHU, Adharsh RAJAGOPAL, Zubin BALIGA, Huga NAM, Damian KROTOV, Andrew WU, Chloe GAW, Sritej SATTARU, Aaryan DESHPANDE, Tori PORAT, Nirav NATHA, Artemii KHANBUTAEV	2½
34–39 Ruoxiao XIA, Danil Mcquillin, Sri BONDALAPATI, Ian BROIHIER, Uthra PAKKIRISAMY, Luke ANATOL	2
40–48 Dominique MYERS, Kimon DIVARIS	etc.

Temecula, CA

June 13–16, 2024
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAMPIONSHIP
(8-player round-robin)

1–2 Vladimir AKOPIAN, Cemil ALI MARANDI (TUR)	5
3 Robert SHLYAKHTENKO	4½
4 Melikset KHACHIYAN	4
5–6 John BRYANT, Eduard HAKOBYAN	3
7 Alexander COSTELLO	2½
8 Gabriel EIDELMAN	1

Marlborough, MA

June 15–16, 2024
NEW ENGLAND CLASS CHAMPIONSHIP – MASTER/EXPERT
(5 rounds, 22 participants)

1–2 Jianchao ZHOU (CHN), Alexander IVANOV	4
3–5 Maximillian LU, Eric FENG, Christopher CHASE	3½
6–8 Franklin LEWIS, Akshay PADMANABHAN, David MASHKOV	3
9–13 Yury BARNAKOV, Michael UWAKWE, Kevin ZHAO, Charlie CRESWELL, Yuze JI	2½
14–17 Joseph TRUELSON, Zachary PAN, Frank CAO, Sergey MALININ	2
etc.	

Lisle, IL

June 20–23, 2024
U.S. CADET CHAMPIONSHIP
(8-player round-robin)

1 Tanitoluwa ADEWUMI	6
2 Ryo CHEN	4
3–4 Bach NGO, Ryan SUN	3½
5–6 Erick ZHAO, Zoey TANG	3
7–8 Eric LIU, Isaac WANG	2½

Kevin ZHAO, Jacob STOLL, Sanjay KUMAR, Vihaan PENDSE, Karthikeya MALIREDDY, Aditya RAMKUMAR, Justin TREY ... 1½ etc.

18...exd3 continued:

A) 22.♖xd6?? ♗xe3 23.♖xf7+ (23. fxe3 ♕xe3+) 23...♖xf7 24.♗xf7+ ♖xf7 25.♖d8+ ♖f8 26.♖xf8+ ♔xf8 27.fxe3 ♖xa5= gives full compensation in the endgame.

18...exd3 ...

The opening hadn't gone very well for Black up to this point, but 15.♗d5? was a massive oversight that turned the tables around.

▲ Varun Krishnan

▼ Safal Bora

20...♖xe4 21.♖xe4 ♘xe4 22.♕xd3 ♘d6 23.♗e5 ♗h3∓.

19.♘xe4?? A hard decision to understand. White's kingside weaknesses will come back to haunt him.

19.dxe4 ♘f6 20.♗xf6 ♘xf6 21.♕c2 had to be played. The pawn on e4 will fall in the long run, but in the meantime White can hope to complicate the game.

A) 21...♖h3!? puts White under more pressure, but also looks harder to handle, e.g. 22.♖ac1 ♖b7 (22...♗c8 23.♘hf3) 23.♘hf3, with obscure play. Black may be forced to give up an exchange, which takes courage!

B) 21...♕e7!? might have been Black's choice in this game, clarifying the position. 22.♗f5 ♗xf5 23.exf5 ♘xd5 24.♘c4 ♖ed8=.

19...♗xh4 20.gxh4 ♘e5! Evidently the shot Barbosa had missed. But now his position goes

▼ Grayson Rorrer

to pieces – the knight on e5 creates deadly kingside threats, not giving White enough time to regroup. 20...♕xh4?? 21.♖e2, on the other hand, defends quite effectively. 21...♘e5 22.♗g2 ♗g4 23.♕f1∞ turns into a mess.

21.♗xe5?! A hard impulse to resist, but the bishop on b2 was White's only strong piece. That said, 21.♘f2 ♕xd5 22.e4 ♕d8–+ is also lost in the long run.

21...♖xe5 22.♕f3 ♖xd5 23.♕g3 ♖b7 Bora was easily winning, and methodically converted the full point without much trouble. **Black won in 26 moves.**

| Grayson Rorrer | 2391 |
| Akira Nakada | 2412 |

1000GM Six Day Summer GM Invitational, New York 2024

21.♖d1?! An impulsive move that seems to win on the spot, but I should have been able to see through that illusion!

21.♘xg6 at once was far simpler, when a number of tactical themes I hadn't picked up on decide the outcome.

A) 21...♖h7 22.♖d1 ♗c8 23.♗b4!+– is another nice shot. The e4 pawn falls, and the extra pieces only accentuate White's superiority.

B) 21...♖h5 22.♖d1 ♖b8 23.♖xb8+ ♗xb8 24.h4+–.

C) 21...♖g8 22.♖d1 ♖b8 (22...♗c8 23.♖xd6 ♗xb7 24.♘e5+– is a beautiful example of utter dominance.) 23.♖xd7! ♗xd7 24.♗e7+–. The big difference over what came to pass in the game. White wins with ease.

21...♖b8! A creative resource. White's task isn't so easy after all. **22.♖xb8+** 22.♖xa7?? ♗c5+–+ would be a brutal turnaround. **22...♗xb8 23.♘xg6 ♖g8 24.♔f2 ♗c7**
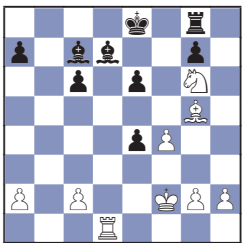
An important moment. Of course White has to be winning, but Black's potential for counter play can't be underestimated either. I had the presence of mind to pause and take up a large chunk of my remaining clock time.

25.♗e3 c5 26.♖b1! A nice solution. Other moves should win too, but not as easily.

26...♗a4!? 26...♗f7 27.♖b7 ♗xg6 28.♖xc7+– picks up two pawns, and with them the game. As long as rooks stay on the board opposite-colored bishops have no importance. **27.♖b7!?** With a clear draw in hand, I decided to eat up my last reserves of clock time searching for the elusive win. Time well spent! 27.♗c7! ♖h8 28.♖b7 ♗d7 29.f5! exf5 30.c4+– would have been a pretty way to cap off a good game. Black is completely paralyzed. **27...♗d7 28.♖xa7 ♗xc2 29.♘e5+ ♔c8 30.♗e7!?** What I had decided on beforehand. It was enough to keep a decisive advantage, and after

some time trouble adventures **White won** in 20 moves.

30.♖a8+! ♗b8 31.♘c6 ♗b7 32.♖xb8+ ♖xb8 33.♘xb8 ♔xb8 was my initial "draw in hand." but interestingly it would have been an even cleaner win for White, since he has the capacity to force decisive weaknesses – 34.♗e7! c4 35.♗f8 g6 36.♗d4+–.

To touch on the other sections covered, GM B was fairly harsh for the Norm seekers, with only FM Liam Putnam achieving an unneeded fourth IM Norm. He'll be happier with the 17 point rating gain that puts him right on the 2400 threshold. IM C featured popular streamer IM Levy Rozman, or Gotham Chess, who had his games broadcast with a camera. He dominated the tournament and eventually finished with an overwhelming 8/9, while FM Danila Poliannikov was close behind at 7/9, securing his third and final IM Norm in the process.

A notable bright spot in an otherwise unremarkable tournament came in my seventh round game. I had lost against my opponent before and was eager to take revenge. A rare opening idea worked quite well, and I was able to take over the initiative right from the very first moves. 16.♘f3-h4 was objectively a mistake, overlooking an immediate win, but not forfeiting all of White's advantage. Moreover, it provoked a practically decisive error.

16...♗d7?? Black's pieces will be vulnerable, stacked on the d-file as they are.

16...♖xh4! was of course the only chance. I had planned to follow up with 17.♕f3+! ♗g8 18.♗xh4 e5 19.♗g3±, when White keeps reasonable winning chances, but it isn't clear if he'll actually be able to crack Black's broad center and pair of bishops.

17.♖ab1 ♕e5 18.f4! 18.♕xg6+?? would be an impulsive material grab, but luckily I spotted 18...♗g8 19.f4 ♕e3+ 20.♔h1 ♗e8∞, when White can't avoid an unfavorable queen swap.

18...♕e4 18...♗c5+ 19.♔h1 ♗c7 desperately attempts to defend the seventh rank, but 20.♘xg6+– doesn't lessen the severity of Black's difficulties.

19.♕xe4 dxe4 20.♖b7 ♗e8 20...♗c5+?! 21.♔h1 ♗e8 22.♖d1+– would only serve to make a bad position worse. I made sure the e4 pawn couldn't do any damage, but on its own the passer is quite toothless.

The Continental Chess Association regularly holds fairly small five or seven round events throughout the U.S. but also has a number of larger events that draw big prizes and big names. The World Open is their landmark tournament, aptly named since the huge prize fund quite literally draws players from all over the world. Before getting into the action, though, one can't pass over the Philadelphia International without a mention. While definitely lacking some strength at the top, for many players it serves as a much welcome warmup before the major event.

Typically for a large Swiss, it took some time for the cream of the crop to separate themselves, but eventually the leading pack clarified itself. GM-elect Andy Woodward, fresh off a victory in St. Louis and also the Universal Open, started fast with 3½/4 and distinguished himself in the next games with vital wins over GMs Jianchao Zhou and Fidel Corrales, taking over pole position.

After slowing down a bit with two draws Woodward was caught by GMs Corrales and Rahul Peddi, but fate dealt him a less challenging final round pairing while his rivals could do no more than draw against each other. After a suspicious opening Andy took over and won "to order," finishing alone in first place with 7½/9 – another in a recent string of fantastic triumphs for the talented young GM.

| Anthony Atanasov | 2407 |
| Andy Woodward | 2523 |

Philadelphia International 2024

Coming from yet another Najdorf where Black chose to enter into complications a bit prematurely, White has been afforded a temporary window of opportunity

▲ Andy Woodward

– with pieces hanging all over the board, how could he have posed problems?

14.♘b6? Grabbing an exchange is natural, but in thematic fashion Black easily gets more than sufficient compensation.

14.♘xe4! ♗xc4 15.♗xc4 was quite dangerous. Black would have been faced with a tough choice.

A) 15...♘xe4! looks best, but also feels very hard to play. 16.♗xf7+!? (16.♕d5!? ♘g5 17.♗b6 ♕c6 18.0-0-0 0-0 19.♖he1 ♗e6 20.♗b3± was another approach to the position, when White has promising compensation.) 16...♔xf7 17.♕d5+ ♔f6! 18.fxe4 ♖hf8 19.0-0+ ♗g6 20.c4 ♗h7± White keeps an iron grip over the position and a safe, small edge.

14...♘xc3 15.♗xa8 ♕d8 16.bxc3 ♖xa8 The last couple of forced moves have left Black with fantastic play for the exchange – an extra central pawn and White's ugly doubled c-pawns. Objectively the position is equal but it's clear who the play lies with.

17.♗d3 ♗c8!? Getting the queen back into play makes perfect sense. 17...♘d5!? could have been another way to reach the game position, e.g. 18.♕d2 ♗c8.

18.♕d2 Defending the pawn has logic to it, considering that White's material edge is his only trump card in the position. But the weakling on c3 doesn't have long to live in any case.

18.0-0 might have been a more practical decision. Play is balanced but complex after 18...♗xc3 (18...♗d5 19.♕d2 0-0 is also playable.) 19.♕d2 ♗c8 20.c4 ♗f7 0-0 21.♔h1∞.

18...♘d5 19.0-0 19.c4 ♘xe3 20.♕xe3 ♕c7!?↑, with ...d5 soon, looks rather risky for White, whose pieces haven't come to life.

19...0-0 20.f4?? After holding

the line for a time White couldn't stand the pressure any longer. His position makes a gruesome impression, and it's easy to seek impulsive activity.

Hard as it was, White had to swallow his pride and enter into defense with 20.♕e1! ♕xc3 21.♗d2 ♕c7 22.c4 ♘f6 23.♗e3∞. White's dropping pawns like flies, but hopes to get his rook active on the seventh rank. It should be sufficient.
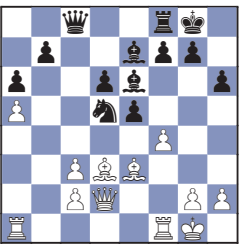
20...e4! A nice resource. The pawn is immune on account of deadly pressure along the g1-a7 diagonal, and otherwise Black establishes a menacing protected passer.

21.♗e2 21.♗xe4? ♘xe3 22.♖xe3 d5–+ was the tactical justification. Also 21.f5 ♗xf5 22.♗e2 ♘xc3–+ wouldn't have been much help either.

21...♘xc3 White's position was thoroughly devastated. **Black won in 13 moves.**

| Jianchao Zhou | 2574 |
| Andy Woodward | 2523 |

Philadelphia International 2024
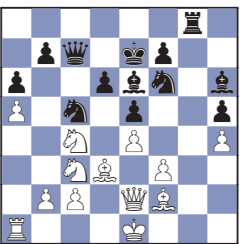
Andy has outplayed his strong GM opponent straight from the opening, but missed some better chances to put the game away. He's now faced with a far from easy choice: how to keep the pressure on?

23...♖g2!? A forcing, powerful move. White's position is tied up in pins, and practically it proved impossible to keep his head above the water.

23...♘d3+! 24.cxd3 ♗f8! was even stronger, but far from an easy idea to spot and understand. Black's point can be seen in 25.♘e3 ♗d8!∓, when White's coordination is far from ideal.

24.♘b6?? Eyeing the d5 square looks natural enough, but White doesn't have enough time to grip the juicy outpost with ♗c4 next. That said, 24.♘e3 ♖h2 25.♕f1

xd3+ 26.cxd3 ♖xe3 27.♗xe3 ♖xb2∓ snatches a clean pawn, with no end to White's troubles in sight. 24.♕f1 was the best defensive chance, when Black can either send his rook further into enemy territory or choose to withdraw it. 24...♖h2!? looks the most emblematic of Black's play so far! (*24...♘xd3+ 25.cxd3 ♖g6∓*, with ...d5 soon, also keeps the pressure on.) 25.♕g1 ♖h3 26.♕g2 ♔f8 27.♖d1 ♘xd3+ 28.cxd3 ♕c6∓.

24...♖h2 A good start - first Black threatens a decisive invasion on h1. **25.♕f1 ♘xd3+! 26.cxd3** Black keeps a superior position even with slower moves, but a beautiful combination exists in the position. I have no doubt Andy spotted it before executing 24...♖h2. Try to find the idea before moving on!
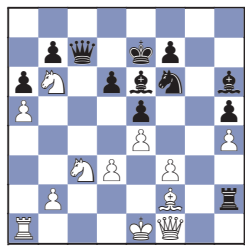
26...♕c5!! The "MOVE" that breaks White's resistance. A beautiful mating net appears seemingly out of nowhere. 26...♗f4??∓ would have been unpardonably slothful. **27.♕g1** Zhou might as well have just put 27.♗xc5 ♗d2+ 28.♔d1 ♗b3 mate on the board, to complete the picture. **27...♗d2+! 28.♔xd2 ♖xf2+ 29.♘e2 ♖xf3 30.♕xc5 dxc5 31.♖c1 ♔d6**
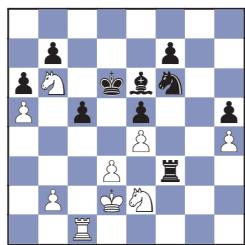
White managed to salvage his king, a herculean task in itself, but his position in the endgame is devastated. **Black won** in ten moves.

After that it was on to the World Open – for many the most important and prestigious tournament on the calendar. In recent years it's been plenty common for numerous strong GMs to power ahead and subsequently fail to outpace each other, resulting in ties at the top. The last two editions have summarily bucked that trend, though.

After starting with 2/2 GM Awonder Liang suffered an early

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upset loss to IM Sam Schmakel, which would seem to practically end his chances at victory. Surprisingly, though, he picked himself up and "simply" won the remaining six rounds, which turned the tournament into a walkover! It certainly wasn't all smooth, but Awonder scored important wins over defending champion GM Fidel Corrales and new aspirant GM Vasif Durarbayli – fresh off a win at the National Open – ruining both their tournaments in the process.

His hard work could have been all undone in the final round, but a smooth win over English self-proclaimed "amateur" GM Luke McShane was the cherry on top. 8/9 was nearly the highest winning score in the event's history, and certainly in modern times! Tied for second were GMs Viktor Matviishen, Arthur Guo, Mikhail Antipov and surprise IM-elect Joseph Zeltsan, the latter two of whom won their last two games "on command" to leap up into higher company. A big group finished half a point further back, with a few surprising names.

It isn't possible to do such a massive tournament justice in the space we have, especially with limited games broadcast on DGT boards – a few fragments from games that had an impact at the top will have to suffice.

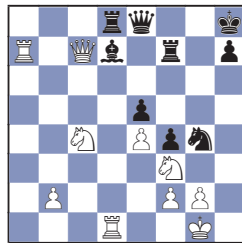| Awonder Liang	2648
Luke McShane	2617

World Open, Philadelphia 2024
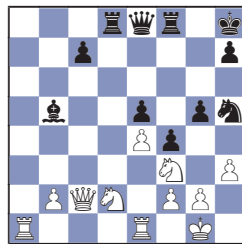
23...♘f6!? Since the opening Black has been thoroughly outplayed. The game isn't over until both players sign the scoresheet though, and McShane takes his last chance at opening the kingside and starting an attack. **24.♕xc7 g4 25.hxg4 ♘xg4 26.♖a7 ♗d7?** A final mistake that condemns Black to complete passivity. 26...♖d7 27.♕a5 ♕d8!?+− is objectively winning for White, but some nervous moments remain. As long as the knight stays on g4 there will always be threats against his king. **27.♖d1 ♗f7** 27...♘f6 28.♘f1+− changes little. **28.♘c4!** Otherwise White's active queen might have been driven away. But now the struggle concludes.

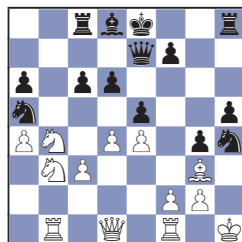challenging approach.) 27...0-0 28.♕d3 ♘g6 29.♕e3♙ promises a complicated fight ahead. I would favor White, who has a nice outpost on f5 and prospects of opening the f-file with f4 coming soon. **26...dxe5 27.♘xa5 ♗xa5 28.♘xc6!?** Otherwise White's operation would seem to have little point. 28.♘c2!♙ would again have made a strong alternative. **28...♖xc6 29.♕d5 ♖e6**
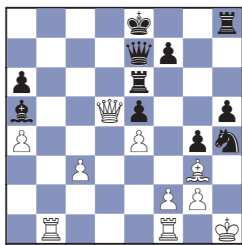
30.♗xe5?? A hideous oversight that taints an otherwise well-fought battle. 30.♕xa5 0-0 31.♗xh4! ♕xh4+ 32.♔g1∞ looks easier for Black, but White has his trumps, too. **30...0-0!** Not just Durarbayli, I was also shocked when my opponent unexpectedly castled in a recent game, with no kingside cover. It's an easy oversight to make, but this instance is especially harsh since Black is simply left with a fairly safe king and extra material. **31.♖b7 ♕g5 32.♗g3 ♗d8!** **33.c4 ♘g6** With his consolidation campaign complete, **Black won** in 15 moves.

Mikhail Antipov	2602
Victor Mikhalevski	2499

World Open, Philadelphia 2024
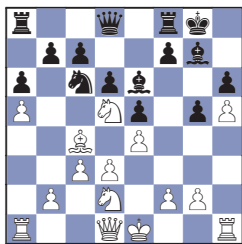
Before the final day GM Antipov had slowed down a bit with three draws in quick succession. But a win in the eighth round gave him a good chance to finish at or near the top in this, the final game. White has good chances to play for an advantage. **15...♘xa5?!** A thematic transition in Italian structures, but this time White can prevent the liquidation of his d5 outpost. The d5 knight is a thorn in Black's side.

With that in mind, it's possible to liquidate it off tactically – 15...♗xd5! 16.♗xd5 ♘e7! 17.♗xb7?! (*17.♗b3 d5±*) 17...♖a7 18.♗d5 ♘xd5 19.exd5 ♕a8 20.c4 f5♙ promises a messy game. But

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11-year-old Daniela Fitzsimmons Beats A National Master

We are always happy to hear about the success of our subscribers, especially the youngest ones! Just a couple of days before we went to print, Daniela Fitzsimmons reached her first milestone by beating a National Master and increasing her rating above 1800. This all happened at a FIDE-rated tournament in Virginia, only two days after she turned 11!

Daniela learned to play chess at the age of 5 from her father, Daniel, who was her first coach. Apart from playing chess and reading ACM, Daniela enjoys swimming and will be joining the swim team at her new middle school.

Congratulations to Daniela, and we wish her much success in her future endeavors!

A25

Victor Sawhney-Duran	2142
Daniela Fitzsimmons	1729

DMV Summer FIDE Premier, Chantilly, VA 2024
Notes by Daniela Fitzsimmons

**1.c4 e5 2.g3 f5** I decided to play a Reverse Grand Prix Style against the English Opening as I was looking for counterplay from the start. **3.♗g2 ♘f6 4.♘c3 ♘c6 5.d3 d6** By move 6 I already had a good development and space and I even believe White might be a bit cramped! **6.♘f3 ♗e7 7.0-0 0-0 8.♖b1 a6 9.b4 ♕e8 10.♗g5 h6** Here I thought for a while about 10...♖h5, but realized it wasn't very good because after 11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♘d5 ♗d8, my queen is simply misplaced. **11.♗xf6 ♗xf6 12.♘d5 ♗d8 13.♘d2 ♘e7** Challenging White's best piece – the knight on d5. **14.c5 ♕f7 15.♘xe7+ ♗xe7 16.cxd6 cxd6 17.♘c4 ♖b8 18.a4 b5** Gaining even more space and preventing his ideas. **19.axb5 ♖xb5 20.♕a4 f4 21.♗c6 ♖b8 22.♕a5 ♔h8** A subtle move to prevent White's potential ♗d5 threat. **23.♗g2 ♕f6 24.♕c7 ♗g4 25.f3 ♗f5 26.g4 ♗h7 27.♘b6** Rather threatening, but I stayed calm and found the best move.
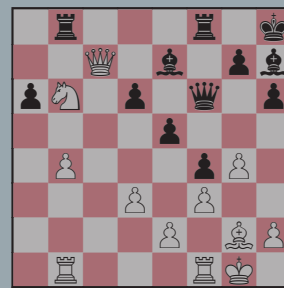
27...♕e6! 28.♖fc1 ♗g5 29.♘c4 ♖fd8 30.♘a5? White was in severe time pressure and probably made this move to try to make some threats.

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1. Nathan EHRENBERG.......................... **3½**
2–5. William MARCELINO, Kamatchi MUTHU, Kevin FANG, Parsa MOTAHARINEZHAD....... **3**
6–10. Philip COLLIER, Alice CHOVANEC, Lucas LU, Daniela FITZSIMMONS, Ameya RAJEEV....................................... **2½**
**11–13.** Timothy HAMILTON, Pinhang GAO, Anirudh GHODGAONKAR........................... **2**

30...♖dc8 31.♕a7 ♖a8 32.♖xc8+ ♕xc8 33.♕b7 ♖b8?! Not the best, but I didn't want to let his knight make any threats at all. **34.♕xc8+ ♖xc8 35.♘c4??**
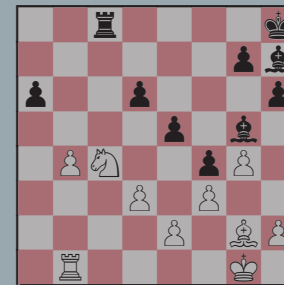
35...♗e7 Here we both missed 35...♖xc4!, taking advantage of the fact that his d-pawn was pinned to the rook on b1. **36.h4?? ♗g8** Same thing here...

Daniela with her dad

37.♘a5 ♗xh4 38.♔h3 ♗e6 39.♗f1 ♔g8 40.b5 ♖b8 41.b6 ♗d8 42.♘c4 ♗xc4 43.dxc4 ♗xb6+ 44.♔g2 a5 45.g5 hxg5 46.♔h3 ♗f7 47.♔g4 ♗f6 48.e3
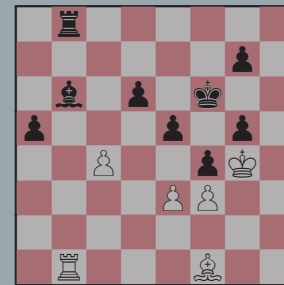
48...♖h8! 49.exf4 exf4 50.♖xb6 ♖h4 Mate.

During the game I felt the adrenaline pumping so much. In fact, when I was writing down the last couple of moves, my hand was shaking! I feel like going into what I call the Reverse Grand Prix was the right idea, going into the sharp, but positional lines shown in the game. This is probably my biggest milestone so far and this game was key for getting my rating above 1800.

I just want to say thank you to my dad for helping me so much in chess and in life. He has been my primary teacher and I'm very grateful for that. I also know he has been working as hard as he can to bring me these opportunities and prepare me for them. I also want to thank my mom, because she also works really hard to bring me these opportunities.

To anyone reading this - family is the most important thing!