

The Chess Journalist

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Hello From the Editor

For the first time in a while we are ahead of schedule. On top of that, this issue is the largest we have ever produced, coming in at 60 pages. I usually try to keep it to 48 pages or below, so that I can print the issue in booklet form. There was just no way to do that this time. As it was, I postponed six articles!! My apologies to the authors who got pushed back.

We recently lost a couple more chess stars, GM Vlastimil Hort and ICCF-GM Fritz Baumbach. Jon Edwards salutes Baumbach and IM Anthony Saidy and I salute Hort. Originally, Dr. Saidy and I were going to put together one joint piece, but it just worked out better to have two individual tributes. Please accept the minor amounts of overlap.

We have an editorial by James Eade with a discussion of the current state of US Chess and a warning about missing the boat.

We have the results of the Lerner Awards. Congratulations to Brian Ribnick and David Heiser.

World ICCF Champion GM Jon Edwards sends in a review of an Elk & Ruby book *Critical Theory: A Chess Biography of Isaak Lipnitsky*. I also reviewed an Elk & Ruby book *Korchnoi Year by Year Volume IV*. We have a few more Elk & Ruby, book reviews coming over the next issues.

We were also able to review the long-awaited Mihail Marin book, *Learn From the Legends 2: Chess Heroes at their Best*, and the ChessDojo book, *How to Analyze your Games*. The Dojo book was reviewed by a new author for us: Pranav Srinivasula. Welcome aboard!

Chess in the Third Reich by Taylor Kingston got a short but strong review by IM Anthony Saidy.

We seem to have found a niche in the book review department! I enjoy book reviews. They are the first things I turn to whenever an issue of *Chess Life*, *American Chess Magazine* or *New in Chess* arrives in the mailbox.

A longtime friend of mine, Dennis Wasson also joins in the fun with his first article for us. Dennis has been quite active over the years doing chess research and he provides some interesting food for thought about it.

Awani Kumar sent in two, knight's tours this time, but I had to postpone one of them till the next issue.

Prolific author Tibor Karolyi, from Hungary, was nice enough to allow us to interview him. I think you will really enjoy what he had to say. In addition, the interview motivated him to write a poem (ode) to a friend who inspired him in his writing.

Rachel is back with a "Chess Keys" and a report on the first ever Minnesota Scholastic Grand Prix. There is a new "Queens Corner" but it won't appear until the next issue.

Our friends Gene Salomon and Diane Dahl have put together a nice piece on Gene and his long history with the royal game.

Don't forget that our next membership meeting will be at the US Open in Madison on July 31 at 9am. We don't get to pick the time! There is a zoom invite if you can't make it in person. See page 4 for the details.

Special thanks to Rex Gray for his tremendous help on this issue. I would say it was almost a 50-50 effort between Rex and I.



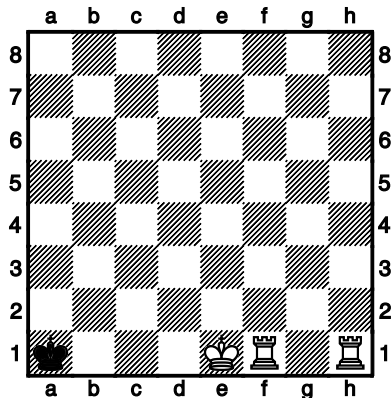
Thanks to Rex Gray, Diane Dahl, Gio Espinosa, Joshua Anderson, Jon Edwards, and Rachel Schechter for their excellent proofreading and suggestions.

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 October 5.

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

mcapron243@mchsi.com

—Mark Capron



White to move and mate in two

"You can fight without ever winning, but never ever win without a fight."—Neil Peart

<p>Topic: CJA US Open Meeting Time: Jul 31, 2025 09:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada) Join Zoom Meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8185542253?pwd=SDBtNFpLeExhNC9WaUN6LOVIRnBEUT09&omn=84366484262</p> <p>Meeting ID: 818 554 2253 Passcode: 08062021</p> <p>Please note that I had no say in our meeting time. I apologize to those in the West who will need to attend at 7:00 AM.</p> <p>One tap mobile +19292056099,,8185542253#,,,,*08062021# US (New York) +13017158592,,8185542253#,,,,*08062021# US (Washington DC)</p> <p>---</p> <p>Dial by your location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • +1 929 205 6099 US (New York) • +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC) • +1 305 224 1968 US • +1 309 205 3325 US • +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) • +1 646 931 3860 US • +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston) • +1 360 209 5623 US • +1 386 347 5053 US • +1 507 473 4847 US • +1 564 217 2000 US • +1 669 444 9171 US • +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) • +1 689 278 1000 US • +1 719 359 4580 US • +1 253 205 0468 US • +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma) <p>Meeting ID: 818 554 2253 Passcode: 08062021</p> <p>Find your local number: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kbQz3caR1c</p> <p>--</p> <p>Take care, Joshua Anderson President, Chess Journalist of America</p>	<p>Using ChessBase for Bibliographic Work By ICCF GM Jon Edwards</p> <p>One significant flaw in ChessBase is that there is no easy way to identify within a game in what books and articles the game appears. Important games will often appear within multiple sources, and as authors and players we are somehow expected to become master of the references. A throwback to the pre-computer age, those of us with large libraries are left to open many books in search of notes to key games. That search can be surprisingly enjoyable, but it is undeniably inefficient.</p> <p>I am grateful when publishers of books and magazines provide indices that substantially ease the search. Here is a link to the New in Chess archive. It is in essence a database of unannotated games with bibliographic citations that will point you quickly to the correct Yearbook or Magazine in which games appear.</p> <p>https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kG8qJ79xyY_PSBvEYeFaEVb2E1OwUSZI/view?usp=drive_link</p> <p>To complete this New in Chess bibliographic database, I hand-entered the citations for their Secrets of Opening Surprises (SOS), a 14-volume series which ran from 2003-2012. Here is the link to that database:</p> <p>https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kHAQNCemols3eYeFo0y6e_UpUf48HXpB/view?usp=drive_link</p> <p>The early SOS issues closely mirror articles that had appeared in the Yearbook, but often with corrections and additions.</p> <p>Of course, most book publishers do not share databases to ease the reading of their books. The Informant publishers have a database of the whole series, but the games within the database are annotated and therefore they sell it at a price that many players will find to be high. The publishers have apparently decided that they make more money that way than by freely distributing a database of unannotated games as an encouragement to buy the physical books in order to read the annotations.</p> <p>I have also undertaken the creation of separate databases for each of the Trends publications, which were published from 1989 through 1997. Each pamphlet contains exactly 100 unannotated games, but the authors did discuss each variation in section introductions. The databases help to bring the pamphlets to life by easing significantly the effort required to read through the games. Along the way, I have acquired nearly 130 of these pamphlets, and I am making a belated effort to acquire the 35 or so that I am still missing. Here is my summary database. Reach out please if you are interested in assisting the effort or of you would like to stay in touch as the project progresses.</p> <p>https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1OzJkZn4rpWyJEFEQ5tVNj3pMaktWy2MG/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=111088665127020994336&rtpof=true&sd=true</p> <p>It occurs to me that many of our readers may have undertaken such bibliographic projects on other chess journals or perhaps even on the books within their personal libraries. If you are willing to share with the chess community, please reach out to us!</p>
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In Memoriam: Fritz Baumbach (1935 – 2025)

by Jon Edwards, ICCF-GM and the 32nd World Correspondence Chess Champion

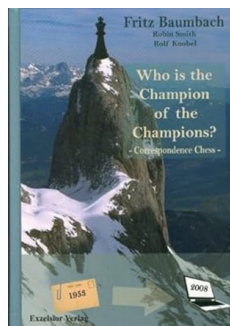
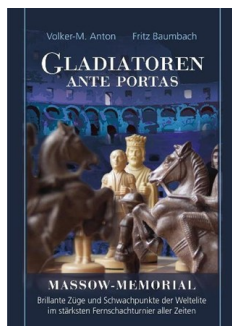
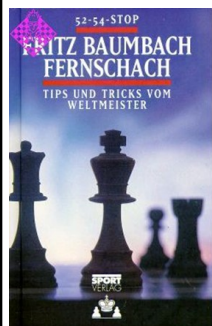
Friedrich (Fritz) Baumbach (8 September 1935 – 24 April 2025) was an international Correspondence Chess Grandmaster best known for becoming the 11th ICCF (International Correspondence Chess Federation) World Champion (1983-1989). He was also the Correspondence Chess Champion of East Germany in 1970.

These accomplishments should be remembered within the context of the technical environment. Baumbach was among the last ICCF World Champions for whom computers were simply a tool or guide. Human mastery of chess was by far, for Baumbach, the key ingredient in winning the title.

Baumbach was born in Weimar, Germany. He earned the International Correspondence Chess Grandmaster title in 1973 and earned the FIDE Master title in 1985.

Apart from his outstanding successes as a player, Dr. Baumbach was a long-term official in the ICCF. Baumbach received his doctorate in Chemistry in 1966 and became a chemist. After 2000, in semi-retirement, he became a freelance patent attorney.

Dr. Baumbach's varied contributions to correspondence chess continue to be recognized and celebrated within the chess community. Apart from his many titles and tournament wins, he authored or co-authored three important books on correspondence chess. The first provided a summary of his correspondence chess successes, but the style is pedagogically accessible to all chess players. His second book provides comprehensive coverage of the best games from the monstrously strong Hans-Werner von Massow Memorial correspondence tournament (1999-2003). The third, which he wrote with Robin Smith and Rolf Knobel, details the ICCF 50th Jubilee Tournament that involved all nine living CC World Champions, a tournament that had its genesis with a proposal at the 2000 ICCF Congress in Daytona Beach where we first met. It is probably the only book in which so many World Champions all contributed to the annotations of their own games within the same tournament.



In an interview with Tim Harding in Chess Mail (2/1999), Baumbach noted that he received special permission to attend the 1988 ICCF Congress in Aarhus, Denmark. "This was connect-

ed with a lot of trouble, because, as you may remember, trips to Western countries were strongly limited... the ICCF Congress (and of course, the ceremony) was one of the most impressive events in my chess life!"

Regarding use of computers, he added: "It is obvious nowadays no CC player can renounce this help, as well as in the opening research as during the game as analyst... but in all cases, the computer is no more than a dialogue partner, and there are enough positions in which it is really blind. I regard it as a medium strong analyzing partner which never gets tired."

ICCF Congresses are also distinguished by the photographs taken of the former World Champions who attend. This photograph is from Daytona Beach in 2000:



Fritz Baumbach - 11th World Champion; Grigory Sanakoev - 12th World Champion; Hans J. Berliner - 5th World Champion; Vytas V. Palciauskas - 10th World Champion

Some of Dr. Baumbach's ICCF achievements include:

- 1968, ICCF Olympiad 06 Final Board 2
- 1973, GM (International Correspondence Chess Grand Master)
- 1977, World Championship 09 Final, Vice World Champion
- 1983, World Championship 11 Final
- 1987, 10. Olympiad Final Board 2
- 1988, ICCF World Champion 11
- 1992, 11. Olympiad Final Board 4
- 2004, ICCF Olympiad 13 Final Board 1
- 2010, ICCF Olympiad 16 Final Board 1
- 2000, Silver Bertl von Massow Medal
- 2006, Gold Bertl von Massow Medal
- 2010, ICCF Honorary Member

1		Baumbach, Fritz
2		Mikhailov, Aleksey Ivanovich
3		Nesis, Gennady Efimovich
4		Kosenkov, Vsevolod Tikhonovich
5		Zagorovsky, Vladimir Pavlovich
6		Khasin, Abram Iosifovich
7		Pereyra Puebla, Manuel Miguel
8		Blockx, Frank
9		Buj, Pablo
10		Sande, Oystein
11		Zaitsev, Vladimir Valent'ch
12		Weisenburger, Horst
13		Thiele, Erich
14		Danner, Georg
15		Anton, Aurel

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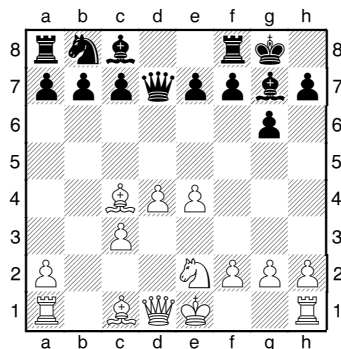
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	TB
1	*	1	1	½	1	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	½	1	½	10.5 / 14 70.75
2	0	*	½	½	0	1	1	1	1	½	1	1	1	1	1	10.5 / 14 60.00
3	0	½	*	½	1	1	1	1	1	½	1	½	1	½		9.5 / 13
4	½	½	½	*	½	½	0	1	1	½	½	½	1	1	1	9.0 / 14 55.50
5	0	1	0	½	*	½	1	½	1	1	½	1	1	0	1	9.0 / 14 55.25
6	½	0	0	½	½	*	½	0	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	7.0 / 14
7	½	0	0	1	0	½	*	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	½	6.5 / 14 38.50
8	0	0	0	0	½	1	1	*	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	6.5 / 14 36.75
9	½	0	0	0	0	½	1	½	*	½	1	0	½	½	1	6.0 / 14
10	0	½	½	½	0	½	0	½	½	*	0	1	0	½	1	5.5 / 14
11	½	0	0	½	½	½	0	½	0	1	*	½	½	½	0	5.0 / 14 33.25
12	0	0	½	½	0	0	1	½	1	0	½	*			1	5.0 / 12 31.00
13	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	½	1	½		*	1	½	4.5 / 13
14	0	0	½	0	1	½	0	0	½	½	½		0	*	½	4.0 / 13
15	½	0		0	0	0	½	½	0	0	1	0	½	½	*	3.5 / 13

The following annotated game from Baumbach's successful World Correspondence Championship first appeared in Chess Mail 2/1999. I reached out to Tim Harding, who generously agreed for the game and its annotations to appear here. The notes are mostly Baumbach's, but you will also note Tim Harding's hand at work here.

Baumbach, Fritz - Nesis, Gennady Efimovich [D86]

Wch11 Final ICCF, 1981

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 g6 3.♖c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♖xd5 5.e4 ♖xc3 6.bxc3 ♗g7 7.♗c4 0-0 8.♖e2 ♗d7



This move, invented by Larsen, became a Nesis specialty. The first idea is to fianchetto the c8-♗ without having to fear an attack on the kingside. The immediate 8...b6 would be very strongly met by 9.h4, whereas now 9.h4? is unplayable because of 9...♗g4. After a search through Chess Informators, I found three games in which Nesis had played this move and won.

9.0-0

9.♖b1 is also good, as Dr Baumbach played in the H-W. von Massow Memorial against CC-GM Heinrich Burger to avoid his opponent's preparation.

9...b6

Burger has attempted to revive this variation for Black with a new plan beginning 9...b5!? An example is 10.♗d3 (10.♗d5!? ∞) 10...c5 11.♗e3 c4 12.♗c2 ♖a6 13.♖b1 (13.♗d2 ♖c7 14.a4 a6 15.axb5 axb5 16.♖xa8 ♖xa8 17.♗h6 ♗xh6 18.♗xh6 ♗d6 19.f4 f5 20.exf5 ♗xf5 21.♗xf5 gxf5 22.♗g5+ ♖h8 23.♗g3 ♗e6 24.♖f2 H.Bellmann-U.Baumgartner, EM/M/A077 ICCF Email 2000; now according to Bellmann, his opponent had to try 24...♗f7!? 25.♖e1 e6 Δ26.♗h6 ♖e8 27.♖f1±) 13...♖c7 14.♗d2 ♖e8 15.f4 f5 16.♗g3 ♖f8 17.♖bc1 ♖b7 18.♖h1 e6 with a complicated position in Koskinen-Burger (Kirjeshakki 50, 1987-90).

10.♗e3

This is more flexible than other moves, since White is not committed to any particular plan. I also looked at:

10.♗d3 e.g. 10...♖b7 11.e5!? ♖c6 12.♖f4 e6 13.♗h3 ♖a5 14.♗e2 c5 15.♗e3 Gligoric-Vaganian, Yugoslavia-USSR 1975; 10.e5 ♖b7 (10...♖a6 11.♖b3 ♖c6 12.♖e1 ♖h8 (12...e6 comes into consideration, according to Nesis) 13.e6 fxe6 14.♖f4 e5 15.♖xg6+! Möhring-Pribyl, Hradec Kralove 1977/78) 11.♖f4 e6 12.♗g4 c5 13.♗e3 ♖c6 14.♖ad1 cxd4 15.cxd4 ♖e7! (15...♖fd8 is less good: 16.h4 ♖ac8 17.h5 G.Kotenko-Nesis, 13th USSR CC Ch 1997-78) 16.h4

h5 17.♗e2 ♖d5 and Black drew after 38 moves in Baumbach-B.Vukcevic, Belgrade-30 jubilee 1979-82.; 10.f4 ♖b7 11.♗d3 ♖c6 12.a3 (12.f5 is better, but after 12...♖a5 13.♖b3 ♖xb3 14.axb3 a5 15.♗g5 Larsen suggested 15...gxf5!? should be considered.) 12...♖ad8 13.e5 e6 14.♗g3 ♖a5 15.♖a2 c5 16.♗e3 ♖c8 (0-1, 50 in V.Yershov-Nesis, 13th USSR CC Ch).

10...♖b7 11.f3

This natural move was not given as the main line by Suetin in his book on the Grünfeld. Preference was given to 11.♗d3, although this move is doubly illogical: the ♗ leaves the excellent a2-g8 diagonal and is tied to the defence of the e-pawn. (More recent books, such as that by IM Malcolm Pein on the Exchange Grünfeld, do recommend the line selected by Dr Baumbach.)

11.d5!? also deserves a mention: 11...c6 12.♗d4 cxd5 13.♗xg7 ♖xg7 (13...♖c8!? Nesis) 14.exd5 ♗g4 V.P. Khiutt-Nesis, 12th USSR CC Ch semifinal 1973.

11...♖c6 12.♖b5!

According to Pein, this subtle move stems from GM Tukmakov. The threat of d4-d5 highlights the downside of Black's 8th move, and in some lines the rook will go to b1 to restrain Black's ...c5 break.

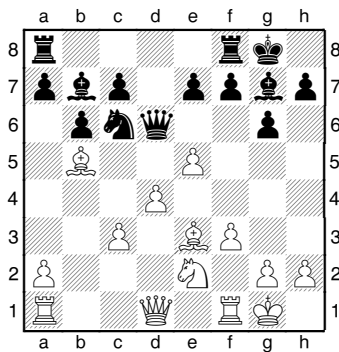
12.♖c1 ♖ad8 13.♖b5 was good for White in Spassky-Larsen, Beverwijk 1967, but later it was found that Black's resources are sufficient after 12...♖fd8 or 12...♖a5!?

12...♖d6 N

This was a novelty from the Nesis workshop, designed to avoid weakening pawn moves. The alternatives 12...a6 and 12...e6 both leave White with the somewhat better prospects.

12...a6 13.♙d3 ♖ad8 14.♗b1 ♘e5 15.c4± Hort-Spiridov, Decin 1977; 12...e6 13.♗b1 ♖ad8 14.♙g5 f6 15.♙h4 g5 16.♙f2 f5 17.exf5 exf5 18.♙g3± Hort-Gulko, Polanica Zdroj 1977

13.e5



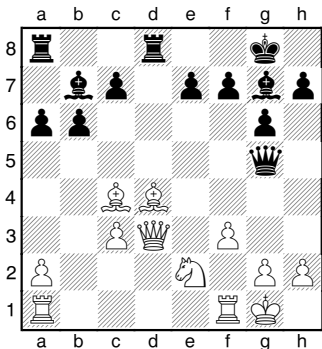
This thematic move now gains a tempo. I posted the card with this move just before Christmas, on 23/12/83.

RR 13.♖c1! was employed in what appears to be the only other master game where 12...♖d6 was played. The continuation was 13...e5 (13...a6 14.♙d3 ♘a5 15.♙d1±) 14.♙d1 a6 15.♙a4 ♘a5 16.♙b3 ♘b3 17.axb3 f5! (17...♖e7!) 18.exf5 ♖xf5 (18...gxf5 19.dxe5 ♖xe5 20.♙d4 ♖xe2 21.♙xg7 ♖xg7 22.♙d7+ ♖h8 23.♙g5 ♖e5 24.♙h6+) 19.♙g3 ♖ff8 20.d5! ♖fd8 21.♙e4 ♖f8 22.c4 h6 23.♙d3! ♖h7 24.♖d2 (24.♖e1) 24...♙d7 25.♙d1 ♖ad8 26.♖e1 a5 27.♙f2 ♖f7 28.♙d2 ♙f8 29.♙e2 ♙b4 30.♖a1 ♖e8 31.f4! 1-0 R.Sutkus-E.Cherniaeva, ICCF World Cup V Final-B 1988 ♭31...exf4 32.♙g5+ hxg5 33.♖h3+-]

13...♖d5

So the black ♖ has moved from d8 to d5 in three steps! As Nesis comments ruefully in his article, "even tenacious defense could not compensate for the two tempi flippantly wasted in the opening". During the night I woke up at about two o'clock and thought of the game, horrified: what if Black plays 13...♙xe5 14.dxe5 ♖xe5 attacking both bishops? I got up and analyzed until morning but could find no refutation.

I therefore went back to the pillar box and waited for it to be emptied, my mind grimly set on persuading or bribing the mailman to return the card, or, if the worst came to the worst, even to steal it myself. The mailman was obliging, turned a blind eye to the regulations, and helped me look for the card amongst a mountain of Christmas mail. Christmas was a period of intensive analysis, resulting in the following. 15.♖d3 (only move) 15...a6 (if 15...♖ad8 or ...♖fd8, then 16.♙d4 ♙g5 17.♙a6! with advantage) 16.♙c4 ♖fd8 17.♙d4 ♙g5



18.♖f2!! This move was hard to find. It serves the double function of covering g2 and closing the d4-g1 diagonal, so that if 18...c5 19.♖e3 and if (RR 18.a4! Dr Baumbach's final comment on seeing a proof of this chapter is: "I am very happy that the computer found only one mistake in my analysis. And I was so proud of my move 18.♖f2!!, with double function... All the same, 13.e5 was strong and 13...♙xe5 wasn't possible because of the interesting move 18. a4". ♭18...c5 (18...e6 gives White time to consolidate) 19.♙e3! 18...e5 (18...c5 19.♖e3 RR ♙f6!! In this position, the 21st century computer finds a resource for Black that equalises the game. The machine therefore concludes that 18.♖f2 is not correct after all, and recommends 18.a4 instead (to prevent ...b5). (RR 19...♙h6 looks the same but White can try 20.f4! cxd4 21.♙xf7+ ♖h8 Black cannot take the ♙ because 22. fxg5 is check; that is why 19...♙f6 is correct. 22.♙xd4 ♭20.♖xg5 (20.h4 cxd4 21.♖xg5 ♙xg5 22.hxg5 looks better. Black will obtain a third pawn for the ♙ but the extra piece may yet prove to be more significant.) 20...♙xg5 21.♙e5 and the sharp play goes on; now a possible continuation is 21...♙e3! 22.♙c7 ♙d5! (22...♖d2!) 23.♙xd8 ♙xc4 24.♙xb6 ♙xe2 (♭24...♖b8) 25.♖e1 ♖b8 26.♖xe2 ♙xf2+ 27.♖xf2 ♖xb6 28.♖xe7

with a drawn ♖ endgame!) 19.f4! exf4 20.♙xf4 In both cases, White consolidates his extra piece. In the second variation above, the sequence 20...c5?! 21.♙xf7+! ♖xf7 22.♙h3+ ♖f6 23.♙g5+! had to be found. I finally posted the same card, only with the thinking time changed, on 28/12.

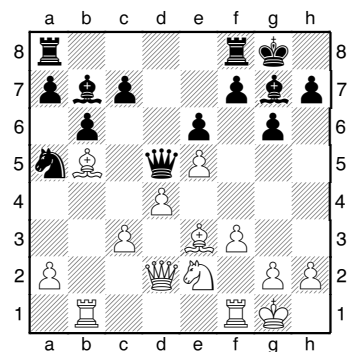
14.♖b1

The loss of the a-pawn is not to be feared.

14...e6

14...♖xa2? 15.c4 e.g. 15...a6 16.♖a1 ♖b2 17.♙xc6 ♙xc6 18.♖d3 b5 19.♖fb1 bxc4 20.♖d1! trapping the queen.

15.♖d2 ♙a5



Black intends to carry out a delayed standard Grünfeld plan: attack on the White center with ...c5. However, an unpleasant surprise awaits him.

16.♙g5!

Tremendously strong. Not only is ♙f4 threatened, trapping the queen in the middle of the board, but also ♖f4, paralyzing Black on the dark squares on the kingside. The following moves are forced.

16...c6 17.♙d3 f6 18.exf6 ♙xf6 19.♙xf6 ♖xf6 20.♙g3 ♖af8 21.♖fe1

The bishop sortie at move 16 has secured an advantageous position for White. With his last move White sets his sights on the isolated pawn on e6. In order to avoid succumbing to constant pressure on the e-file, Black tries to complicate.

21...c5?! 22.♙e4 ♖f5 23.dxc5 ♖d8 24.cxb6 ♙xe4 25.fxe4

Thus, Black has managed to cover the weakness on e6 (25.♖xe4? ♖d5).

25...♖f2 26.♖e2

Looks like a loss of tempo, since the rook

contritely returns to the first rank two moves later.

After 26.♖e3 ♗xb6 27.♗xb6 ♖xa2 or 27. a4 ♖a2, Black's prospects of a draw are better than in the game.

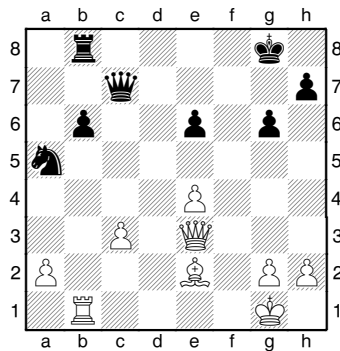
26...♗f7 27.♖e3

Of course not 27.bxa7?? because of 27...♖b6+! and mate.

27...a×b6 28.♗ee1

The "natural" 28.♗eb2? leads, by contrast, to a loss 28...♗d7 29.♗e2 ♖c4! 30.♗xc4 ♗d1+

28...♗d7 29.♗e2 ♗d6 30.♗ed1 ♗xdl+ 31.♗xd1 ♖c7 32.♗b1 ♗b8



After this forced defensive move (32...♗c8 line ***), it seems that victory is only a matter of time. White has an extra pawn, a space advantage and his bishop has more scope than the Black knight on the edge of the board. Nevertheless, the Black position has numerous resources, and White has to take heed of them in the next few moves. 32...♗c8 33.♖xb6 ♖xb6+ 34.♗xb6 ♖xc3 35.♗g4

33.♗b5?

An inexact move, played in anticipation of victory, which makes the win more difficult. The further course of the game shows that the ♗ on the fifth rank has little effect.

In keeping with the principle of creating another weakness, 33.h4 was indicated. After 33...e5 34.h5 would have been possible. Likewise, 33...♖c6 34.♗g4, or 33...♖c4 34.♖d4. It is this last variation which has drawbacks after 33.♗b5...

33...♖c4 34.♖d4 ♗d8! 35.♖f6

The unprotected back rank (33.♗b5?) makes itself felt. The c4-♖ could not be captured:

35.♖xc4 ♗d1+ 36.♖f2 ♖f4+ 37.♗f3 Now there is more to say than in Baumbach's book *** He gives 37...♗d2+ with perpetual check, which White can only defer for a few moves (37...♖h4+ also draws, e.g. 38.g3 (38.♖e3 ♖h6+ 39.♖f2 ♖h4+) 38...♖xh2+ 39.♗g2 ♗d2+ 40.♖e3 ♖xg2 41.♖xe6+ etc) RR 38.♖e1 ♖e3+ 39.♗e2 ♖c2! 40.♖xe6+ ♖f8 and it is White who must give the checks.

35...♗e8 36.h3

It was hard to choose between this move, which would be played rapidly in an OTB game, and 36.h4. Safety considerations finally decided in favor of h3; besides there is no clear win to be seen after 36.h4 line **). I expected this variation in the game, but once again Nesis surprised me. 36.h4 ♖c6 37.♗b4 ♖d6

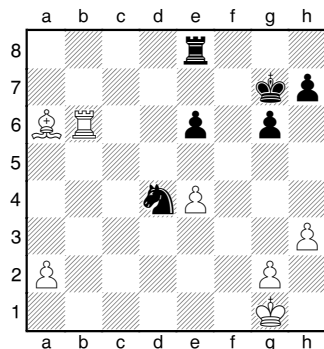
36...♖e3 37.♖e5!

At last White can force the exchange of queens and go into the favorable end-game. All the same, it demanded a lot more analytical effort than I had anticipated.

37...♖d8 38.♖d4 ♖xd4 39.cxd4 ♖c2 40.♗xb6 ♖xd4 41.♗a6!

Denies the black rook the c-file and is much better than 41.♗c4 after which 41...♗c8! 42.♗xe6+ ♖xe6 43.♗xe6 ♗a8 gives good drawing chances.

41...♖g7



Now White is at a crossroads. Should he play the thematic 42.e5, shutting out the Black king and fixing the pawn on e6, or is it better to mobilize the a-pawn immediately with 42.a4? Both moves look good and are in accordance with the general princi-

ples of such positions. A decision could only be reached by calculating concrete variations. Page after page was filled with notes, with the following main variations arising: (i) 42.a4 ♗a8 line ***; (ii) 42.e5 line ***

In both cases White has a clear advantage, but still no certain win, so, which one to choose? Every correspondence player knows the torment one experiences when faced with such an important decision. In my case, it lasted for nearly six weeks, for I worked on this position every day during my summer holidays in 1986. Finally, I chose:

42.a4

42.e5 ♖h6! 43.a4 ♗a8 44.♖f2 ♖g5 45.♖e3 ♖f5+ 46.♖d3 ♖f4! 47.♗xe6 ♖g7 48.♗b6 ♖xe5 49.♖c4

42...♖f6

This was a load off my mind! Although Black places his rook behind the a-pawn and centralizes his king, his position is now demonstrably lost. As indicated, 42...♗a8 was more tenacious. The next five moves are forced and I was able to offer them as conditionals. 42...♗a8 43.♖f2 ♖f6 44.♖e3 ♖e5 45.a5 ♗a7 46.♖d3 g5 or ...h6/.h5 47.♖c3 ♖c7+ 48.♖b4 ♖c1 49.♗b7

43.♗b7 ♗e7 44.a5 ♗c7 45.a6 ♖c1+ 46.♖f2 ♗a1 47.♖e3 ♖e5 48.♖d3 ♗a4

This barrier is soon lifted.

49.♖c3 ♖e2+ 50.♖b3 ♗a1 51.♗b4 ♖d4+ 52.♖c3 ♗a3+ 53.♖c4 ♖c2

Nor can a barrier be set up on the fifth rank: 53...♗a5 54.♗b2 and Black is in zugzwang.

54.♗b3 ♖d6

Despair but Black is also lost after 54...♗a1 55.♖c5 ♖d4 56.♗b2

55.♗xa3 ♖xa3+ 56.♖b4 1-0

Black resigned, because of 56.♖b4 ♖c2+ 57.♖b3 ♖d4+ 58.♖c4 winning.

Rest in Peace, Fritz

Remembering Vlastimil Hort

By IM Anthony Saidy

Vlastimil Hort chose an inopportune place and time to be born, near Prague. His country Czechoslovakia in Jan. 1944 was still three months away from being liberated from Nazi rule. And the Red Army would herald a new kind of tyranny for the smallish binational state in Central Europe, born from the defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918. That state did not live as long as Hort, who passed away this year at 81.

Living sandwiched between warring empires, the very cultured Czechs developed survival skills. Two writers born in 1883—when chess lit in Czech already existed—would live barely 40 years but were of world stature. Most famed was Franz Kafka, who wrote nightmarish stories in German. But Jaroslav Hasek had the gift of satire, which one needed more, to defend against the travails of fate. His *Good Soldier Schweik* is a classic. Schweik appears simple-minded, but unlike millions of others, he survives WW1 thru apparent innocence. And many a Czech learned to incorporate his wiles. Hort was one.

As a chess-player he was *sui generis*. He was confined to a hospital at age five for two months, for an illness he could not name (my bet: rheumatic fever). He recalls the kindly doctor who taught him chess, to which game he bonded for life. No talk here of any Czech chess school named for Oldrich Duras, a top player at start of the century. Or the famous Richard Reti, a native, but from another culture. And no coaching. He absorbed the game by reading and playing.

The brilliant Czech-American GM Lubomir Kavalek said that Hort's style was "defensive" and no one wished to emulate it. GM Lombardy remarked to me that Hort was "not sharp." After notching one draw with him, armed with this knowledge, why didn't I try a gambit? No, twice I was out-woodshifted. In another game where I played wrong rook to d1, he nicely sacked the exchange on f2 and outplayed me.

We became buddies. In a cafe in Marianske Lazne (AKA Marienbad) the smoke was so thick that the place was aired out twice per hour. In well-lubricated post-game conviviality, I was willing to share the cheer with mere ginger ale. Funny stories were bandied back and forth.

At the Nice Olympiad in 1974, all the buzz was about whether the FIDE Congress would accede to Fischer's demands for new rules in defending his crown. The Soviet delegation availed itself of a blond interpreter who was stunning to look at. She gave me her card, and I still remember her name. But it was the Cold War! I was paranoid. For sure, she reported to the KGB. Then I learned that Vlastimil's skill in Russian matched his English. One night, he whisked her off to Monte

Carlo. All I could say was, "I hope you gave my regards to Princess Grace."

One morning in a Prague hotel, the Soviet army major in the next room to mine was fuming because there was no hot water for shaving. He accosted the mid-aged chambermaid about it. She responded with the national motto of the Communist Party: "The Soviet Union is our model." Very Schweikian.

Likewise Hort had a light-hearted, humorous approach that one day would make him a popular raconteur on TV in his adopted country, Germany. Czechs countered the Soviet invasion of 1968 to abort the new "socialism with a human face" - nonviolently. They posted signs in Russian like "Ivan, go home. Svetlana is cheating." That was Schweik plus. Hort chafed under the new dictatorship but had a young son and long bided his time until he made his escape. (A few Russians also protested the invasion—see some of them in my novel "1983." My best work.)

One night in Prague, Hort was chauffeuring me around town.

Suddenly he became agitated, exclaiming "Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh!"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

He had taken the wrong turn down a one-way street. And a cop was on top of us right away.

Hort said, "Wait here" and got out of the car.

The minutes ticked on. There I was alone in a Communist country, an accomplice to crime, about to be abandoned to the fates!

Eventually he got back in the car, all smiles. "What happened?" I asked.

"The fellow is a chess fan. He knew me. He asked me a lot of questions about Bobby Fischer."

We shared a Schweikian chuckle and turned the car around.

In Blitz, the Knight is stronger than the Bishop!

The stronger person is not the one making the most noise but the one who can quietly direct the conversation toward defining and solving problems.

Both by Vlastimil Hort

Vlastimil Hort (1944-2025), A Remembrance

By Mark Capron

Another Chess legend has left us. Czech-German grandmaster Vlastimil Hort passed away on May 12, at the age of 81, due to complications from diabetes.

As I was growing up, I always looked forward to receiving *Chess Life*. Every so often there were pictures of a player who had a large mustache. Vlastimil Hort was this player. Based on the interviews and game comments I have read over the years, he seemed to be a very cordial gentleman.

Hort was born on 12 January 1944 in Kladno, in what was then Czechoslovakia. While in the hospital for two months with high fever and an unknown infection around age five, Doctor Novak, a correspondence player, taught him how to play chess. Hort only learned the basics while he was in the hospital. After his stay in the hospital, in his first game, which he lost, the opponent played the *en passant* move that Hort did not know and thought his opponent was cheating. Hort was a good ice hockey goalie and had to choose between it and Chess. Fortunately for us Hort chose Chess. Hort rose in strength and was invited to play in the 1960 Olympiad representing the Czechoslovakian national team (they came in fifth in the Final A). In 1962 Hort received his International Master title and he was awarded the Grandmaster title in 1965 by FIDE.

This is a game that Hort called out as one of his favorites from early in his career:

Pachman, Ludek - Hort, Vlastimil [B33]

CSR-ch30 Kosice (7), 13.02.1961

1.e4 c5 2.♂f3 ♀c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♂xd4 e6 5.♂b5 d6 6.♂f4 e5 7.♂e3 ♀f6 8.♂1c3 a6 9.♂a3 b5 10.♂d5 ♀xd5 11.exd5 ♀e7 12.c4 ♀f5 13.♂d2 ♂e7 14.cxb5 ♂f6 15.♂e2 e4 16.b6 e3 17.♂xe3 ♀xe3 18.fxe3 ♂xb2 19.♂c4 ♂c3+ 20.♂f2 ♀f6+ 21.♂f3 ♂xa1 22.♂xa1 ♀h4+ 23.g3 ♀xc4 24.♂c1 ♀b4 25.♂xg7 ♀d2+ 26.♂e2 ♀xc1 27.♂xh8+ ♀e7 28.♂g7 h6 29.g4 ♀c2 30.♂xh6 ♀g6 31.♂xg6 fxg6 32.h4 ♂b8
0-1

Hort described himself as an analyzer, sometimes analyzing a single game for a month. Remember this is PRE-computer era. Adjournments were difficult as he had no second to help him. He would get caught up in the analysis and many times spend most of the night analyzing, reporting to his game the next day with little or no sleep.

In 1968 after the Prague Spring, a brief period of economic and political liberalization, the Warsaw Pact troops moved into Czechoslovakia to stop the movement. It was at this point Hort decided to call himself a chess professional. His hope was that Chess would allow him some freedom from the Russian occupation. Unfortunately, even this did not solve his problems as he was only allowed to play in tournaments held in the Eastern Bloc countries for quite some time.

In 1970 Hort was invited to play for the World Team in the USSR

vs. Rest of the World match. Hort played board four, because, in his words, "Fischer said I should play on board four; so it was!"¹ He was matched with Lev Polugaevsky. Hort won the mini-match +1-0=3.

Hort, Vlastimil (2610) - Polugaevsky, Lev (2640) [B22]

Match/Team URS-World 20,5-19,5 Belgrade (1.4), 29.03.1970

1.e4 c5 2.c3 ♀f6 3.e5 ♀d5 4.d4 cxd4 5.♂xd4 e6 6.♂f3 ♀c6 7.♂e4 d6 8.♂bd2 dxe5 9.♂xe5 ♀f6 10.♂a4 ♀d5 11.♂df3 ♂d6 12.♂f4 ♀e4+ 13.♂xe4 ♀xe4 14.♂d3 ♀xe5 15.♂xe5 ♂xe5 16.♂xe5 ♀c5 17.♂c2 f6 18.♂c4 ♀e7 19.0-0-0 ♂d7 20.b4 ♀a6 21.♂d6 b6 22.♂he1 g6 23.♂b3 ♂ad8 24.f4 ♀c7 25.f5 gx f5 26.♂xf5+ ♀f7 27.♂d3 ♂c8 28.♂g3 ♀e8 29.♂d4 ♀c7 30.♂f5 ♀e8 31.♂d4 ♀c7 32.♂e4 ♂dg8 33.♂xg8 ♂xg8 34.♂f5 ♂d8 35.♂g4 ♀e8 36.♂h4 h5 37.♂xh5 ♀g6 38.♂g3 ♀g7 39.♂h4 ♂b7 40.♂g4+ ♀f7 41.♂e2 f5 42.♂c4 ♀e8 43.♂d4 ♂d6 44.♂f4 ♂c8 45.♂a4 ♂xd4 46.♂xe8+ ♀xe8 47.cxd4 ♀e7 48.♂d2 ♀f6 49.♂d3 ♀g5 50.♂e3 ♂a6 51.♂f4 ♂c4 52.a3 a5 53.g3 ♀g4 54.♂f2 ♀g5 55.h4+ ♀f6 56.♂e3 axb4 57.axb4 e5 58.♂d3 exd4+ 59.♂xd4 b5 60.♂f4 ♂f1 61.♂d5 ♂c4+ 62.♂d6 ♂b3 63.♂d5+ ♀g6 64.♂e5 ♂c2 65.♂e7+ ♀h5 66.♂xf5
1-0

The apex of his career came in 1977 when Hort qualified for the Candidates Matches. He was matched up with former World Champion Boris Spassky in the quarterfinals. Hort lost the match in an unfathomable way. After the 12 games in regulation of the match ended in a tie, they needed to play sets of 2-game tie-breakers until one of them prevailed. In the meantime, Spassky had become ill (after the 12th game) and ended up with appendicitis. Spassky used all his timeouts, but still didn't feel good enough to play. At this point, Hort asked for his three timeouts to allow Spassky to heal enough to continue the match. It was seen for decades as one of the greatest acts of sportsmanship in the history of the game. "I would never have wanted to win in my life because the opponent is sick," explained Hort in a *Chess Whisper* interview.² They drew games 13 and 14, but then while Hort was winning the 15th game the unthinkable happened. Hort simply forgot about the clock, overstepped the time limit and lost. The 16th and final game was drawn after a long battle, but Spassky had won the match.

Spassky, Boris Vasilievich (2610) - Hort, Vlastimil (2620)

[E14] Candidates qf Spassky-Hort +2-1=13 Reykjavik (15), 03.1977

1.d4 ♀f6 2.c4 e6 3.♂f3 b6 4.e3 ♂b7 5.♂d3 d5 6.0-0 ♂bd7 7.b3 ♂e7 8.♂b2 0-0 9.♂c3 c5 10.♂e2 ♂c8 11.♂fd1 ♀c7 12.♂ac1 ♂fe8 13.cxd5 exd5 14.♂f5 g6 15.♂h3 ♂cd8 16.♂a4 ♀e4 17.dxc5 bxc5 18.♂xd7 ♀xd7 19.♂e5 ♀c7 20.f3 ♀f6 21.♂d3 c4 22.♂dc5 ♂c6 23.♂d4 ♂b5 24.♂f2 ♀d7 25.♂xd7 ♂xd7 26.♂c3 ♂f5 27.e4 dxe4 28.♂xe4 ♂xe4 29.fxe4 c3 30.♂f1 ♂b4 31.♂xa7 ♂d2 32.♂e3 ♂a8 33.♂b6 ♀d7 34.a4 c2 35.♂c5 Here Black simply forgot about the clock and overstepped the time limit. The continuation could be 35. ... ♂xc5 36.♂xc5 ♀g4 37.g3 ♀xe4 38.♂f2 ♂d1+ 39.♂f1.
1-0

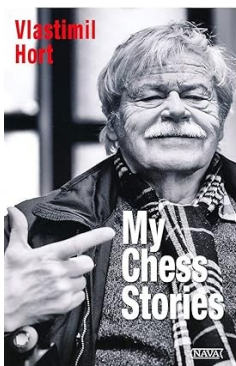
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Spassky	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	1/2
Hort	1/2	1/2	0	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	0	1/2

Hort applied his own self-therapy by playing a 636-board simul within the next few days, a world record. It lasted almost 37 hours!

Hort found things increasingly difficult and uncomfortable living under the rule of Russia. Hort had wanted to leave right away, but "Of course, I would have liked to leave in 1968, but my son was only one year old at the time. I didn't want to leave him alone," he explained in a Chessbase interview.³

After the interzonal tournament in Tunis in 1985, Hort had planned his escape and fled to the airport. His son, Daniel, had chosen not to go with him. At the airport he purchased a ticket to West Germany. He had placed a \$200 bribe in his passport to help get through. They could have stopped him, but the inspector took the money and signaled for Hort to continue. Once in West Germany Hort officially asked for political asylum and it was granted. He began a new life, and in 1986 he received German citizenship.

Hort appeared with Helmut Pfleger on the television show 'Schach der Großmeister' for over 20 years. The series presented chess to an audience of millions as a public TV event. Hort discussed many anecdotes, stories, and experiences using humor and many metaphors. One story was relayed where he took Bobby Fischer mushroom picking. Fischer collected all sorts, including some you could not eat. Fischer insisted Hort had to eat first, for fear of poisoning. In 2019, his many chess stories were published in a book aptly titled *My Chess Stories*.



After meeting with Fischer in Budapest 1993 Vlastimil Hort stated, "My conclusion—I met a mentally ill man in Budapest. Genius and madness are—and might always be—close, unfortunately."

Hort won the Czechoslovakian Chess Championship six times and claimed the German Championship title three times. Between 1960 and 1992, Hort participated in 14 Chess Olympiads: eleven times representing Czechoslovakia and three times representing Germany.

Hort won Hastings three times (1967/68 shared, 1974/75 as sole first, and 1975/76). He won Venice (1969), Skopje (1969), Gioggnitz (Schlechter Memorial 1971), Gothenburg (1971), The Capablanca Memorial in Havana (1971 shared), Reyikjavik (1972 shared), US Open Chess Championship (1974 shared), Vinkovci (1976 shared), Banja Luka (1976), Polanica-Zdrój (Rubinstein Memoria 1977), Lone Pine Open (1979 shared), IBM-Amsterdam tournament (1979), Sarajevo (Bosna 1980), twice at the Biel GMT (1981 and 1984 both shared), twice at Dortmund (1982 clear first, and 1985 shared), OHRA Open at Amsterdam (1982 shared, 1987 outright), and the American Summer at Berlin (1983)

At Wijk aan Zee (Hoogovens), Hort finished four times as the runner-up! Twice as clear second, twice as shared second between 1968 and 1986.

Browne, Walter Shawn - Hort, Vlastimil [B08] Hoogovens Wijk aan Zee (10), 25.01.1975

1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♟f6 3.♟c3 g6 4.♟f3 ♟g7 5.♟e2 0-0 6.0-0 c6 7.a4 a5 8.♟e3 ♟g4 9.♟g5 h6 10.♟h4 ♟a6 11.♟e1 ♟b4 12.♟c4 g5 13.♟g3 ♟f6 14.♟d2 d5 15.♟b3 ♟g4 16.f3 ♟h5 17.♟e5 ♟b6 18.♟h1 ♟f8 19.♟e2 ♟ac8? 20.♟ad1 ♟g6 21.♟f1 ♟d7 22.f4 gxf4 23.♟xf4 ♟xc2!! 24.♟xc2 ♟xb2 25.♟xf6 exf6 26.♟e3 ♟xc2 27.♟c1 ♟b2 28.♟xd5 ♟e8 29.♟c4 ♟a2 30.♟e2 ♟xe2 31.♟xe2 cxd5 32.♟b6 ♟dd8 33.♟b5 ♟xe4 34.♟xa5 f5 35.♟d2 ♟e6 36.a5 ♟g6 37.♟g1 ♟f8! 38.♟a4 ♟c8 39.♟c3 ♟b4 40.♟b2 ♟xc3 0-1

Hort contested against some of the best

players in the world. Hort met eight world champions over the course of his career (Tal, Botvinnik, Petrosian, Smyslov, Spassky, Fischer, Karpov, and Kasparov). He reached #6 in the world in 1977.

Hort, Vlastimil (2600)—Smyslov, Vassily V (2560) [D16] Interpolis-03 Tilburg (7), 10.11.1979

1.c4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♟c3 ♟f6 4.♟f3 dxc4 5.a4 ♟a6 6.e4 ♟g4 7.♟xc4 e6 8.♟e3 ♟b4 9.♟d3 ♟xf3 10.gxf3 ♟a5 11.♟g1 0-0 12.e5 ♟e8 13.♟e2 ♟xc3 14.♟xc3 ♟d8 15.♟b3 ♟b8 16.♟g4 ♟ac7 17.♟ag1 b5 18.axb5 cxb5 19.♟d3 f5 20.exf6 ♟xf6 21.♟e4 ♟d5 22.♟g5 ♟f7 23.♟h6 ♟h8 24.♟xg7 ♟xg7 25.♟xg7 ♟xg7 26.♟xg7+ ♟xg7 27.♟xd5 exd5 28.♟xd5 ♟be8+ 29.♟f1 b4 30.♟d7+ ♟h8 31.♟xa7 ♟xf3 32.d5 ♟g8 33.♟d4 ♟f7 34.♟xb4 ♟d8 35.♟g4+ ♟f8 36.♟d4 ♟d6 37.b4 h6 38.♟c5 ♟fd7 39.b5 ♟f7 40.b6 ♟xd5 41.♟c8

1-0

Hort, Vlastimil (2575) - Karpov, Anatoly (2690) [D58] IBM-21 Herinnerungs Toernooi Amsterdam, 05.1981

1.d4 ♟f6 2.♟f3 e6 3.c4 d5 4.♟c3 ♟e7 5.♟g5 h6 6.♟h4 0-0 7.e3 b6 8.♟c1 ♟b7 9.cxd5 exd5 10.♟e2 ♟bd7 11.0-0 c5 12.♟c2 a6 13.♟fd1 c4 14.a4 ♟c6 15.♟e5 ♟c7 16.♟xc6 ♟xc6 17.♟f3 ♟b4 18.♟xd5 ♟xd5 19.♟f5 ♟xa4 20.♟xd5 ♟ac8 21.b3 cxb3 22.♟xc8 ♟xc8 23.♟xf7+ ♟h8 24.♟xb3 ♟b5 25.♟e6 ♟f8 26.♟xd7

1-0

Spassky, Boris Vasilievich (2590) - Hort, Vlastimil (2545) [B25]

Bundesliga 1985/86 Germany (6.2), 22.12.1985

1.e4 c5 2.♟c3 ♟c6 3.g3 g6 4.♟g2 ♟g7 5.d3 e5 6.♟ge2 ♟ge7 7.0-0 d6 8.a3 0-0 9.♟b1 f5 10.♟d2 a5 11.a4 ♟e6 12.♟d5 h6 13.c3 ♟h7 14.♟e3 ♟f7 15.f4 ♟xd5 16.exd5 ♟e7 17.♟b3 b6 18.♟be1 ♟a7 19.c4 ♟g8 20.fxe5 ♟xe5 21.d4 ♟g7 22.dxc5 bxc5 23.♟c3 ♟e7 24.♟b5 ♟fe8 25.♟d2 ♟e5 26.g4 ♟f6 27.gxf5 gxf5 28.♟xf5 ♟d4+ 29.♟xd4 ♟xe1+ 30.♟xe1 ♟xe1+ 31.♟f2 ♟e7 32.♟xf6 ♟xf6+ 33.♟xe1 ♟xd4 34.♟g3 ♟xc4 35.♟xd6 ♟c1+ 36.♟f2 ♟xb2+ 37.♟g3 ♟g7+ 38.♟f2 ♟d4+ 39.♟g3 ♟g7 40.♟f4 ♟xf4+ 41.♟xf4 ♟f6 42.♟e4 c4 43.d6 ♟e8 44.♟d5 ♟xa4 45.♟xc4 ♟c6 46.♟a2 a4 47.♟c4 ♟d7 48.♟e3 a3 49.♟d4 ♟e6 50.d7 ♟xd7 51.♟c3 ♟e6 52.♟e2

0-1

At a lecture in Prague in 2014, Vlastimil Hort said: "Chess is beautiful and it gives you always some idea that maybe you are not so old." *Quoted from [Macauley Peter-son's article on chess24](#).*

Hort: "When I watch the chess here, I forget everything. I forget my illnesses, I forget the rheuma in my knees, I forget everything. For me this is a beautiful world of the pieces who are dancing, who are rocking on the board sometimes and sometimes they are just dancing a waltz. This chess harmony is really for me what I appreciated very much. I think that the whole world was having its pleasure, its fun. It was fun."

Ever since I was 18 I have had a mustache (minus one Halloween when I shaved it off for a costume, but started to grow it back immediately the following day). I didn't grow it consciously as a nod to Hort, but maybe subconsciously he had made an impact on me?!

¹*Legendary Chess Careers Vlastimil Hort*, Tibor Károlyi, Chess Evolution, 2016. p41.

² [Vlastimil Hort \(1944-2025\) Pearls from Lake Constance](#) by Conrad Schormann, 5-14-2025.

³[Vlastimil Hort, the great chess entertainer, turns 80!](#), Eduard Frey, 1-12-2024, ChessBase.

Additional Games:

Hort, Vlastimil - Byrne, Robert Eugene [E81] Olympiad-15 Final A Varna (3), 29.09.1962

1.c4 g6 2.♖c3 ♗g7 3.d4 ♖f6 4.e4 d6 5.f3 a6 6.♗e3 c6 7.♗d2 b5 8.♗d3 ♖bd7 9.♗ge2 0-0 10.h4 e5 11.h5? ♖xh5 12.g4?! ♖hf6? 13.♗h6 exd4? 14.♗xg7 ♗xg7 15.♗h6+ ♗h8 16.♖xd4 ♖e5? 17.♖xc6! ♖xd3+ 18.♗d2 1-0

Hort, Vlastimil - Korchnoi, Viktor [A15] Alekhine Memorial-02 Moscow (15), 15.12.1971

1.♖f3 ♖f6 2.c4 b6 3.g3 ♗b7 4.♗g2 e5 5.d3 ♗b4+ 6.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 7.♗xd2 0-0 8.0-0 ♗e8 9.♖c3 c6 10.♗ac1 d5 11.cxd5 cxd5 12.d4 e4 13.♖e5 ♖bd7 14.♖xd7 ♗xd7 15.♖d1 ♗e7 16.♗f4 ♖e8 17.♖e3 ♖d6 18.♗h3 ♗d8 19.♗c2 ♗c7 20.♗fc1 ♗xc2 21.♗xc2 g6 22.♗e5 f6 23.♗e6+ ♗f8 24.♖xd5 ♗c8 25.♗xc8 ♗xc8 26.♖f4 g5 27.♗xc8 ♗xc8 28.♗xc8 gxf4 29.♗e6 ♗e7 30.♗g8 ♖f5

31.♗xh7 ♖xd4 32.♗xe4 fxg3 33.fxg3 ♖xe2+ 34.♗f2 ♖d4 35.♗e3 ♖e6 36.♗f5 ♖d8 37.♗e4 ♖c6 38.h4 ♖d6 39.♗c8 ♗e7 40.♗a6 ♗f7 1-0

Hug, Werner - Hort, Vlastimil [E18]

Olympiad-20 Final A Skopje (14), 11.10.1972 Best Game Prize

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♖f3 e6 3.g3 b6 4.♗g2 ♗b7 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.d4 0-0 7.♖c3 ♖e4 8.♖xe4 ♗xe4 9.♗f4 d6 10.♗d2 ♖d7 11.♗fd1 h6 12.♖e1 f5 13.♗xe4 fxe4 14.♗c2 ♖f6 15.f3 g5 16.♗e3 ♗e8 17.♗g2 ♗h5 18.h3 ♗g6 19.♗ac1 ♗f7 20.fxe4 g4 21.h4 e5 22.♗d3 ♖xe4 23.♖c2 ♗af8 24.♗g1 ♗xh4 25.gxh4 ♗f3 26.♖e3 ♗g3+ 27.♗h1 ♗f2 0-1

Larsen, Bent (2620) - Hort, Vlastimil (2600) [A43] Montreal International Montreal (18), 06.05.1979

1.e4 d6 2.f4 g6 3.♖f3 ♗g7 4.d4 c5 5.d5 ♖f6 6.♖c3 0-0 7.a4 e6 8.dxe6 ♗xe6 9.♗e2 d5 10.e5 ♖e4 11.♖xe4 dxe4 12.♗xd8 ♗xd8 13.♗g5 ♗d5 14.♗e3 h6 15.♖h3 ♗f8 16.♖f2 ♖a6 17.0-0-0 ♖c7 18.b3 ♗c6 19.♗xd8 ♗xd8 20.♗d1 ♗xd1+ 21.♗xd1 b6 22.♗d2 ♗g7 23.g3 f5 24.exf6 ♗xf6 25.♗g4 ♗g7 26.f5 ♖d5 27.♗c4 ♗h7 28.♗xd5 ♗xd5 29.fxg6+ ♗xg6 30.c4 h5 31.♖f2 ♗c6 32.♖h3 ♗f5 33.♖f4 ♗g4 34.♗e2 ♗e5 35.♖d5 ♗h3 36.♗f4 ♗d4 37.♗b8 ♗d7 38.♗xa7 ♗xh2 39.♗xb6 ♗g4+ 40.♗f1 ♗xg3 41.♗c7+ ♗f3 42.♖f4 ♗f2 0-1

Huebner, Robert (2595) - Hort, Vlastimil (2600) [B66] Match Huebner-Hort +2-1=3 Hamburg (3), 02.09.1979

1.e4 c5 2.♖f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♖xd4 ♖f6 5.♖c3 ♖c6 6.♗g5 e6 7.♗d2 a6 8.0-0-0 h6 9.♗f4 ♗d7 10.♖xc6 ♗xc6 11.f3 d5 12.exd5 ♖xd5 13.♗e5 f6 14.♗d4 ♗b4 15.♗c4 0-0 16.♗e2 ♗e8 17.♖e4 ♗c7 18.♗f2 b5 19.♗b3 a5 20.♗c5 f5 21.♗g3 f4 22.♖e2 ♗b7 23.♗xb4 axb4 24.g3 ♖e3 25.♖xf4 ♖xd1 26.♗xd1 ♗c6 27.♗d3 ♗h7 28.♗e1 e5 29.♖d5 ♗c5 30.♖xb4 e4 31.♗e3 ♗ad8 32.fxe4 ♗d4 33.♖d3 ♗g5 34.h4 ♗g4 35.e5 ♗e4 36.c3 ♗xe3 37.♗xe3 ♗e4 38.♗xe4+ ♗xe4 39.♖c5 ♗c6 40.e6 ♗g6 41.♗d2 ♗f6 42.c4 b4 43.♖a6 ♗e6 44.♖xb4 ♗f3 45.c5 ♗e2+ 46.♗c3 ♗g2 47.♗d4 ♗e7 48.♗d5 ♗xg3 49.♖c6+ ♗e8 50.b4 g5 51.♗xf3 ♗xf3 52.hxg5 hxg5 53.b5 g4 54.b6 ♗f7 55.♖e5 g3 56.♖xf7 g2 57.♖d6+ ♗d8 58.a4 0-1

Hort, Vlastimil (2600) - Seirawan, Yasser (2485) [C04] Lone Pine op Louis D. Statham Masters Lone Pine (8), 03.04.1979

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♖d2 ♖c6 4.♗g3 ♖f6 5.e5 ♖d7 6.♗e2 ♖cb8 7.h4 b6 8.h5 c5 9.c3 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♗a6 11.h6 g6 12.♖f1 ♗e7 13.♗d2 ♗xe2 14.♗xe2 ♖c6 15.♗c1 ♗c8 16.♖h2 ♗c7 17.0-0 0-0 18.♗g4 ♗b7 19.♗c3 ♖cb8 20.♗g5 ♗xg5 21.♖xg5 ♗xc3 22.bxc3 ♗c8 23.♗c1 ♖c6 24.♗b5 ♗h8 25.♗a4 ♖a5 26.♗a3 ♗d8 27.f4 ♗g8 28.♗d6 ♗h8 29.♖f6 ♖xf6 30.♖xf7+ ♗xf7 31.♗xd8+ ♖g8 32.♗e8 ♗e7 33.♗f8 ♖c4 34.♗f2 ♖d2 35.♗e3 ♖c4+ 36.♗e2 b5 37.♗b1 a6 38.a4 ♗d7 39.axb5 axb5 40.♗xb5 ♗a7 41.♗b8 ♗a2+ 42.♗e1 1-0

Hort, Vlastimil (2535) - Polgar, Judit (2630) [B07] Women-Veterans Monte Carlo (8), 1994

1.d4 ♖f6 2.g3 g6 3.♗g2 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♖c3 0-0 6.♗ge2 ♖bd7 7.0-0 c6 8.a4 ♗c7 9.h3 e5 10.♗e3 ♗e8 11.f4 exd4 12.♗xd4 b6 13.g4 ♗a6 14.♗f2 ♗ad8 15.g5 ♖h5 16.♗xg7 ♖xg7 17.♗g3 ♗b7 18.h4 a6 19.♗d2 b5 20.axb5 axb5 21.♗e1 ♗b6 22.♖d1 d5 23.♖e3 dxe4 24.♖g4 e3 25.♗xe3 ♗xe3 26.♗xe3 ♗xe3 27.♖xe3 f5 28.♗d2 ♖e6 29.♖e2 ♗f7 30.♗f2 ♗e7 31.b4 ♗b8 32.c3 ♖b6 33.h5 ♖c8 34.c4 bxc4 35.hxg6 hxg6 36.♖xc4 c5 37.♖e5 ♗xg2 38.♗xg2 ♗e8 39.bxc5 ♖xc5 40.♖xg6 ♖e4 41.♗a2 ♖cd6 42.♖e5 ♖f7 43.♖f3 ♗f8 44.♖ed4 ♖fd6 45.♖e5 ♗g8 46.♗h3 ♗c8 47.♗h4 ♖c3 48.♗a7 ♖cb5 49.♖xb5 ♖xb5 50.♗d7 ♖c3 51.♗h5 ♖e2 52.♗h6 ♖xf4 53.♗g7+ ♗f8 54.♖d7+ ♗e8 55.♖f6+ ♖d8 56.♗d7* 1-0

Hort, Vlastimil (2463) - Short, Nigel D (2707) [B20] Trans Europa Schach Express Potsdam (7.5), 14.10.2012

1.e4 c5 2.g3 d5 3.exd5 ♗xd5 4.♖f3 ♗g4 5.♗g2 ♗e6+ 6.♗f1 ♖c6 7.h3 ♗h5 8.d3 ♗d8 9.♗e3 c4 10.♖c3 ♖f6 11.g4 ♗g6 12.♖h4 a6 13.♖xg6 hxg6 14.g5 ♖d7 15.d4 ♗d6 16.d5 ♖cb8 17.♗d4 ♗c8 18.♖e4 ♗e5 19.♗d1 ♗xd4 20.♗xd4 f5 21.♖c3 b5 22.♖e2 ♖c5 23.♖f4 ♗f7 24.♗e2 ♖a4 25.b3 ♖b6 26.h4 ♖d8 27.♗d2 a5 28.♗f3 ♗g8 29.h5 gxh5 30.g6+ ♗e8 31.♗xh5 ♗b8 32.♗xf5 ♗h8 33.♗h5 ♗xh5 34.♗xh5 e5 35.dxe6 ♖f6 36.♗f3 ♗b4 37.♗d1 ♗e7 38.♗c6 cxb3 39.axb3 ♗c8 40.♗xb6 ♗xc6 41.♗d8+ ♗f8 42.♗xf6 gxf6 43.♗d8+ ♗g7 44.♗d7+ ♗f8 45.g7+ ♗g8 46.♗f3 f5 47.e7 ♗xe7 48.♗xe7 ♗xc2 49.♖d5 ♗c6 50.♗f4 a4 51.bxa4 bxa4 52.♗e5 1-0

Thank you Mr. Entertainer, may you rest in peace.

US Chess and Chess in the US

By James Eade

There can be no denying that US Chess has a role to play for chess in the US. But it shouldn't be overstated. US Chess rates tournament players and certifies titles. These are important things to be sure, but they impact only a tiny fraction of the chess being played in the United States.

For example, US Chess officials were delighted when their membership exceeded 100,000. My book, *Chess for Dummies*, sold over 100,000 copies in its first year. It is still in print almost 30 years later. It was neither written for, nor, for the most part, purchased by the chess tournament player.

US Chess has never been able to influence the popularity of chess in the United States, and it has not been flexible enough as an organization to seize the opportunities that it had. Of course, having a World Champion such as Bobby Fischer remains the best way to popularize the game in any country. But US Chess completely missed the boat on the opportunity presented by the Internet, as just one example.

I was on the board of US Chess from 1996-1999, and companies such as the ICC were dying to make a deal with US Chess. Sadly, the board was split 4-3 against making a deal. Bill Goichberg was against it at the time although he has come around in his thinking since. Fan Adams was fresh off a costly project at *Inside Chess* and was against it. The kicker, however, was when the Executive Director told the board that people will never trust their credit card information over the Internet.

It sounds crazy now, but in those days, it was not so out of touch with reality. Our arguments went for naught, and US Chess sat on the sidelines while chess proved to be a killer app on the Internet.

Chess in the schools was another great opportunity that US Chess did not capitalize on the way it should have. Sure, they established scholastic councils and held championships at various levels, but they were never actually in the schools. Other organizations were. This is where a true difference could've been made, and US Chess was once again on the sidelines looking on.

Why isn't there an approved school curriculum certified by US Chess? Whatever money could've been made is beside the point. US Chess could've had a presence in almost every classroom where chess was being taught. As with the Internet, there were people arguing for this all along, yet the organization could not be budged.

This brings me to the complexity of the organization itself. US Chess is comprised of a governance structure and office staff. The office staff publishes *Chess Life*, maintains the rating system, and processes title applications, among other things. The

governance structure, comprised of a Board, and a group of Delegates that meet once a year.

The Delegates are the ultimate authority, but the Board is in charge when the Delegates are not in session. The Board is elected by popular vote. There are well-known problems with this arrangement. A billionaire could send postcards to every voting member and have an undue influence on the outcome, for example.

The Delegates are appointed by the state chess organizations. The main problem that arises stems from the difficulty of building consensus among a geographically dispersed population. It often comes down to who gives the best speech at the annual Delegates' meeting, which is no way to run a railroad.

Efforts to establish a committee to coordinate the delegates have not been successful, but it is the simplest way to address the geographical complexity of the organization. Delegates who only assemble once are hard to coordinate and Board members elected by popular vote often lack the background to run an organization such as US Chess.

The Delegates can be fooled by effective speeches or by organized deception. Such a deception occurred in the late 90's when the true state of financial affairs was hidden from the Delegates. Vendors had put us on a cash-only basis for failure to pay our bills. The bank had refused to lend us more money. The borrowed money had not been used to stock inventory, as was usual, but to meet monthly expenses instead. Yet, the Delegates were told that everything was fine.

One source of income, historically, has been books and equipment. Al Lawrence was famous for getting the catalog just so, but he had left to become the Managing Director of the US Chess Hall of Fame. The inventory had gotten to the point that one past President told me at a US Open that it was the first time he had gone into the US Chess bookstore and found nothing he wanted to buy.

It was only a few short years later that the whole house of cards collapsed. The organization moved, first to Crossville, then to Saint Louis, and the books and equipment business was contracted out.

The truth is that US Chess is strongest when the local organizations are strong. The recent desire to centralize power in the organization is misguided. When the States are strong, the organization is strong.

The organization can also profit from some investigative journalism. Board members often consider this a threat, but the more information the Delegates have, the better their decisions will be.

*In the **Limelight**:* Tibor Karolyi
Interview by Mark Capron

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

My dear parents have passed away. My father died in 2004 and my mother in 2016.

My father was a Hungarian champion of gymnasiums at chess ahead of future grandmasters, but at age 17 he won the long-distance swimming championship in the Danube and ended up being a water polo player. He narrowly did not make the 1956 Melbourne Olympic team which won gold, because of injury. He was a successful trainer in water polo for nine players that won Olympic gold medals. He was a member of the team winning the Hungarian water polo championship three times. He returned to chess in his mid-forties and reached the rating of 2345 which was respectable in the seventies.

My mother was a basketball player. At age 17 she competed in the highest league and made the national junior team. Her accomplishment was special, because she was a short lady at a height of 154 centimetres (*just over 5 feet -ed.*).

I got married in 1988. My wife, Aliz, works in a government office for problematic families with over 20 people working under her. I have three sons and two granddaughters. It is a special joy for me to see that they all do well, and that they live in Újpest, the suburb where I was raised.



Tibor (in blue) surrounded by his family.

On Facebook I see lots of pictures of you participating in sports activities. What sports do you regularly compete in? How did you get started in them?

I started chess seriously after my grandfather passed away. Before he passed, my father and grandfather had me wake up early to play a Hungarian card game which required three players. After his passing my father and I started to play blitz. Sadly, I started to play chess a bit late, around 13 or 14.

I wanted to play chess, but I loved to play table tennis in the gymnasium, and I knew I had a special feel for the ball. Once I played tennis when I was 28 and a player told me that I was really good and why did I not go to a club. I did, and soon after, made a silver medal at the Hungarian Senior championship at singles. When I worked in Singapore a future friend asked me if I wanted to play badminton with him. I fell in love with it. I read about the relatively new sport of racketlon (*racketlon consists of four independent matches of table tennis, badminton, squash and tennis, in that order -ed*). I only needed to learn squash. Nick Aplin, who was my co-author, was a decent squash player, so I played him a few times. I got the information that in 2010 there would be racketlon championship. I prepared hard and managed to win the Hungarian championship in Győr.



Then I looked to make winning "senior championships" a sport. I made it in tennis doubles with my old friend Levente Bakonyi. Then I looked for more sports and found crossminton (*previously known as speed badminton-ed*). It

quickly shined through that I would be good and made a silver at the senior championship. When I aged 55, I prepared extremely hard to win the Hungarian Senior championship and made it. A few years later I won the senior championship at crossminton for the first time. I looked for more sports and I was told about padel (*another racket sport -ed*), I luckily managed to win the first Hungarian senior championship. I looked for another sport and found pickleball and thanks to my very strong partner Hajnalka Szabó managed to win the senior mixed double championship. I looked for more sports, but in no other sport existed a senior championship. If I saw a chance, I would try another sport as well.

Is chess writing your main occupation or what else do you do for a living?

I give online lessons and some in person. Apart from chess I have virtually no income. Luckily, I am still in love with chess.

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

I can't remember when I learned the rules. I started to train hard in 1974 and played my first official game in early 1975.

What are a few of your chess playing highlights?

I won the Hungarian Open Championship in 1984, and in addition, I was a member of the Hungarian championship team four times (1977, 1978, 1979, and 1996). I admired and learned a lot (especially about analysis) from some of the great players that were teammates: Istvan Csom, Jozsef Pinter, Lajos Portisch, László Szabó, and Miskolc Beliavsky.

When I was 16, I finished 11th at the Under 26 World Championships. My team won bronze. We made only four points less than the Soviet team consisting of Kasparov, Yusupov, Dolmatov, Psakhis, Kochiev and Vladimirov. USA was fourth. In 1980, I was 8th at the World Junior Championship. In the penultimate round I could have won a rook against Nigel Short, but lost, and in the last round I was a pawn up versus Kasparov when I took his draw offer. In general, I am not satisfied with my accomplishment over the board. I virtually retired when I got married at age 27. I consider myself lucky playing Kasparov, Tal and all the Hungarian great players starting from Szabó. Judit Polgar is the only special Hungarian I did not face in an official game.

Wikipedia says you are an International Arbiter. How often do you exercise that ability? Have you directed any famous events?

I was an arbiter only once. I did poorly. In time troubles I got carried away with looking at the game positions and forgot to record the number of moves that were played.

That makes me laugh a little. I have done the same thing! Do you recall what the first chess book you ever had was?

Alföldy László's *33 Chess Lessons* and *Alekhine's 300 Selected Games*. I can recall Vasily Panov's opening book as well.

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

I love books on old masters; Schlechter's games were my favourites. I liked Georgy Lisitsin's books a lot. Non-chess, I read all Dostoevsky and Lion Feuchtwanger. I liked Somerset Maugham as well. I like a lot of Hungarian writers, too. But writing and reading are clashing; since I write books, I mainly read articles.

What is your personal chess library like and are you able to use it to help write?

I estimate the size of my Chess library to be over 100 books. I have used them a lot. I have the scanned version of the Hungarian Chess magazine *Sakkélet*. Grandmaster Szabó's articles were brilliant, and I have used the magazine's articles a lot.

Do you ever need to spend time at places like the Hague library in the Netherlands? What other fun places have you visited to do research for a book?

Not really, the library of the Hungarian Chess Federation is in bad shape. I usually ask friends online about information.

Which sources have you found the most intriguing?

Sakkélet, Brady's and Donaldson's books were very useful for my Fischer books. *Chess Life Online* issues are also excellent sources. I also look at Russian chess books. I also like to contact players who have faced the great players I write about.

Any good stories on the research process or how you stumbled onto anything?



My writing career started in an interesting way. I visited Grandmaster Tony Miles' funeral, and I was asked to write a detailed article on his chess for *Kingpin*. Somebody liked it and I got an offer from Batsford to write a book on Judit Polgar (*Judit Polgar: The Princess of Chess*, 2004).

Endgame Virtuoso Anatoly Karpov



On Karpov (*Endgame Virtuoso Anatoly Karpov*), the idea came in Singapore. Natalia Edzgveradze was my trainer colleague in Ignatius Leong's company, and she told me that she was fascinated by Karpov's play. I got a lot of inspiration from that book; I tried hard to please her. I consider that book my best. Her interest for my book has been an inspiration all the way in my writing career.

I talked a lot on Petrosian with the Armenians, Tigran Gyozyan and Ashot Nadanian. Their devotion affected me, but I had to wait years to get the offer to write about Petrosian.

Ashot also liked my idea on Kasparov's great predecessors.

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

Tibor Florian wrote in the *Sakkélet* that Fischer and Larsen agreed on Larsen playing board one in the Rest of the World-Soviet Union match in Belgrade.

By the way, it was a surprise to get an offer to write about Fischer. By getting that offer I was able to write about the six players I wanted to write about the most. I already wrote about Kasparov, Karpov, Tal, Petrosian, and Carlsen. In addition, I had warm relations with many, but only two friends in chess: Károly Honfi and Péter Szilágyi. They were my junior trainers, and I had close early friendships with them until their passing away. It meant an awful lot to me to write a book on Péter and devote a chapter to Honfi. It would be nice to write about Botvinnik, but I already consider myself blessed.

My best quality as an author is not the chess-historical feature. That is why I had several co-authors. Hans Renette's work, together with mine, in my opinion, produced a high-quality series on Korchnoi. The complimentary reviews suggest that my evaluation is correct. I consider my

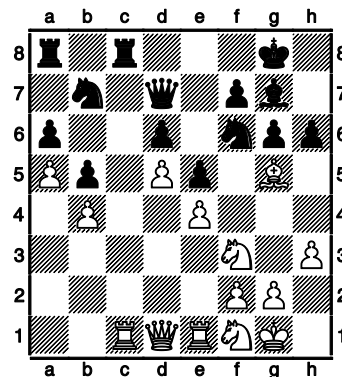


best quality is to discover new features of the player I write about. GM Jacob Aagaard told me, and I agree with him, that I have a good eye for discovering beauties. Let me show some

masterpieces I spotted that were not analysed by other authors:

Spassky, Boris - Kholmov, Ratmir

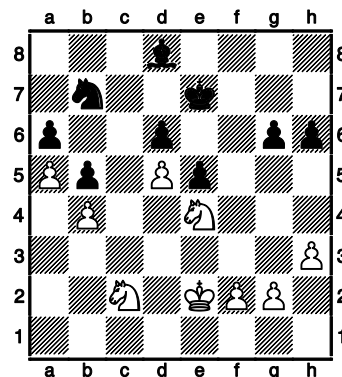
Soviet Championship Final Yerevan (17), 1962



23. ♖xf6!

Spassky starts exchanging pieces. He possibly anticipated the motif would decide the outcome of the game.

23... ♗xf6 24. ♗d2 ♖g7 25. ♖xc8 ♖xc8 26. ♖c1 ♖c7 27. ♗e3 ♗e7 28. ♖xc7 ♗xc7 29. ♗c2 ♗xc2 30. ♗xc2 ♗d8 31. ♗d2 f5 32. ♗f1 ♗f6 33. ♗e2 fxe4 34. ♗xe4+ ♗e7



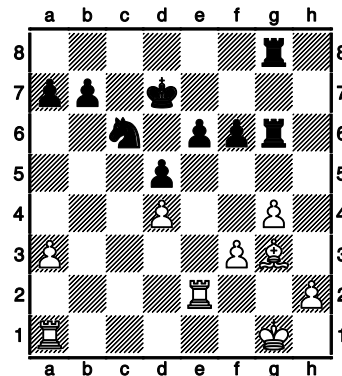
35. ♗a3!

After many purposeful exchanges, Spassky created a threat, which can't really be stopped.

35... ♗xa5 36. bxa5 He went on to win.

Polgar, Judit - Timman, Jan

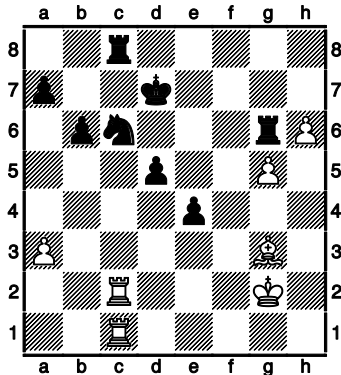
Paris Immopar Rapid Paris (1), 1992



26. ♖b2!!

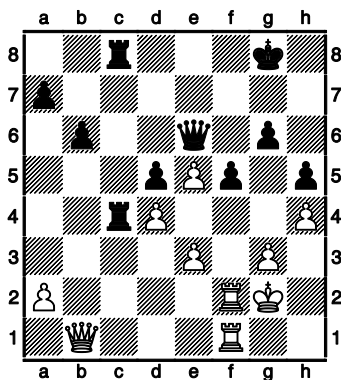
Judit weakened the c6 square, the point of it will be seen many moves later.

26...b6 27.♖c1 ♜c8 28.♖bc2 ♜gg8 29.♚f2 e5 30.dxe5 fxe5 31.h4 ♜gf8 32.h5 e4 33.h6 ♜xf3+ 34.♚g2 ♜f6 35.g5 ♜g6



36.♜xc6! ♜gxc6 37.♜xc6 ♚xc6 38.h7 1-0

Aghamalian, Vartan - Petrosian, Tigran
Championship of Georgian Republic Tbilisi, 1945

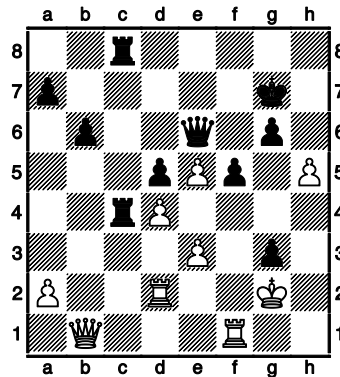


29...♚g7!!

It would be really nice to know exactly why he played this very deep move. One possibility is that he knew that his opponent likes to go forward and just waited. But there is a good chance he noticed something hidden. One may think it is a subtle prophylactic king move, but not quite! On 29...a6 30.g4 hxg4 31.h5 g3 32.♜b2 with equal chances, or after 32.♚xg3 ♜e7 33.♜g2 the position would be equal.

30.♜b2

Aghamalian doesn't know what to do, he decides to wait and see how Black develops his play on the queenside. 30.g4?! hxg4 31.h5 g3! 32.♜d2 (On 32.♚xg3 ♜e7 wins.)



32...♜h8! Here we can see the point of Petrosian's idea. He vacated the 8th rank to enable his rook joining the attack. 33.♜h1 g5 White would face problems.

It looks like your chess books have been supported by various publishing companies. Are there big differences between the requirements of each? Have you ever done or considered self-publishing?

I was fortunate to work with virtually all the best chess publishers in the world. They are all professional, they all have qualities they excel in. Some care a lot about the size, some for the title, in one case it took more than two years to settle on a title. Recently most of my books have been published by Elk and Ruby. Sometimes we do not agree on certain things, but our relationship is good, and I think our chemistry affects our books positively. I have not really considered publishing on my own.

Where do you do most of your writing and what makes it a good place to write?

I mainly write at home, but sometimes at my son's home. I had some memorable places as well. In Bangkok, I was invited to a fantastic meal and the large amount I ate made me wake up and I found a fantastic game and made the analysis in the middle of the night in the hotel room. Another time I was playing a badminton event and while I waited for the next match, I analysed an endgame by Carlsen, who loves physical sports as well.

Once I analysed a game at the Bangkok airport. I was the first to arrive to the waiting area before entering the plane. When I finished analysing, I noticed there were only 3-4 more people to get on the airplane, so roughly 800 passengers entered the jumbo jet and I was so concentrating on the game I did not see anything of it. But mainly, I write at home. My wife wakes up at 5.30. I rarely oversleep, but usually I get up at the same time to spend time together. I start writing around 6 am, my head works the best at that

time. I stop when I get tired, and when I feel refreshed, I restart and when I get tired again, I stop, have a nap and continue. In the evening, I usually just select games or do preparation.

What inspires you to write?

When people express their appreciation on Facebook or I read a positive review on my books it means a lot and gives me a lot of energy to keep on working. When I told my former teacher and friend, Péter Balogh, that I would write a book, he told me, "Tibi, if you write, write well." I try to live up to his expectation. His suggestion has remained with me ever since.

One of my best moments in my life was when I showed Judit's ♖b2!! to my father (see *Polgar, Judit – Timman, Jan game above-ed*). He was already very ill and died the same year, but he still was able to enjoy the beauty.

The biggest pleasure in writing for me is to discover a new quality of a great player and discover majestic games which were not noticed earlier.

As I mentioned before, I consider my best quality is to discover a new feature of the player I write about. For example, Fischer is famous for liking bishops, but I calculated a statistic which showed he more often had a knight. However, he indeed has more artistic masterpieces with a bishop versus a knight. Fischer had to have a one week break in the Siegen Olympiad. He fell apart in the remaining four rounds. When the start of the Reykjavik match was delayed a week, he started very poorly, and when they moved from Sveti Stefan to Belgrade he lost his touch for a few games. When he could not play and probably wanted to, the returns were not successful. Such discoveries mean a lot to me.

My wife has no interest regarding my writing except when the money arrives to my bank account. Still, I am very grateful to her, since whatever I accomplished as a trainer, as a writer, and in the sport has a lot to do with the great environment she has provided.

Do you ever get writer's block? How do you deal with it?

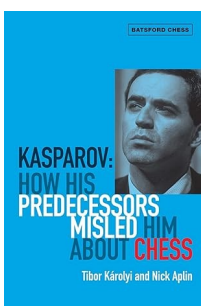
Somehow, I am confident that I can write at the required level. The only time I had a lack of confidence was when I undertook writing on the greatest ever chess event, the Spassky-Fischer Reykjavik match. But I had a long conversation with my former classmate, Hilda Tompa, who is a teacher of literature and the English language. The warm and memorable talk made me get rid of my worries and inhibitions and from that point on my writing came natural-

ly. Usually, near the end of books I get a bit impatient.

On my last book featuring an opening variation, I had personal difficulties which made it hard to get started. But I told myself I must be tough and was able to get going. Also, at some points I was scared of some move orders, but once I started working on the games it went fluently.

Which of your books has turned out to be your favorite and why?

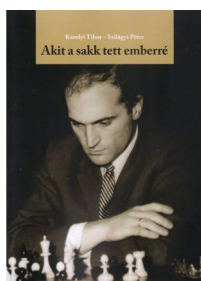
I consider the *Endgame Virtuoso Anatoly Karpov* my best one. But *Kasparov: How My Predecessors Misled Me*



About Chess is the most unique. I was happy to find out that Kasparov remained friendly with me after my *Predecessors* book. The *Secret of Queen Endings* was a small contribution to



understand better. That book, written together with Ferenc Berkes, is of the highest quality.



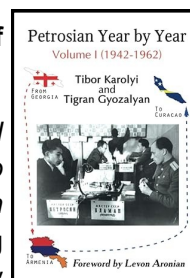
Which book gave you the most pleasure writing and why?

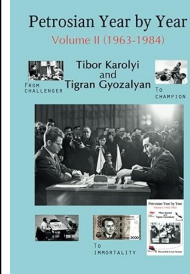
Péter Szilágyi's health was deteriorating, and he expressed that he would be happy to have a book written about himself. I wrote it in a rush to be able to present it to him before he would pass away. I often went to bed just waiting to have the morning come, so I could continue the book. I managed to give him the book on a Friday, and he passed on the next Tuesday. He was in such poor shape I do not know whether he realised it was the book about him or not. After it, maybe the Karpov one. But *Genius in the Background* was special as I was able to write about Honfi and a bit about Laszlo Lindner, Yochanan Afek, and Nadanian with whom I have a warm relationship. In general, I love to write books and get much pleasure out of them.



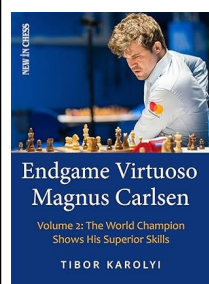
Which book are you most proud of and why?

Kasparov: How his Predecessor Misled Him About Chess, *Endgame Virtuoso Anatoly Karpov*, and maybe the *Petrosian Year by Year*. By the way, something unique happened. A player from my



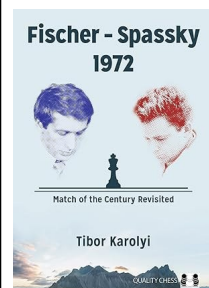


crossminton club, who is an English teacher, told me that in a certain English language class they select high quality texts by great writers to translate into Hungarian. She told me that she was utterly surprised that the text they chose was from *Judit Polgar: The Princess of Chess* written by Tibor Karolyi!



Congratulations! That is definitely something to be proud of. Which book was most difficult and why?

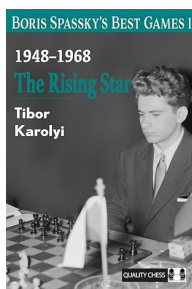
Maybe the second Carlsen Endgame Virtuoso, (*Endgame Virtuoso Magnus Carlsen: The World Champion Shows His Superior Skills (Volume 2)*). The publisher wanted to change the style somewhat and it was not easy to adjust. Maybe the *Secrets of Queen Endgames* book with Ferenc Berkes due to our inexperience with what to do with the completed book (it ended up expensive for us), but I am still proud of the quality of the book we made. Translating some of the Russian text in the Petrosian and Spassky



books were tough as my Russian could be better. Starting my last book was not easy, it was tough to overcome some personal difficulties as discussed previously. In the Fischer-Spassky book it was not easy to choose what to insert and what to leave out.

Victor Korchnoi has been one of my favorite players ever since I read Keene's book on the 1978 World Championship match with Karpov. During the Korchnoi four volume, book project what surprised you the most?

Though I wrote in great detail about his closest rivals: Petrosian, Tal, Spassky and Karpov, I did not fully realize how great Korchnoi was. In my opinion, Fischer and Korchnoi together can be grateful to the Communist party as they created so much tension, which was too much for the Communist party's own players. I think the tension affected Taimanov's, Polugaevsky's, Petrosian's and Spassky's play. Korchnoi and Fischer got used to it. Banning Korchnoi in 1974 or 75 was useful, as after that he raised his level of endgame play, which earned him many wins, including in Baguio. It was a surprise that he was slightly better in openings and endgames than Karpov in the 1978 match. In my opinion, the key to his losses was



time trouble. With other players he got away with it, but Karpov was so strong he was able to punish him.

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

I liked Carl Schlechter for his nice positional play. I would say Kasparov was my favourite in the opening, (in my opinion Korchnoi was possibly the second-best Soviet player in that department, or maybe Botvinnik.) Petrosian for his exceptional vision of the long-term elements. Tal and Kasparov are my favourites at creating complications. I found Spassky the most elegantly and fluently attacking player. Karpov and Carlsen are in my opinion the greatest endgame players of all time. At being resilient in the endgames, Carlsen has a rival; Fischer was majestic at that and surprisingly Robert Hübner was also very special at saving bad endgames. Fighting spirit is hard to choose, maybe Fischer, Carlsen, Korchnoi and Nona Gaprindashvili (the first woman to receive the grandmaster title).

Which of your 38 (and counting) books have the best sales and any thoughts as to why it has done so well?

I think the Karpov book. First of all, he was majestic at endgames, maybe the depth I analysed the game, maybe the very strong inspiration that affected the quality of my work. He mentioned in an interview that he rated my book and someone else's the best books on him. My co-author asked good questions and touched up my English very well.

My trainer told me that Szilágyi said that I was the most successful Hungarian chess-author ever. At first, I did not know what to think, but later when I realized that it is correct, it started to mean a lot to me. It is a very specialized and small area, but it is very, very pleasing to be the most successful ever from my nation!

Have you had the chance to talk to some of your subjects in person? For example, you have written quite a few books on Karpov. Did you have any in-person conversations?

In my interview books, my talks with Timman, Seirawan and Gaprindashvili are very memorable. I did not talk to Karpov apart from a very short phone conversation on his junior trainer, Leonid Gratvol.

Unfortunately, Boris Spassky just passed away. Is there a second book featuring him on the way?

As far as I know, the publisher is editing it now.

I counted and I have 15 (18 now since the interview was completed) of the books you've authored. I know, I need to get more! Ha! Ha! My favorites are the Korch-

noi books, Petrosian books, Tal books and the Legendary Chess Career books. What led to the Legendary books? Were they really a precursor to learning how to write the later books like Petrosian and Korchnoi?

I am grateful to you for having so many of my books. I no longer remember exactly what led to the idea of the Legendary books, but I knew that asking active players about chess creates a situation where a current professional cannot speak sincerely, while a retired player can. It is nicer to write about a living person as one can ask questions. It would be nice to be able to ask questions of the past. I feel pity that I can never ask Tal, Petrosian and Korchnoi. The Legendary books probably contributed a bit to the writing of the future books.

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

Do it, if it comes naturally. Maybe it is useful to ask what the aim is: teaching people or entertaining. I think my wish is to increase people's knowledge.

According to Wikipedia you have coached some famous students such as Peter Lékó and Judit Polgár. Do you have a coaching/teaching philosophy or game plan you rely on, or did/do you tailor your approach to each individual?

I trained Lékó from age 10 to 14. In the first three years, I was his only trainer, and raised his level from 1900. It is hard to imagine nowadays, but Lékó, a 1900 player at age of ten, was able to receive an invitation in a closed tournament with Karpov only three years later! It would be a great achievement to get this invite in your own country, but it was not even a Hungarian tournament! I worked for him 2.5 years more from 1998-2000, but by that time he was a world class player. I worked together with Susan Polgár and some time with Sofia Polgár, but not Judit Polgár. I saw how they trained, and I saw what László (*Polgár, their father -ed*) was fully right about and what could have been improved. All together my six pupils won ten medals at world, age group tournaments. I trained Zoltán Gyimesi, who won the European Community Championship, and Olympic champion Ildikó Mádl. Jason Goh, who I trained intensively in Singapore, finished fourth at the world under 14 Championship. He finished higher than Carlsen, beat Ian Nepomniachtchi and had chances to win, but lost to Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

I very carefully look into the games of the pupil and spot his or her weakest point and remove it. On a side note, I think I spend more time on selecting the games for my books than other authors. Also, a trainer and the pupil, just like an author and the reader, has to have the right chem-

istry. In principle, I pass a lot of knowledge to my pupils. I like to compare chess learning to learning languages. The teacher passes the knowledge in the first period, the pupil must learn in the second, and in the third period the pupil must go practice the learned material. And then, we start all over again. Sadly, in Hungary junior trainers get virtually no respect. In 2002, the Hungarian Men's Olympic team had chances to win a gold and finished second. In 2014, Hungary had no chance to win, but in a close race among equal teams received silver. Then in 2024, in Budapest, we finished 11th. The steady decrease has a lot to do with how junior trainers are treated. When I started to write a book, it was shocking for me to receive so much more respect as an author than as a junior trainer.

What were some of the big differences you used for coaching each of them? What were their biggest differences?

The Polgárs had many trainers, while I was Lékó's only trainer. I think, until making the grandmaster level, having one trainer has more advantages than disadvantages. I saw clearly what to work on. I also felt that he was my pupil and if work had to be done, I did not wait for another trainer, but did it myself. I was able to convince Péter's mother that I would work ten hours a month on Péter's opening. Péter, at age 11, had an opening repertoire at grandmaster level. He consistently earned good positions in grandmaster tournaments and sometimes even got an advantage against great players like Adams or Timman. The Polgár girls were young, and their trainer had to watch out for how they made preparations to keep them from getting bored.

Are you still actively coaching? If so, anybody famous?

I still do some coaching. Two years ago, a German boy finished second at the under 14 Championship, but our work stopped. Sadly, I was not able to convince the mother to have him give up football. I currently have a pupil winning the Hungarian School Championship.

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

Go to a trainer and let them investigate your chess. Trust them and follow their advice and hope. Also ask the question of what you want: becoming a professional or just a very strong amateur. Chess is like learning languages. If one wants to learn Russian, it is better to be clear about the goal and then learn accordingly. For example, it makes a difference in approach to read Dostoevsky or just being able to ask how to get to the airport. Desire and effort should be in harmony.

What new projects are you currently working on and when might we see them?

My *Korchnoi Year by Year* came out this week, the Hübner two-volume book which I also did with Hans Renette for Elk and Ruby will come out soon. The same publisher will also publish a two-volume book on Sir Gorge Thomas who beat Botvinnik and Capablanca and who was one of the greatest ever badminton players and a semi-finalist at Wimbledon All England tennis championship. My co-author, Jon Manley, has not finished the historical part yet, but I submitted the analysed games. I found it remarkable that badminton left its mark on his chess as well. I have also submitted a repertoire book for Black of a certain variation. And soon to start a book on Alekhine.

Exciting! I can't wait for the Hübner books as readers will know that I have been a big fan of his. Sir George Thomas will also be on the "must buy" list, as I really enjoy the history of the game. What would be your dream project to do?

I have a few, which would be nice to write, but I would not call them a dream. When I read *Kasparov's Great Predecessors* I liked a lot of his analysis, on which his genius left its mark, but I felt in some ways it was misleading. For example, he devoted more than 40 pages to Chigorin or Stein, but did not analyse a single game by Maróczy, who was the dominating player from 1905 to 1907. I like to look at the retrospective Elo ratings and starting from La Bourdonnais there were 60 world, number one players. My idea is to introduce these special players and analyse a few games from the period elevating them to the highest spot. I need a co-author. I suggested the idea to Hans Renette. I misunderstood his answer, and I made a chapter, but, sadly, he did not like the idea.

I have analysed some very difficult endgames. For example, White has a queen, a-pawn and b-pawn versus a rook and a, b, and c-pawns. Having a book with such an endgame would not be the most exciting, but it would contribute to increase our knowledge a bit on chess and spread this knowledge.

I have written a few humorous articles on chess; it would be nice to have them in one book. (See end of interview for two humorous articles Tibor has written -ed.)

Another humorous story is on the pronunciation of my last name, Karolyi. It should be Karo-ee in Hungarian, the "i" is silent. One time a younger person called me Calorie (like in the food measurement). I didn't correct them, but thought it pretty funny?!

One last funny story. I was in Australia and went into a book store to purchase one of my book to give as a gift to

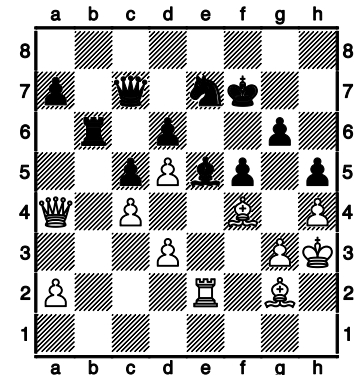
a friend. I wrote my name on a sheet of paper and gave it the attendant. She looked it up in her computer and said I don't have any books by that author ...but there are much better authors?! I didn't correct her.

This has been a really fun interview. Thank you. Anything you would like to add for our readers?

Fischer's ♖h3! against Spassky in the second match was special. I think the world did not understand how much he was ahead of us. Computers made us understand such moves twenty years later.

Fischer, Robert James (2785) - Spassky, Boris Vasilievich (2560) [B23] St Stefan/Belgrade m Belgrade (19), 1992

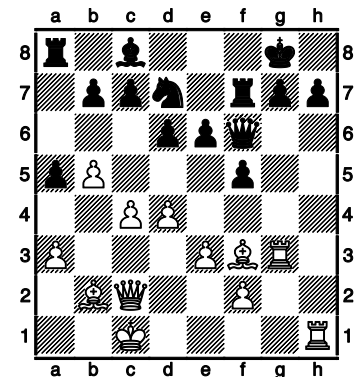
1.e4 c5 2.♗c3 ♘c6 3.♗ge2 e5 4.♗d5 ♗ge7 5.♗ec3 ♗xd5 6.♗xd5 ♗e7 7.g3 d6 8.♗g2 h5 9.h4 ♗e6 10.d3 ♗xd5 11.exd5 ♗b8 12.f4 ♗d7 13.0-0 g6 14.♗b1 f5 15.b4 b6 16.bxc5 bxc5 17.c4 0-0 18.♗a4 ♗f6 19.♗b7 ♗b6 20.♗b5 ♗f7 21.♗xf7 ♗xf7 22.♗d2 ♗b8 23.♗c6 ♗c8 24.♗e1 ♗e7 25.♗a4 ♗c7 26.♗h2 exf4 27.♗xf4 ♗e5 28.♗e2 ♗b6 29.♗h3



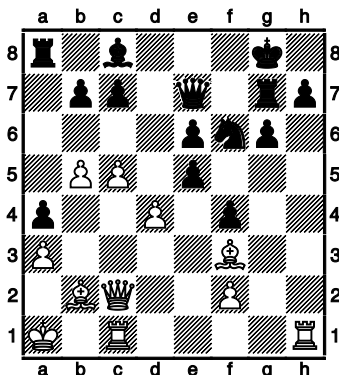
"Fischer finds an extraordinary place for his king, and in so doing, he sets up a wicked trap. Let me show you one of AlphaZero's gems.

AlphaZero - Stockfish 8 [A17]

Computer Match London, UK (255), 18.01.2018

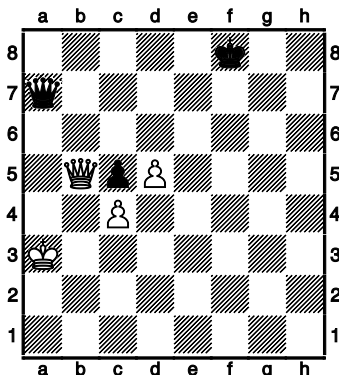


21.♗b1!! g6 22.♗gg1 a4 23.♗a1 ♗g7 24.e4 f4 25.c5 ♗e7 26.♗c1 ♗f6 27.e5 dxe5



28.♖he1 e4 29.♙e4 ♜f8 30.d5 exd5
31.♙d3 ♙g4 32.f3 White had a decisive advantage. 1-0” Quoted from *Fischer - Spassky 1972*, Tibor Karolyi. Quality Chess, 2022.

29. ... ♘g8 30.♖xe5 dxe5 31.♙xe5 ♜e7 32.d6 ♖xd6 33.♙xd6 ♜xd6 34.♙d5+ ♜f8 35.♜xa7 ♘e7 36.♜a8+ ♜g7 37.♜b7 ♜f8 38.a4 f4 39.a5 fxg3 40.a6 ♜f4 41.♙f3 ♘f5 42.♜e4 g2 43.♜xf4 g1♜ 44.♙e4 ♜a1 45.a7 ♜xa7 46.♙xf5 gxf5 47.♜xf5+ ♜g7 48.♜g5+ ♜f8 49.♜h6+ ♜g8 50.♜h5 ♜c7 51.♜g6+ ♜h8 52.♜f6+ ♜g8 53.♜e6+ ♜h8 54.♜d5 ♜f7 55.♜g2 ♜g6+ 56.♜h3 ♜f7 57.♜e5+ ♜h7 58.♜g4 ♜g6+ 59.♜f4 ♜h6+ 60.♜f3 ♜g6 61.♜e4 ♜h8 62.♜e2 ♜d6 63.♜e3 ♜h2+ 64.♜e1 ♜h1+ 65.♜d2 ♜h2+ 66.♜c3 ♜xh4 67.d4 ♜h7 68.d5 ♜f6+ 69.♜c2 ♜d6 70.♜g5 ♜h8 71.♜d2 ♜b6 72.♜e5+ ♜g8 73.♜e8+ ♜g7 74.♜b5 ♜c7 75.♜c2 ♜f8 76.♜a6 ♜h2+ 77.♜b3 ♜b8+ 78.♜b5 ♜c7 79.♜a3 ♜a7+



80.♜b3

Had Fischer played 80.♜b2!! ♙e7 81.♜b3! it leaves Black in *zugzwang* and wins for White!

80. ... ♜e7 81.♜c2 ♜d8 82.♜d2 ♜c7 83.♜a6 ♜f4+ 84.♜c2 ♜e4+ ½-½

Tibor Karolyi's Books!!

- 1) Judit Polgar Publisher Batsford 2004
- 2) Kasparov's Fighting Chess I Batsford 2006
- 3) Kasparov's Fighting Chess II Batsford 2006
- 4) Endgame Virtuoso Anatoly Karpov New in Chess 2007
- 5) Kasparov: How His Predecessors Mislead Him About Chess Batsford 2009
- 6) Genius In the Background Quality Chess 2009
- 7) Karpov's Strategic Wins I Quality Chess 2011
- 8) Karpov's Strategic Wins II Quality Chess 2011
- 9) Mikhail Tal's Best Games I Quality Chess 2014
- 10) Mikhail Tal's Best Games II Quality Chess 2015
- 11) Mikhail Tal's Best Games III Quality Chess 2017
- 12) Legendary Chess Career's: Lajos Portisch Chess Evolution 2015
- 13) Legendary Chess Career's: Jan Timman Chess Evolution 2015
- 14) Legendary Chess Career's: Yasser Seirawan Chess Evolution 2015
- 15) Legendary Chess Career's: Eugenio Torre Chess Evolution 2015
- 16) Legendary Chess Career's: Nona Gaprindashvili Chess Evolution
- 17) Legendary Chess Career's: Vlastimil Hort Chess Evolution 20152015
- 18) Legendary Chess Career's: Alexander Beliavsky I Chess Evolution 2017
- 19) Legendary Chess Career's: Alexander Beliavsky II Chess Evolution 2017
- 20) Legendás Sakközök: Portisch Lajos Chess Evolution 2016
- 21) Play the Semi-Tarrasch I 2018 Chess Evolution
- 22) Play the Semi-Tarrasch II 2018 Chess Evolution 2018
- 23) Endgame Virtuoso Magnus Carlsen Volume 1 New in Chess 2018
- 24) Endgame Virtuoso Magnus Carlsen Volume 2 New in Chess 2023
- 25) The Exchange Queen's Gambit Chess Evolution 2016
- 26) Play the Dutch I Chess Evolution 2018
- 27) Play the Dutch II Chess Evolution 2018
- 28) Akit a sakk tett emberré Sakkvilág Péter Szilágyi 2019
- 29) Petrosian Year by Year Elk and Ruby I 2020
- 30) Petrosian Year by Year Elk and Ruby II 2021
- 31) Road to Reykjavik Quality Chess 2021
- 32) Fischer-Spassky Quality Chess 2022
- 33) Secret of Queen Endings Gambit 2023
- 34) Boris Spassky's Best games 1 2024
- 35) Korchnoi Year by Year volume 1 Elk and Ruby 2023
- 36) Korchnoi Year by Year volume 2 Elk and Ruby 2024
- 37) Korchnoi Year by Year volume 3 Elk and Ruby 2024
- 38) Korchnoi Year by Year volume 4 Elk and Ruby 2025

Submitted, not published books

- 39) *Hübner volume 1*
- 40) *Hübner volume 2*
- 41) *Sir George Thomas 1*
- 42) *Sir George Thomas 2*
- 43) *Opening variation*
- 44) *Boris Spassky's Best Games 2*

Yesterday I saw a review of my Karpov endgame book. Jesse Kraai, in my opinion, was wrong, giving the impression that Karpov just felt where to put the pieces. Portisch said he had played so many games against Karpov that when he was Karpov's second, he was utterly shocked how much Karpov calculated. Also, Kraai thinks it was all computer analysis, but, especially then, it was me and the program; and still, I am asking questions of the computer. However, it doesn't matter.

I would like to add something else to the interview. I think it is an important discovery from me that almost all Soviet grandmasters were spreading misinformation about their own chess. Some examples:

- Smyslov said he was looking to make 40 sensible moves and readily agree to a draw, but in reality, he played for a win.
- Petrosian said he liked to defend, but no player made more effort not to allow the opponent to attack (of course he was great when he ended up defending, but it was rare).
- Korchnoi rarely took pawns.
- Tal said there were two kinds of combinations, his and the correct ones. Many of his combinations were fully correct.
- The propaganda said that Karpov felt the squares to place his pieces, but he calculated a lot.
- Spassky was not a universal player, but a fantastic attacker.

Even as the world changes and paper books are gradually losing popularity to videos and ebooks, I hope I can continue writing and not see the end of paper books in my lifetime.

Thank you, it was a pleasure.

A follow-up item about the books Tibor has written:

Endgame Virtuoso Anatoly Karpov was awarded the Guardian Chess book of the Year in 2007. *Judit Polgar* was nominated to *British Chess Magazine* Book of the Year award.

In 2020 on the www.chess.com/amp/article/top-10-chess-books website *Karpov Strategic Wins* two volume book was selected into the top 10 chess book ever.

Citing Karpov from a 2018 interview from Chessbase.com: *Let's talk about chess literature. Have you read all the books written about you? Definitely not: there are too many! In fact, I read only a few. The ones by Guik and Tibor Karolyi I found them very interesting, these are good books.*

Kasparov the Patzer

An Exercise in Humor

By Tibor Karolyi

Many years ago, László Hazai told me as a critic, the lack of any system in Hungary to select the Olympic team was an issue. Due to this, he could not prove that Kasparov must be left out of the Hungarian national team. According to him, a fair and previously declared system must be set up. I always had great respect for László's lexical knowledge of chess. Even before he was to train, with great success, the Polgar sisters and the present World Junior Champion Peter Acs. László has very interesting ideas on chess, and he can point out things that most people miss. I buried his idea in my mind.

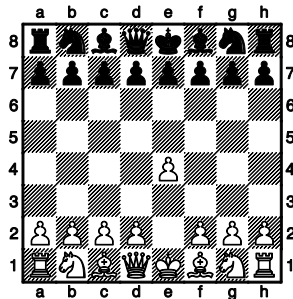
Let me tell you a bit about the importance of clear rules and laws. When I was in India, I asked people how they felt about the British colony times. They had altogether positive feelings towards the British, though they mentioned sometimes their ancestors suffered. They brought a lot of knowledge to India. Recently I visited Singapore, where I noticed how much they still respect the British Queens and Kings. They name many squares and streets after British governors. I was wondering why. They explained the British imposed their way of running a country, unlike the French, who mainly exported their culture, but otherwise did not leave much of a legacy. It seems to me the Soviets were the most accurate; they imposed their system as well as their culture. Believe me or not, it did not bring an economic boom to Hungary! However, it was nice we had to read so much Russian literature, and also chess became popular. Singapore reminded me so much of England, the way they speak English, left side driving, and even the underground is similar. One of the reasons for the current prosperous economy was because of the inherited system they used to run the country.

Let me return to the original subject.

In this article I will not only make it clear that Kasparov can be left out of the Hungarian team, but I will go even further to prove he is a patzer and convince you of it. Many of you think it will not be an easy task. The way I do this is not to show his lost games where he made mistakes, but games where he played great opponents and won against extremely strong grandmasters. He lost his last regular tournament game in early 1998. I will just remind you that it is only 2002 now. He has not been able to stay undefeated for 10 years. One can say he has won all the tournaments he has played over those years, but team events are different. He would just put too much pressure on the rest of the team by winning too many games. The others would feel they must win that many games as well, and so they may over-press and lose. One can't deny that those losses would be Garry's fault. Also, he nowadays plays only 1.e4 such that it makes it so easy for the opponent to prepare. Let me add one more thing: he may win some games after time trouble, which would raise the tension among other team members who may make a mistake in their own games because of that. Some may say he is one of the greatest players of all time, if not the greatest. But true experts cannot be misguided by results and facts, when it comes to choosing players for the team. Dear Reader, I could go on and on finding other logically and carefully selected reasons, making sure one has no other choice than to leave him out of the Olympic team. Instead of that let me analyze for you two of Garry's won games, where his victims were Alexei Shirov and Jaan Ehivest. I can't help reminding you he has such an incredible plus score against Alexei, sooner or later he will lose a

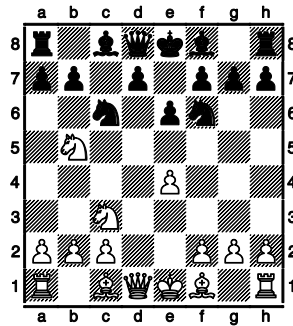
game against him. Can a responsible expert expect that it would happen in the Olympiad?

Kasparov,G (2805) - Shirov,A (2740)
[B33] Dortmund (9), 1994
 1.e4

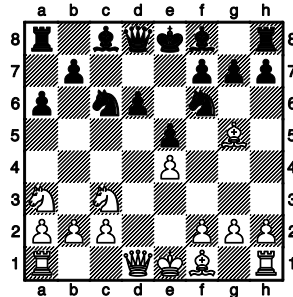


This move doesn't show much imagination, just follows old masters' patterns. It has been played thousands of times. Garry has been the best player in the world since 1984. When has he not been able to make a first move, which is not his own idea. There are 20 possible moves in the starting position; he has used only 3-4 altogether in his life. That is not great variety. He may end up finishing his career without contributing anything to hot openings like 1.dh3 a6. I saw him smiling in a picture receiving the first prize in Linares. How could he have been so happy when serious opening problems exist? He visibly forgot the opening questions at the prize giving ceremony. Just let me tell you one really great problem: Against 1.a4 it is not clear, whether Black should play 1.g6 or 1.g5. The latter gains space, on the other hand it blocks the h6-c1 diagonal, so limits the bishop's moves, it may weaken the h5 and f5 squares. Can White capitalize on this? What happens, if White follows up with d4, what should Black do with the g5 pawn? He can just sacrifice it or push forward to g4 (which opens the h6 square again!). Black can defend it in two ways, which is the more accurate, e6 or h6? You can see problems are serious indeed and they need solving urgently as well. Garry was happy just because he won Linares by the margin of 1,5 points. It raises the question: Does he feel responsible for chess?

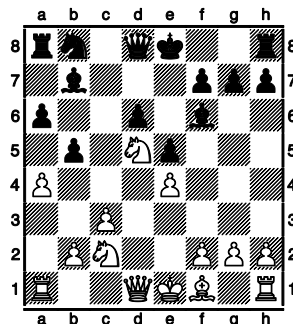
1...c5 I don't want to enter too deeply to evaluate Shirov now, but this is just passive. Black can make a direct attack by 1...xf6. 2.f3 It is correct, but look what he does to this knight! One can't say, it is wrong, but would he be prepared against sharp lines like the Dragon. Isn't it too much risk for the team?
2...e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.fxd4 f6 5.c3 c6 6.dxb5



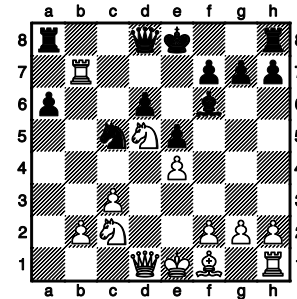
Would you believe it? He has made six moves and four of them have been knight moves. Doesn't he know he has other pieces as well? Let me make a point, Garry does it voluntarily, his knight is not under attack. 6...d6 7.f4 e5 8.g5 Again two moves with the same piece! When both of the rooks, the queen, and the f1 bishop, have not made a single developing move. Not to mention he did not take care of the safety of his king. 8...a6 9.a3



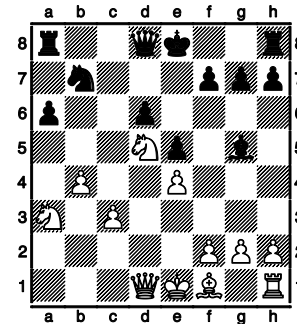
What is this? Garry develops the knight to the edge of the board wasting four moves out of nine to achieve that. Great play, isn't it? 9...b5 10.d5 Another knight move, the game is slowly becoming a scandal. 10...e7 11.f6 Garry has already made several bishop moves. And if that was not enough, he now voluntarily exchanges one. Should we laugh or cry? f6 12.c3 b7 13.c2 b8 14.a4 It is a transparent threat, but at least he does something.



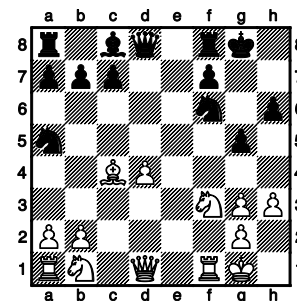
14...bxa4 15.Bxa4 d7 16.Bb4 If he makes one move with a piece Garry feels like making another right away. 16...c5 17.Bxb7



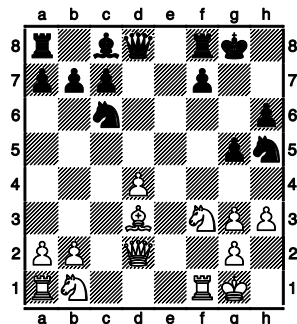
What is the value of the rook? Why give up a developed rook for a bishop, which any ten-year-old boy knows is worth less.
17...xb7 18.b4 g5 19.a3



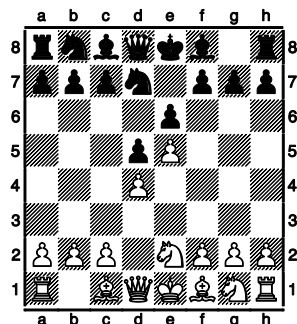
This is ridiculous. The same knight goes back to the edge of the board. I can understand whoever plays chess can make mistakes, but this is just getting to be too much. There is a danger that younger players will pick up this kind of chess. Let me show two games by Anand: Lautier,J (2596) - Anand,V (2781) [D20] Ambrapad 8th Monte Carlo 1.d4 d5 2.c4 dxc4 3.e3 e5 4.fxc4 exd4 5.exd4 f6 6.f3 d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.g5 h6 9.fh4 c6 10.h3 g5 11.fg3 ffg3 12.fgg3 fa5 Even very strong grandmasters follow Garry's footsteps
13.fd3 c6 14.fc4 fa5



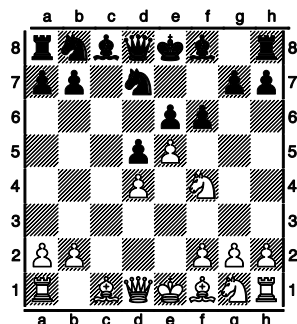
Black could have played something classical, but sticks to this strange kind of play.
15.fd3 c6 16.fdd2 fh5



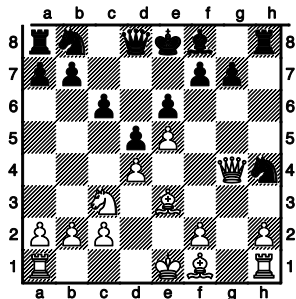
All knights should go to the edge of the board! 17.g4 ♖f4 18.♙e4 ♜xg4 19.♜xg4 ♜xg4+ 20.♜xg4 ♜e2+ 21.♜h2 ♜xg4 22.♜c3 ♙e6 23.♞ad1 ♜c6 24.♜d5 ♙xg4 25.♙xg4 ♞ad8 26.♙xc6 1/2-1/2. Anand, V (2762)-Bareev, E (2702) Shenyang 2000 1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♜c3 ♜f6 4.e5 ♜f7 5.♜ce2



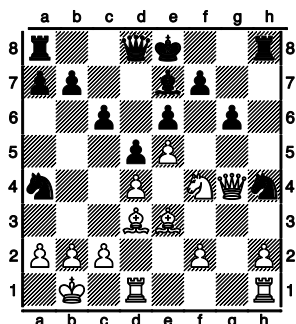
Of course, the same knight moves there, which already has moved. c5 6.c3 ♜xd4 7.♜xd4 ♙f6 8.♜f4



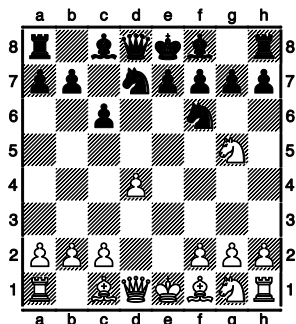
Where will this kind of chess lead to, if players play with a single knight and with pawns? Even the older generation can pick up new ideas. There are very few players, all-time, greater than Vishy, but even they get influenced by Garry's play. The next example is by Karpov, he was black against Nunn, they played in Monaco in 1994: 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♙f5 Why not 3. ... ♜a6 right away? 4.♜c3 e6 5.g4 ♜e7 7.♙e3 h5 8.♜f4 hxg4 9.♜xg6 ♜xg6 10.♜xg4 ♜h4



The first part of the task has been accomplished, one knight has reached the edge! The second is warming up. It is about to start its journey. 11.♙d3 g6 12.0-0 ♙e7 One may think not postponing the knight maneuver to the edge is a waste of time or lulls the opponent to sleep, but it is not. It stops Bg5, which would change the splendid knight on the h-file. 13.♜b1 ♜d7! 14.♜e2 ♜b6! 15.♜f4 ♜a4!!

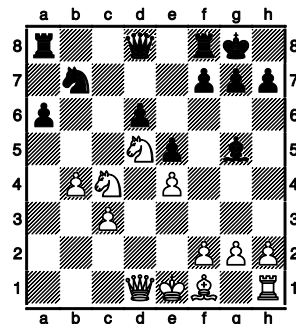


Hurray, He has made it where both knights reached the edge. From now on one can relax, as the lion's share of the work has been done. There are theoretical questions. Are the knights better placed, if they are both on the same edge file or better one on h- and one on the a-file? Will Garry contribute to that question? And what about bishops on the edge? Of course, if a champ plays like this, strange ways of opening can spread like 1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♜c3 dxe4 4.♜xe4 ♜d7 5.♜g5

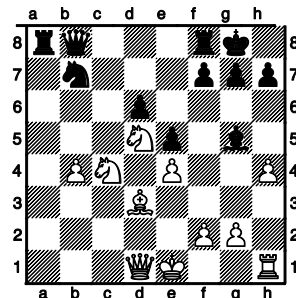


of course, players make knight moves only.

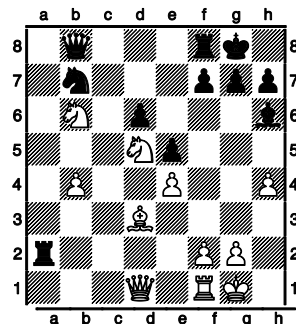
19...0-0 20.♜c4



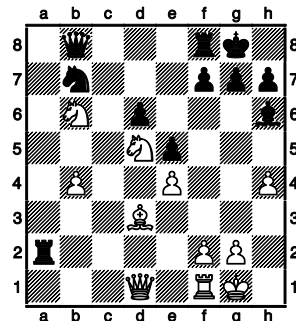
I did not want to comment on this, but I simply must. After 20 moves White has developed only two pieces. 20...a5 21.♙d3 Does the kingside bishop have to start its development at move 21? 21...axb4 22.♜xb4 This time he has a chance to take back with a knight, and he doesn't take the opportunity. At least he should be consistent. 22...♜b8 23.h4



Again, a childish try. Did he think his opponent would leave the bishop *en prise*? 23...♙h6 24.♜cb6

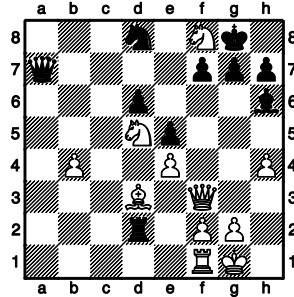


This is the tenth knight move. 24...♞a2 25.0-0

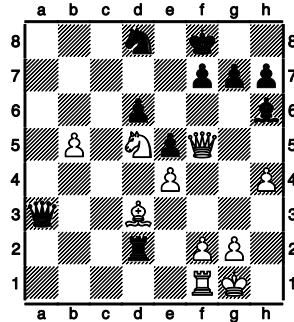


Garry, is this the kind of play that was taught at the Soviet Chess School, castling only on move 25, when queens are on the board?

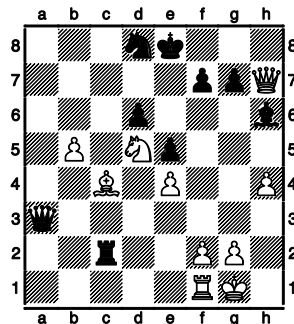
25...♖d2 26.♗f3 ♖a7 27.♘d7 ♘d8 28.♙x♗f8



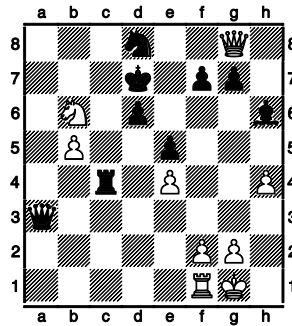
I am not able to calculate the number of knight moves. What is worth more, a light piece or a rook? 28...♗x♗f8 29.b5 ♖a3 30.♗f5!



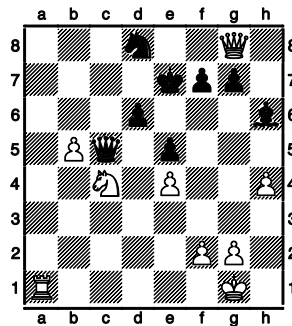
This is a good move, a fair commentator must admit it. However, I guess he accidentally touched the queen and he was forced to move it. It turns out to be a decent move. Sheer luck. 30...♗e8 31.♙c4 ♗c2 32.♗xh7



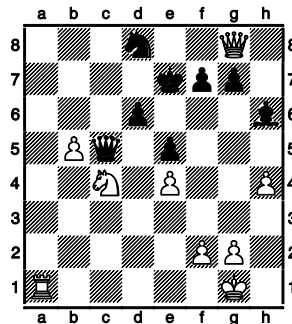
I guess Garry did not notice that his bishop was hanging. He put the queen to the edge of the board from the centre just for a check. 32...♙xc4 33.♗g8+. Why does one have to wait 33 moves for the very first check of the game? Let me remind you there was a Csom-Karolyi, game, which went 1.c4 e5 2.d3 ♘b4. That is true attacking chess. Despite the ferocious opening play the game ended a draw. 33...♗d7 34.♙b6+



Would you believe it, he gets lucky again? Fortune is on his side for him to have found this lucky check. Please note he is not consistent. One time he goes with the knight and soon changes his mind and wants the rook. He confuses trainers, what to teach? 34...♗e7 35.♙xc4



I think here, to his own surprise, he discovered he was ahead on material. He was so happy he blundered back straightaway. 35...♗c5 36.♙a1 What about protecting your pieces? He may do this kind of play in the Olympiad and it is just too much risk for the team. 36...♗d4 37.♙a3 Keeps the knight unprotected. 37...♙c1 38.♙e3

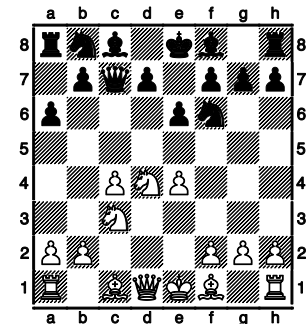


The rook is hanging, but he just did not see that. Still his opponent resigned. Now the game is over, I will let you know what the main problem with this damned game was. It was not played by me. It is a masterpiece of the imagination of a genius. I would rather cut my own arm off, before I would mention it, when it comes to selecting the team. 1-0

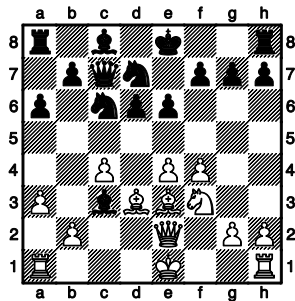
Ehlvest,J (2650) - Kasparov,G (2800)

[B41] Linares Linares (10), 1991

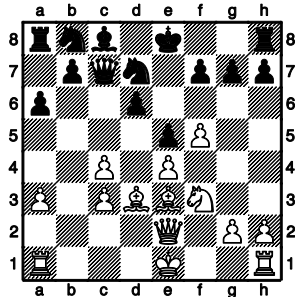
1.e4 c5 Garry hardly played anything other than the Sicilian, it is a one-sided handling of the openings. One subtle thing cannot be missed by a true selector; that is where his stubborn addiction to the Sicilian comes from. What comes to someone's mind when hearing the name of the island of Sicily. The volcano, the sea, but also the mafia. I, of course, do not say he has ties with the mafia, but he might have an appreciation for them and here is a way to show it. Another question, how he feels about Hungary. He had so many world championship finals games, he never used the super solid Hungarian defense, or the Budapest gambit, or the Maroczy bind. It would have helped the Hungarian tourist industry a lot, if he had played the Budapest gambit all his life. He and Karpov rather played the dubious Petroff (in many languages they call it the Russian defense) just to advertise their own homeland. Black doesn't defend his attacked pawn on move two, but starts a counterattack, which is obviously unpredictable. Let me add one more thing. Usually, they select a player for the first time that has the potential to improve a lot. Kasparov is 38, I do not think he would play any better in five years time than now. One cannot sacrifice the future for a gold medal right now. Actually, I do not know if it is an art or science. 2.♗f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♙xd4 a6 5.c4 He lost once to Lautier with white, when he played 5.♙c3. 5...♙f6 6.♙c3 ♗c7



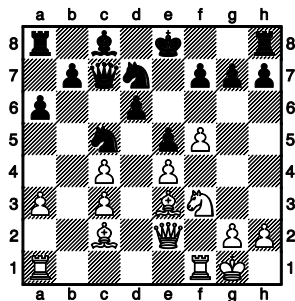
There are so many light pieces on their starting square, is this queen move the right one? 7.♙d3 7.a3 is a move Kasparov plays with White nowadays in this position. 7...♙e7 8.f4 d6 9.♗e2 ♙c6 10.♙f3 ♙d7 11.a3 11.♙e3 According to Kasparov's analyses this gave a clear advantage to White. If he himself admits his position would have been worse, it must have been really difficult. 11...♙c5 12.♙c2 b6 13.♙c1 ♙f6 14.♙b1+ 11...♙f6 12.♙e3 This move received a question mark from the champ. Poor Estonian grandmaster develops his last minor piece and gets scolded right away. 12.♙d2 ♙d4 13.♙xd4 ♙xd4 12...♙xc3+



Despite the bishop making two developing moves and is exchanged for a knight. They say the bishop is slightly superior to the knight in the early part of the game. 13.bxc3 e5 14.f5 Qcb8

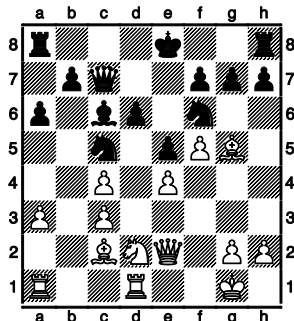


What kind of move is this? The aim of the game is to checkmate the opponent's king. Did Garry temporarily forget the white king lies in the other direction? How can one move back a developed knight to its starting square, when castling has been completed, the a8 rook and the c8 bishop stand on their own original starting places? Please note this was not played at the Soviet Pioneer Championship, when they were 8 years old, but in Linares, which is called the Wimbledon of chess! One may say Kasparov can match Sampras' amazing seven victories at the most prestigious tennis tournament, with his seven first places at Linares. However, let me remind you Sampras has served double faults, but he never served to the opposite direction of the net. This is what Garry is doing in this game. 15.0-0 Qc5 16.Qc2 Qbd7

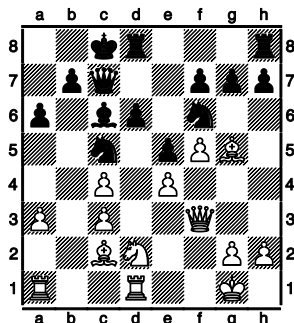


This is already the seventh knight move, so one can't say he just had a bad day against Shirov, but there is something fundamentally wrong in his understanding

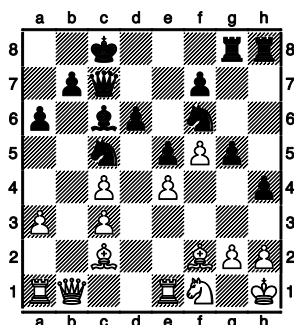
of chess. I think he should take lessons to repeat the basic development with light pieces in the opening. This article is an objective one, however, if he decided to take lessons from me, I could make an even more objective judgment of selecting the team. I would not put him on the second reserve board, but on the second. Of course, the first board cannot be given to him, as the player on the top of the team has been taking lessons from me for several years. Would he take the second board with discipline, like a good team member, or not? 17.Qfd1 Qf6 18.Qd2 Qd7 19.Qg5 Qc6



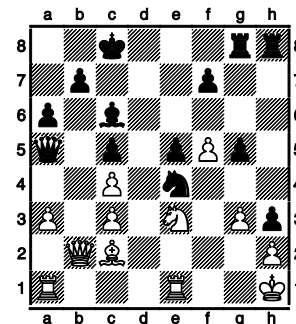
Already 19 moves have been played. Who is going to castle? 20.Qf3 0-0-0



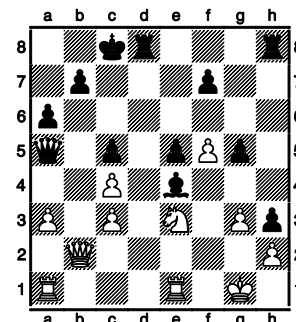
Finally he castles, I expected 20. ... Qfd7, 21. ... Qb6 manoeuvre, that would be consistent. 21.Qe1 h6 22.Qh4 Qdg8 23.Qh1 Qfd7 24.Qf1 g5 25.Qf2 h5 26.Qd1 h4 27.Qb1 Qf6



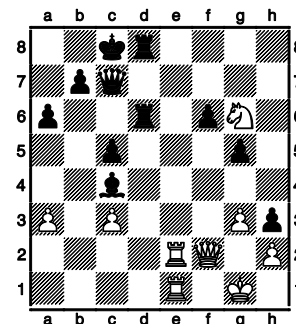
This is the third time the knight goes to f6. Was it not possible to work it out right away, and build the position? 28.Qxc5 dxc5 29.Qe3 Qa5 30.Qb2 h3 31.g3 Qxe4



How on earth? He suddenly has a winning position! Is he hypnotizing the opponents? It reminds me of a magician in the circus, hocus-pocus and a rabbit comes out of the hat. 32.Qxe4 Qxe4+ 33.Qg1 Qd8



Again, I have to praise him a bit for putting the rook on the open file. That is correct. I don't want him to fall into desperation, because of lack of encouragement. 34.Qg4 Qxf5 35.Qxe5 Qc7 36.Qf2 Qe6 37.Qab1 Qd6 38.Qb2 Qhd8 39.Qbe2 f6 40.Qg6 Qxc4



White resigned. 0-1

Let me end the joking and draw a serious conclusion! Following principles can help a player play better, but principles are not rules. Chess is so wonderful. Sometimes there are better ways to play than to follow patterns. Also, chess is a fighting game, it can be useful to play unorthodox moves in order to win. I think there should be a results-related system to judge players. Finally, what is my honest opinion on Kasparov? He is an incredible genius!

Kramnik Interview

By Tibor Karolyi

I planned to write a book on the first Kramnik-Leko match, but I never did. I was fortunate to be one of the live commentators for the Kramnik-Leko, 2004 Classical World Chess Championship. I found Kramnik to be a very nice and modest person, and he agreed to give me an interview on the free day of the match.

Many famous Hungarian people visited the match and the day before the interview I had spoken with Mr. Boros, who makes the candy camera in Hungary. His son had represented Hungary at the World Juniors. He did not like to talk too much, so the conversation did not last very long. However, the effect Mr. Boros produced on my mind caused me, while I was driving to the interview, to generate silly ideas instead of real interview questions.

I could not get rid of questions like:

Dear World Champion, Recently, in Denmark cows started to give less milk and the ozone hole is undeniably getting closer and Black players play the Dutch defence less often. Do you know of any direct, or indirect relation between those facts?

I made some others like this:

Last year a lot of African birds came to Europe flying on a different route compared to their earlier route. Do you think it happened because many people use computers for preparing opening lines?

I thought of tricking him with a candy camera.

I also thought about giving him an incredibly difficult study to solve. Maybe one with no solution, which he would not be able to solve at all. And tell him there is a good player in the hotel who would solve studies like this in no time. I would have filmed him when he tried to solve it on a magnetic chess set. But then, a female chess player, let's say with 2000 Elo would dress as a room cleaner. She would enter the room to start cleaning, and suddenly she would start looking at the position, pretending she had never seen the position. "Sir, let me see the position, I can play a little chess." After 20 seconds of intense concentration, she would say: "Aha, it is a triple-time zugzwang. In the end, one just has to set up a battery. After that it is a simple, theoretical win. Don't tell me you could not solve this simple puzzle!" I can imagine how Kramnik would have been surprised.

Finally, I managed to get myself together to a certain degree. You can judge for yourself from the interview how much.

It is interesting to see how Kramnik judged things back then. In my opinion he has lost his way ever since. He was a clearly better player before he became the world champion. Petrosian also did not win a single tournament during the six years he held the title. Will Kramnik find his older game for the match, I think he has to, to keep the title.

Kramnik Interview

T.K.: Dear World Champion, I would like to congratulate you, on doing what many of the people of my generation thought was impossible to do, you put away the mighty Kasparov.

V.K.: Thank you.

T.K.: Beating the World Champion is the most difficult achievement in chess. However, I felt that you had a small advantage, which people seem to miss. You are Kasparov's countryman. Maybe he would have fought a bit harder, if the pride of Russia would have been at stake. Have you thought of that?

V.K.: No, I haven't thought of that. I do not think it had an effect on the match. Top chessplayers are true professionals. I think it was the same for Garry, if he had played a foreigner.

T.K.: Kasparov said, and many people think, that you had out-prepared him. I just think you had a better match strategy than he had. Did some of your seconds suggest it, or was it your idea?

V.K.: It was my strategy. I arrived at the match with several plans according to the standing of the match. Things went very well for me from the beginning. I have to add that my seconds worked for me with great devotion. I estimate that the importance of preparation in such a match is 20 percent. There are other factors in a match like this.

T.K.: When you were Kasparov's second against Anand in 1995 you were already formidable yourself. You must have estimated your chances against Kasparov. What do you think about your chances if you had played him at that time?

V.K.: I did not speculate on that though I already had beat him a few times. My intention was to see how to improve my chess.

T.K.: Did Anand have a chance?

Anand was a worthy challenger. I think Kasparov was better at that time, but the match could have gone Anand's way, too. Things can go wrong in a big event like that. One mistake can be decisive.

T.K.: Your match reminded me of the Capablanca-Alekhine match. Have you thought of that?

V.K.: That is a surprise for me, I thought of Lasker-Capablanca, because a long-time reigning champion was beaten and Lasker could not win a single game either.

T.K.: Let me tell you why I had this comparison! Alekhine had no superior results at tournaments before the match. He went to Buenos Aires half a year in advance. He stopped smoking and drinking and prepared very hard. Capablanca was facing a somewhat different opponent than he expected. He could not really adjust to the reborn opponent.

V.K.: You have a point.

T.K.: Since adjourned games have disappeared, the level of end-games has dropped considerably. Don't you think, even in your match, it was clearly below the level of Karpov-Kasparov? Is it not possible that players are simply too tired to think properly at the seventh hour?

V.K.: Karpov and Kasparov played endings better because they could analyse it, not because they were less tired.

T.K.: At your level it is not such a problem, but you don't have to play many tournaments. A 2500 player must play many 7-hour games with 2-hour preparation a year. Are you not worried that

<p>doing it for a few decades will have a bad effect on their nervous system?</p> <p>V.K.: You know professionals in all kinds of sports have a demanding lifestyle. Track and field athletes and tennis players are working hard. I think that for the sake of the level of the games, I am for keeping the seven hours format of the games.</p> <p>T.K.: There is something I don't like about great tournaments. I find it strange that great players play for ridiculous prize money, but also get a nice appearance fee. Don't get me wrong! I think you deserve that money, I just would like to see that money distributed by the score. Don't you agree that the prize money makes Wimbledon more interesting?</p> <p>V.K.: I would not mind changing the system. But this is the tradition in our sport. It also happens in music as well. I think organisers still would like to secure the participation of a certain star. So, I believe it would not disappear completely. For me the present situation is alright, but I have no objection against what you mentioned.</p> <p>T.K.: Would you mind playing as the World Champion for a smaller appearance fee than Kasparov.</p> <p>V.K.: I would not.</p> <p>T.K.: As a young man, I guess you still want to improve your chess. Do you see more places for it in your understanding or in your attitude towards the game?</p> <p>V.K.: I see that I can still make a lot of improvement in all the departments of my chess. That makes me very optimistic for the future.</p> <p>T.K.: Have you found out what brings the best chess out of you?</p> <p>V.K.: I know, a match like against Kasparov. It gives me the motivation to prepare very hard for several months. I prepared both mentally and physically as well, not to mention my chess preparation.</p> <p>T.K.: Do you usually feel in advance that you would play well?</p> <p>V.K.: Yes, I do. I know when I am in my optimal shape.</p> <p>T.K.: Do you want to prove sometimes that an opening is playable?</p> <p>V.K.: No, I choose openings according to my chess, which I think are good for my style.</p> <p>T.K.: Will you play for the Russian team in the Olympiads in the future?</p> <p>V.K.: Yes. This time it clashed with the Kasparov match. There were some problems with the federation, too. Maybe you have heard of that. Generally, I want to play for Russia.</p> <p>T.K.: What is your opinion on Alexander Grischuk?</p> <p>V.K.: His results are impressive, he is very talented, but I never really investigated his game so far.</p> <p>T.K.: Are you interested in other parts of chess like studies and correspondence chess?</p>	<p>V.K.: When I was younger, I made studies myself as well, nowadays I have no time for that.</p> <p>T.K.: How do you approach the correspondence games in your database? What kind of value do you give them?</p> <p>V.K.: I respect them, I think they have a serious value, because people sometimes spent a week or two on a move in the openings.</p> <p>T.K.: I liked very much that you dared to give an opinion on the Nato bombardment of Belgrade. Can you share your opinion on the 2nd Chechen war as well?</p> <p>V.K.: The situation is very complicated. There is a one-sided propaganda for it in Russia and there is a one-sided propaganda in the West against it. I think the truth lies between the two.</p> <p>T.K.: I guess you are a good countryman, you definitely earned a lot of respect for Russia by winning your title. You have spent a great deal of time in the west, which gave you a more distant vision on your own people. What way should Russia change in order to reach the living standard of the west?</p> <p>V.K.: That is a very difficult task. We had such a harsh history. Russian people like to have a monarch. I think one cannot change the mentality of a nation. Of course, still there should be some changes, which would allow a more prosperous economy. My country is so huge, that is a big problem. Only the Krasnodar area is bigger than some countries in Europe like Hungary. It is so hard to introduce changes in a huge country.</p> <p>T.K.: I felt for you when at certain times in your career you were accused, once by Kasparov and once by Shirov, of fixing games. The final result proved that you were honest. However, players from your country have low morals in this way. Do you feel bad about it?</p> <p>V.K.: I am responsible only for myself. I know I would never do such a thing. I am sure none of the top grandmasters did it in the last decade. Also, it happens in every country.</p> <p>T.K.: But the proportion seems bigger in Russia.</p> <p>V.K.: Maybe it is true, I do not deny it, but even a grandmaster over 2600 gets little conditions and they do not earn much.</p> <p>T.K.: How do you judge Péter Leko's future in chess?</p> <p>V.K.: Peter is very young and already number four in the world. He is a potential number one player. However, he has to go a long way to reach it. No one knows for sure if he can make it. But he has a real chance, for sure.</p> <p>T.K.: How do you like the Hungarian capital, Budapest?</p> <p>V.K.: I had little time to look around. It looks like any other European capital.</p> <p>T.K.: By the way, do you have time to prepare yourself for a country if you visit it for the first time?</p> <p>V.K.: Sometimes I manage to do it.</p> <p>T.K.: Your chess looked very unbalanced against Péter. The first</p>
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game was a masterpiece. Game six was a poor one compared with your level. Do you have an explanation for that?

V.K.: The match against Kasparov drained me. I prepared for that a lot. I used a lot of energy for the games. The match ended just two months ago. I am still not recovered completely.

T.K.: Is it not a bit risky to go to Wijk aan Zee like this?

V.K.: I signed my contract earlier. I under no circumstances break my contracts.

T.K.: Have you been back in your hometown, in Tuapse since you became the World Champion?

V.K.: Unfortunately, I have not gone back yet.

T.K.: I suppose you will get a very warm reception?

V.K.: I think so.

T.K.: By the way, how often do you go there?

V.K.: On average once every half year.

T.K.: Can you tell me something about your family?

V.K.: My Father's name is Boris Petrovic, while my Mother's name is Irina Fiodorovna. I have a brother who is 5 years older than me.

T.K.: Is he successful as well?

V.K.: He is, but not quite as I am. He is in the advertisement business; he owns a company. He plays chess, too. He is a 2000 player.

T.K.: I saw a picture of yours in *New in Chess*. You have a perfect topspin backhand in tennis. Congratulations! How do you find the time to practice it?

V.K.: I like to play, so I always find time for it.

T.K.: Have you played tennis against Péter?

V.K.: Yes, but he was much younger then.

T.K.: Do people recognise you on the street in Russia?

V.K.: Yes, they often do.

T.K.: Are you so popular that you need a bodyguard?

V.K.: No, I do not need one, but my driver is always with me.

T.K.: What is your favourite country?

V.K.: I do not have a favourite country, but I like to be very much in Yugoslavia and France.

T.K.: Where does the friendship come between Russian and Serbs?

V.K.: We both speak a Slavic language.

T.K.: There are many Slavic countries and why just the Serbs?

V.K.: That is an interesting question, but I do not know the reason for that.

T.K.: Do you have a plan to have a family, or will you dedicate your life to chess?

V.K.: One day I will do it, but it is not on my mind at the moment. If I meet a girl whom I feel to marry, why not?

T.K.: Thank you very much for the interview.

Tibor was inspired by the reminiscing and the interview and wrote this poem about one of his friends who helped him along the way in his writing career.

To Natalia

Recently I started to write poems in Hungarian,
out of the blue my head turned into full skirmish.

as I realised, I had to do it for you in English.
This huge task made my gut almost diminish.

The task looked huge, almost made my stomach weaken.
But the wish of pleasing you, spurred me to strengthen.

Encouraging me to write on Karpov sparked my aspiration,
impressing you certainly gave me such an inspiration.

Though your effect on my later work became less strong,
I will never deny that it not only lasted long, but all along.

Masterpiece games of the giants for me are magic,
Revealing their beauty, no burden for me, but ecstatic.

For my heart, my grandchildren are precious treasures,
But so also my books, though in a bit smaller measure.

Writing chess books gave me such enormous pleasure,
I was, I am, and I will be grateful to you forever.

"Chess in the Third Reich" is Masterful

By Taylor Kingston

Reviewed by Dr. Anthony Saidy (IM)

Taylor Kingston has produced the foremost political/historical, profoundly researched chess book. I learned much German & WW2 history apart from the chess, which is professionally annotated and replete with score-tables. Personal details on players from Alekhine (more opportunist than Nazi) on down are fascinating. Germany won the Buenos Aires Olympiad of 1939 (when USA did not defend its title) thanks to the forcible appropriation of Austria the year before, acquiring Erich Eliskases. But not one of its victorious players came home after war broke out. Despite it, TK concludes that the Nazi chess effort spurred by Hans Frank, ruler of central Poland, was a failure, because of the exclusion of top players who were Jews. Alas, its biggest young talent, Klaus Junge, died in action three weeks before the end of the war. Omitted is vice-world champ Sonja Graf, the anti-Nazi Marlene Dietrich of chess. MacFarland pb, 283 large pages, 2025, \$49.95.

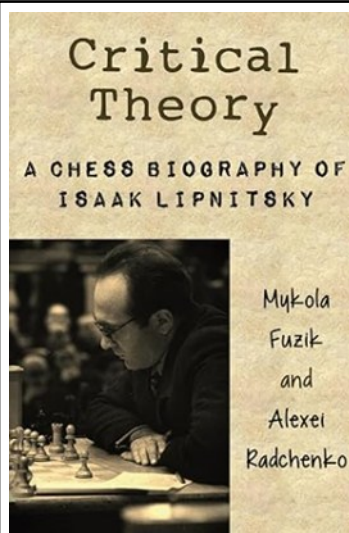
Critical Theory: A Chess Biography of Isaak Lipnitsky

By Mykola Fuzik and Alexei Radchenko

Elk and Ruby: 2024

Reviewed by ICCF GM Jon Edwards

32nd World Correspondence Chess Champion



I so anticipated a thorough consumption of this new Elk and Ruby product that my small disappointments with it were more sorely felt.

First, the reasons for my anticipation.

A Kiev friend and contemporary of David Bronstein's, Isaac Oskarovich Lipnitsky (1923-1959), was a two-time Ukrainian chess champion and among the very best players in the Soviet Union (and quite possibly the World) during the immediate post-war era. His personal chess highlight was a shared-second place in the 1950 Soviet Championship just a half point behind Paul Keres, having defeated Petrosian, Geller, and Smyslov!

In clear contrast to his way too short chess career, Lipnitsky wrote one of the best chess books of all time, *Questions of Modern Chess Theory*. If you have not read it, permit me to simply to ask: "What are you waiting for?" It's a wonderfully instructive read; it was a favorite of Fischer's, and Bobby must have read the original, now hard-to-find Russian edition. The excellent English translation (Quality Chess: 2008) will substantially ease your task.

URS-ch18 Final 1950

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
1 Keres, Paul	*	½	½	1	½	½	0	1	1	1	1	0	½	1	½	1	½	1	11.5 / 17
2 Lipnitsky, Isaak	½	*	½	1	0	1	0	½	1	½	½	1	½	1	0	1	1	1	11.0 / 17
3 Tolush, Alexander V	½	½	*	0	1	½	1	½	0	1	1	0	½	1	1	½	1	1	11.0 / 17
4 Aronin, Lev Solomonovich	0	0	1	*	1	0	½	1	0	1	1	1	½	½	1	½	1	1	11.0 / 17
5 Konstantinopolsky, Alexander Markovich	½	1	0	0	*	½	½	1	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	½	10.0 / 17
6 Smyslov, Vassily V	½	0	½	1	½	*	½	0	½	½	1	½	1	½	1	0	1	1	10.0 / 17
7 Alatorsev, Vladimir	1	1	0	½	½	½	*	0	½	½	0	½	1	½	½	1	0	1	9.0 / 17
8 Boleslavsky, Isaak	0	½	½	0	0	1	1	*	1	1	½	½	0	1	½	½	½	½	9.0 / 17
9 Geller, Efim P	0	0	1	1	½	½	½	0	*	0	½	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	9.0 / 17
10 Flohr, Salo	0	½	0	0	½	½	½	0	1	*	1	½	1	½	1	1	½	½	9.0 / 17
11 Mikenas, Vlasdas Ivanovich	0	½	0	0	½	0	1	½	½	0	*	1	0	½	1	1	1	1	8.5 / 17
12 Petrosian, Tigran V	1	0	1	0	½	½	½	½	0	½	0	*	1	0	0	1	½	1	8.0 / 17
13 Bondarevsky, Igor Tsakharovich	½	½	½	½	½	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	*	1	1	½	½	½	8.0 / 17
14 Averbakh, Yuri L	0	0	0	½	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	1	0	*	1	½	1	1	7.0 / 17
15 Suetin, Alexey S	½	1	0	0	0	0	½	½	1	0	0	1	0	0	*	1	1	0	6.5 / 17
16 Borisenko, Georgy Konstantinov	0	0	½	½	½	1	0	½	1	0	0	0	½	½	0	*	1	½	6.5 / 17
17 Sokolsky, Alexey Pavlovich	½	0	0	0	0	0	1	½	0	½	0	½	½	0	0	0	*	½	4.0 / 17
18 Liublinsky, Victor Alexandrovich	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	½	0	½	0	0	½	0	1	½	½	*	4.0 / 17

Although *Questions of Modern Chess Theory* has long been a fan favorite, there are many obvious reasons for Lipnitsky's relative obscurity. Military service dominated his early adulthood. Despite his post-war victories over more than a dozen unarguably more famous Soviet GMs, as so many Soviet players, he never ever got a chance to play internationally and therefore never received FIDE titles. Then sadly, he died way too young from polycythemia.

I came to this biography with several expectations. I wanted to learn more about Lipnitsky's early experiences at the "Kiev Talent Mill" with his coach, Alexander Konstantinopolsky, who taught David Bronstein at the same time! The book's account of these experiences is short but memorable and fact-filled. Coaches will especially appreciate the entrance test that Bronstein recalled.

I also looked forward to gaining some insight into Lipnitsky's writing of his classic work, and perhaps some additional

thoughts and instruction from Lipnitsky. Sadly, there is way too little about Lipnitsky's approach to the writing of his famous book, just three pages that provide no meaningful explanation regarding his motivations and inspirations.

To get to that section (OK, I turned directly there when I opened the book), we count a meticulous 90-page biography that took three years to assemble, but which will have little relevance to those chess players who are not fascinated by the intricacies of those who played in a 1936 Capablanca simul in Kiev, the grind of Soviet-era military boot camps, and lengthy discourse about the various challenges involved in the research for the book. Perhaps the reader can glean from this detailed history some explanation for Lipnitsky's chess talent and inspirations, but the authors don't make that job easy. Perhaps I am asking for too much. It is enough, perhaps, that the authors have transformed the previous dearth of data into a tome that honors Lipnitsky's life and times in what is now a far better—known glory.

Happily, the book provides access to two other articles from Lipnitsky. The notes to Game 59 first appeared in a little-known Ukrainian magazine for which Lipnitsky wrote an instructional chess column for a few years. And the second appendix is an utter gem, an English translation of Lipnitsky's final published article: "Attention – The a1-h8 diagonal," which appeared in *Shakhmaty v SSSR*, No. 2, 1959 a month prior to his death. It is as if his classic work has gained a wonderful new chapter.

The authors' research is so obviously comprehensive that I can forgive an unnecessary reliance upon passive voice that permeates the writing within the historical section of the book. The book first appeared in Ukrainian in 2018. It may be that the difficulties of translation account for the apparent writing style. Perhaps owing to some personal character flaw (my PhD in History may have much to do with it), I found myself feeling the urge to edit and redraft nearly every paragraph in this 90-page first part. Other readers may not feel quite so much torment.

Like most readers, I came to the book primarily for the coverage of Lipnitsky's chess. There are 63 selected games or fragments, all annotated and of the highest quality, forming roughly the second half of the book. Game annotations in other books and sources, most notably Lipnitsky's own annotations in his classic, are reproduced here in full, resulting in a hodgepodge of annotation styles with only minimal intervention from Stockfish, but the authors have fortunately preserved in one place a record of Lipnitsky's most important games and all his personal game annotations. Readers will be highly entertained.

Here is an obvious highlight, for which I focus upon the annotations after Lipnitsky's marvelous 16th move:

The notes in italics appear in the book with attribution to Kevin Spraggett's web coverage on Lipnitsky: [https://](https://kevinspraggettonchess.wordpress.com/2011/01/01/isaak-lipnitsky-1923-1959/)

kevinspraggettonchess.wordpress.com/2011/01/01/isaak-lipnitsky-1923-1959/)

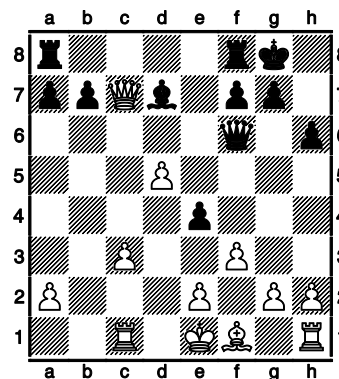
As a player Lipnitsky was well trained in strategy and tactics, capable of playing all types of positions equally well. However, what he really liked doing was playing complicated positions, a trait that many of the finest Ukraine masters seemed to have inherited.

Witness the following game against Beilin played at Riga in 1950. Lipnitsky provokes his opponent to riskily capture material instead of completing his development. The final moves of the game are so pretty and surprising that the judges could not resist awarding the brilliancy prize to Lipnitsky. The reader will do well to pay careful attention to this little known but instructive miniature!

Beilin, Mikhail Abramovich — Lipnitsky, Isaak Oskarovich [D38] URS Spartak-ch Dzintari, 1950

1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 d5 4.♗g5 ♗b4 5.♖f3 h6 6.♗xf6 ♜xf6 7.♜a4+ ♗c6 8.♗e5 ♗d7 9.♗xc6 ♗xc3+ 10.bxc3 ♗xc6 11.♜b3 dxc4 12.♜xc4 0-0 13.f3 e5 14.d5 ♗d7 15.♜xc7 e4 16.♞c1

The White Queen is straying far from her majesty's side but at least she is attacking the Bishop. Lipnitsky decides, after long thought, that it is better for Black to attack than to defend the Bishop.



16...♞ac8!

Launching a combination that leads to a win after nine moves.

How much did Lipnitsky see when playing this clever move? Did he see all of the tactical ideas that follow or was he relying on his intuition? White has nothing better than to accept the gift since trying to play it safe would allow Black to simply build up his initiative without any problems: 17. ♜a5 exf3 18. gxf3 ♞fe8 19. ♗g2? ♜g5! winning.

17.♜xd7 e3!!

This quiet move is the whole point of Black's idea. The black pawn's march from e6 to e3 almost completely paralyzes white's entire queenside.

Continued on page 58

How to Analyze Your Games

By GM Jesse Kraai, IM David Pruess, and IM Kostya Kavutskiy

Reviewed by Pranav Srinivasula

how to
analyze
your
games

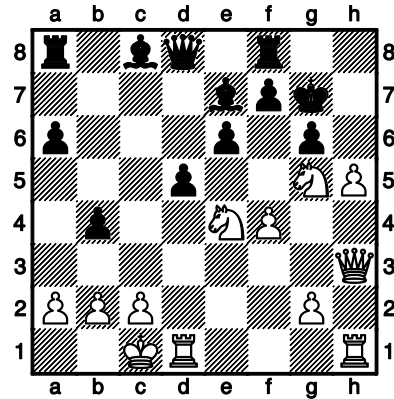


GM Jesse Kraai, IM David Pruess, and IM Kostya Kavutskiy wrote the book, *How to Analyze Your Games: A ChessDojo Guide*, with the help of their experiences from their chess careers. The book includes an easy introduction that helps the reader understand why the authors wrote the book, and explains analysis in four different parts, one from Kraai, Pruess, Kavutskiy, and an end section with analyzed games from ChessDojo member rating groups.

The author, GM Jesse Kraai, discusses why analyzing games is crucial for improvement, clearly illustrating three ways it can help: time/tempo, material, and understanding the quality of your position. He says analysis can help lower-rated players understand where they blunder and learn not to give pieces away by hanging them, as well as see when their opponent hangs material and capitalize on it. Analysis can help you determine when an opponent gives you a tempo and enables you to practice using time to your advantage in a real game. Analysis can help you evaluate a position in a game more easily and more accurately. He also discusses how analysis can aid in all three phases of the game: the opening, tactics, and endgame. Kraai says that analyzing your opening or opening structure can help you identify what positions you excel in, what you struggle with, and learn about early, middlegame plans. Analysis can enhance your tactics by helping you understand when to stop analyzing a position in a game, as you have likely already practiced it during the analysis of other games. It can also help in endgames, because, by that time, both you and your opponent are tired, so experiencing an endgame through analysis can help you understand your position better and find winning or drawing moves. He discusses how to enhance your analysis, including the steps taken during the game and after. For example, Kraai writes timestamps in games and spends a week analyzing each game, first taking notes on paper and then transferring them to the computer. Kraai then proceeds to show the analysis steps taken by other players, ranging from 800-rated to 2000-rated. The book didn't include the steps for analysis of lower-rated players, but it did show examples of their analyzed games later in the book.

IM David Pruess discusses how to assist new analysts in analyzing their games. He provides specific directions on what each player, regardless of rating group (from 100 to titled players), should do before, during, and after analysis. For example, 800-rated players shouldn't spend as much time on openings, but more on easy tactics they might have missed.

IM Kostya Kavutskiy discusses how to use engines while analyzing. He recommends that people under 1600 should not analyze with a computer and should mostly analyze only on paper. He explains the basics of computer analysis and what the analysis symbols and numbers mean. For example, -0.25 to $+0.25$ means equal, but $+1.5$ and higher is winning for white, and -1.5 and lower is winning for black. He also says the engine can find moves humans will never see, so the engine isn't always helpful. He provides examples of this, like in this position:



The winning move here is Qg3, and it is the only viable option. White is winning decisively according to the computer, but only has one winning move. A move that requires a lot of calculation and is a move most humans wouldn't find, because you're down a piece and must play a non-forcing move. Kavutskiy also includes a few more games that demonstrate the usefulness of engines, such as spotting tactics and tactical ideas. The computer also helps you improve your evaluation skills in games. He provides tips for analysis, such as feeding your moves in before analyzing. Also, compare your move to the computer, if you are confused about why one is better. Lastly, he provides tips on what to use for analysis, including LiChess, En Croissant, Chessify, and Chessbase, along with their pros and cons. He says Stockfish is the best engine for most players' analyses.

Lastly, the book showcases games from all rating groups, ranging from 100 to over 2400 FIDE. These games have been self-analyzed and submitted by *ChessDojo* players. There are some key differences you can see from a 100-rated player's analysis and all the levels in between up to a GM's analysis. For example, one of the 200-rated players' analyses stated that a Queen on d3 was attacking its pawn on h1, which is impossible because a pawn cannot be on h1. In a later section, an 1800 Lichess player adds a variation and thoughts on a move where he missed a check, resulting in the win of a pawn. In a 1610's game, the player explains why he played a move he thought was inaccurate, but with a good, albeit not too deep, variation. In a 2100's game, he includes why he plays a sideline of the opening because he knows his opponent usually plays mainlines. The GM's game included timestamps for every move, along with detailed explanations for each move and concise variations that made it easy to read and understand.

The book is published in both hardback and paperback editions. The hardback cover is smooth. The paper also feels good. The binding is good, but the book can be bent and thus could easily be damaged. Kindle and Forward Chess both offer the book. Finally, the book is published independently by Chess Dojo itself.

Overall, the book is excellent for learning the correct way to analyze. It is meant for early intermediate to advanced players, as it may be a bit challenging for beginners.

Pomar, Alekhine... and Me

By Gene Salomon and Diane Dahl

Hello again chess friends! Despite having declared at least twice that a previous article would be my last (I will turn 97 in September), here I am. I had no plans to write again, but an unbelievable opportunity to remember the beginnings of my 80+ years of chess in my native and beloved Spain presented itself last year, and two recent articles help me tell the story.

Someone recently asked me who I am within the chess world. Realistically, I am a “nobody”. I am not a Grandmaster; I am not a champion. OK, I am one of only 600 original Life Masters in the US, a title I am very proud to have. And yes, I was once briefly considered a local child prodigy and I was compared to internationally-known child prodigy Arturo Pomar...but that was in the 1940s in Spain - a long time ago in a galaxy far away.

However, by coincidences of life and longevity, it seems that I have recently become a “somebody”, and have apparently become “living history”. I was a nationally noted chess player as a teen in Spain, played tournaments in Spain, Cuba, and the US, have written many articles and some books about chess, have coached high school chess teams (leading one to a state championship!), and have given lectures across New Jersey’s chess clubs. I am even among the privileged group of players who have been inducted into the Toms River Chess Club’s Hall of Fame - an incredible group that includes such chess luminaries as Botvinnik, Petrosian, Tal, Korchnoi, Spassky, Mednis, Reshevsky, Karpov, Benjamin, Bisguier...and me! It is still hard to believe that my name is linked to those very notable US and international names.



Steve Doyle, past president of USCF and past VP of FIDE and I after my induction into the Toms River Chess Club Hall of Fame.

Recently, though, it is my connections to two chess players of my youth in Spain - Arturo (“Arturito”) Pomar and Alexander Alekhine - that is responsible for my current moment in the spotlight. “*El Pequeno Peon*,” (“The Little Pawn”, a documentary about child chess prodigy GM Arturo Pomar), “*La Partida Infinita de Eugenio Salomon*” (“The Infinite Game of Eugene Salomon,” an article by Manuel Azuaga in the May 24 edition of the Malaga-Spain daily newspaper *SUR*) and the “60 Seconds with...GENE SALOMON” column from the iconic *CHESS* magazine of London are all intertwined. They will help us to bring into focus how the experiences and connections I’ve enjoyed with chess greats Arturo Pomar and World Champion Alexander Alekhine have continued to impact my life, even 80 years later.

In 1944, as a young kid, I played not only a friendly game of “*futbol*” (soccer) with Arturo (“Arturito”) Pomar, but also an unforgettable game of chess with my idol, “The Genius”, Alexander Alekhine. My game with Alekhine, together with the “fatherly” advice he gave me about chess and life, had an unbelievable impact on not only my own life, but on my children’s lives as well. Furthermore, it may have influenced the lives of the hundreds of players I trained during my years as a high school chess coach, and as a lecturer for chess clubs in New Jersey.

The years 1943-1945 were remarkable for the Spanish chess world. They were the years that the names of World Champion Alexander Alekhine and child chess prodigy Arturo Pomar became closely linked. I am a first-hand witness of those three years, both in Gijon and in Madrid. I am pretty sure that nobody else alive can claim such privilege. Arturo Pomar is not as well known by American chess readers, (even though he was a U.S open chess champion), but in Spain, he was just as famous as Bobby Fischer in the U.S many years later.

Young players will not understand it, but back in the 1940’s and even during the 1970’s when Fischer was America’s own child chess prodigy, the words ‘chess’ and ‘children’ were rarely used together. On page 15 of my first book of chess (*40 Years of Friends--100 Games of Chess*) when describing “Chess in Spain (1942-1947)”, I wrote: “The child prodigy Arturo “Arturito” Pomar did for Spanish chess in the early 1940s what Bobby Fischer would do in the 1970s for the U.S. Suddenly, chess became popular and there was excitement all over.”

During the First Gijon International Tournament, I was a “go-fer”, setting up all the pieces, and I chose to place my own set of new chess pieces on the board where Alekhine played Pomar. After the tournament and his astounding draw with Alekhine, the newspapers published a picture of the young Pomar holding the black queen in his hand. That picture was sensational and contributed to his celebrity. The black queen that Pomar held up for the newspapers is part of my own personal treasured chess set, a set that has traveled across the world with me.

Arturito was a nice kid. Aside from the chess games we played in 1945, we played a friendly game of soccer in 1944 in my hometown of Gijon, Spain. For family reasons, I left Spain for Cuba in 1947, while Pomar was enjoying the meteoric rise of his chess career.



Pomar is the one in short pants, and I am the only one wearing a white jacket.

Shortly after arriving in Cuba in January 1948, the Capablanca Chess Club in Havana was holding an invitational tournament, the R. Adler Memorial, and I was invited to participate. After 4 rounds, I was the clear leader with three-and-a-half points, and I had clearly outplayed two of the favorites, J.R. Florido and Carlos Palacios.

My happiness at my success was short-lived. The very next day, I learned that the family for whom I was working as a private tutor would be traveling for several weeks. I would have to leave Havana the next day with them- the children's education could not be interrupted. There would be no more chess for me until January 1952, when I was one of 14 players to compete in the invitational tournament to select the Cuban Olympiad team for Helsinki. There were some conflicts, and I decided to concentrate on my future career. My friend, IM Rogelio Ortega (who ended up #7), was delighted to take my place.

Late in 1952, Arturito came to Havana to play an important international tournament. It was good to see my old friend again, and I was his “tour guide” in Havana. I even let him borrow my car, so he could explore and enjoy the Havana nightlife. That was the last time we saw each other in person.

In 1966, Arturito and I almost met again across the board. A mutual friend was arranging a tournament in Madrid while I would also be in Madrid for a family vacation. Alt-

hough Arturito was now quite famous, his offer to play in this small tournament was obviously a friendly gesture, remembering the “good old days”. Ultimately, so as not to interfere with family plans, we never played. Arturito passed away in 2016.



1952 - Pomar, S.J. Ceferino Ruiz (rector, Belen School), and myself.

More than two years ago, I received an email from some unknown film maker who wanted to talk to me about a film in Spain. You guessed it, I did not bother to answer. Some six weeks later my co-author of the book “*Jugando en el Tablero de la Vida*”, the chess historian Javier Cordero, asked me if he could give my phone number to Joan Gamero as his filming company wanted to speak with me. WOW, so the original letter was real!

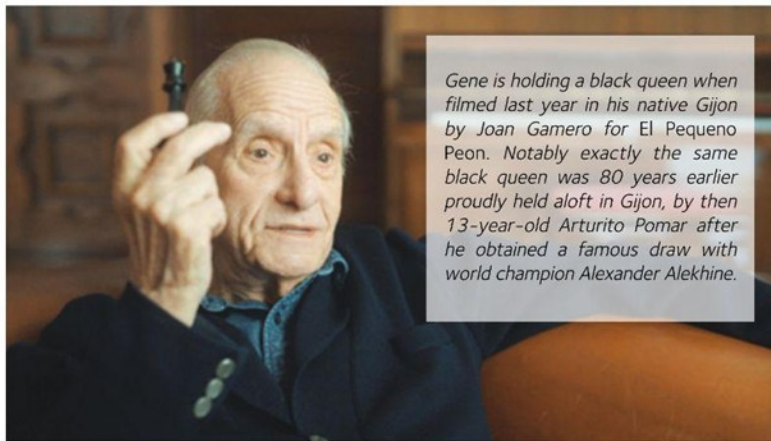
That's how I learned about Minimalfilms' planned documentary, “*El pequeno peon*” (The Little Pawn). Joan Gamero explained that he remembered having read my interview with the unforgettable chess historian, Miguel Angel Nepomuceno, in 2017-2018, where I had discussed Arturito, and asked if I would like to be involved.

A few months later, at age 94, I was on my way to Madrid to give a big hug to my 102-year-old sister and continue to Gijon for the filming.

I was very honored to be interviewed by *CHESS* Magazine for their July “Sixty Seconds with...” interview feature, and I would love to share it with our readers. Life is not chess alone, but chess has given me great insight about many things away from the chessboard. If you don't have time to read my chess biography “*Jugando en el tablero de la vida*” (Playing on the Board of Life) or my family autobiography *Sweet Memories: Family, Friends, Chess, and Sugar*, this short interview will give you a little insight into what is important to me. I've always said “*Recordar es volver a vivir*” (remembering is reliving), and this interview allowed me to remember and relive some wonderful moments.



60 Seconds with... Gene Salomon



Gene is holding a black queen when filmed last year in his native Gijon by Joan Gamero for El Pequeno Peon. Notably exactly the same black queen was 80 years earlier proudly held aloft in Gijon, by then 13-year-old Arturito Pomar after he obtained a famous draw with world champion Alexander Alekhine.

Born: September 29th 1928, Gijon, Spain.

Place of residence: Lakewood, New Jersey.

Occupation: Food Industry Consultant for the last 35 years, currently finishing my last project.

Enjoyable? I still participate in bridge tournaments four days per week.

And home life? 63 years of marriage, with four children and seven grandchildren. I'm very proud of them all.

But sometimes good to escape to: A concert, a good dinner, the occasional visit to Manhattan.

Sports played or followed: I always enjoyed playing tennis and table tennis, and as well as tennis, like to watch football on the TV.

A favourite novel? Anything by Stefan Zweig or Agatha Christie, or perhaps El Quijote's *La Historia de St. Michele*.

Piece of music? Rodgers and Hammerstein's 'Some Enchanted Evening', which was playing as I met my wife at a Christmas party in 1960.

Film or TV series? *Casablanca*.

The best three chess books: *Pawn Endings* by Yuri Averbakh and Ilya Maizelis, Kurt Richter's *Chess Combination as a Fine Art*, and *Mis 100 Mejores Partidas* by Ramon Rey Ardid.

What's the best thing about playing chess? It's the best life 'coaching': great for reasoning, creativity, patience and the evaluation of alternatives. It's also the best and most pleasant mental exercise, as well as a big help with longevity.

And the worst? Times of frustration with stupid errors or miscalculations.

And a highly memorable opponent? Historically, I very much enjoyed playing Alekhine in 1944 and Arturo Pomar the following year. I also got to face Joel Benjamin when he was a child prodigy and contested six games with the legendary GM Arthur Bisguier.

Your best move? Playing Mitchell Klug at the 1974 Atlantic Open. When I played 24...g3, a psychological move, if ever there was one, I knew that my opponent would not resist the temptation of playing 24...f4, allowing me my beloved knight and queen combination.

E.Salomon Rugarcia-M.Klug
Crystal City 1974



24 g3 f4? 25 f5+! gxf5 26 e6+
f6 27 g5+ xe6 28 xf5# 1-0

But less memorable than your worst move? A game where I missed a beautiful

queen sacrifice and mating under-promotion, and even went on to lose painfully.

R.Ribeiro-E.Salomon Rugarcia
US Open, Somerset 1986



34...e2?

Missing 34...b8!! 35 xb8+ Qxb8 36 xb8+ h7 37 fxf5 e2! 38 Qxg7 exf1#. 35 xe2 b8 36 xb8+ Qxb8 37 xb8+ h7 38 a6 c5 39 c8 e4 40 e6 a7? 40...c7! 41 d8 xf4 42 d7+ g7 would still have won. 41 d8! g7? 42 g8+ g6 43 d6+ f6 44 xf6+ g7 45 f7+ xf7 46 xf7 xf7 47 d8 b1 48 a4 1-0

Any advice for FIDE or the USCF? Chess belongs in schools as a character formation tool.

Can chess make one happy? Yes, especially helping to forget the bad times!

A tip please for the club player: Endings and combinations are far more important than openings for fast progress.

Favourite game of all time? Playing Steve Pozarek at the 1968 New Jersey Open, which was my first tournament in the US after 16 years away from competitive chess. My father, my first chess teacher, had just died a few months before, but I could feel his presence with me during the game.

S.Pozarek-E.Salomon Rugarcia
New Jersey Open 1968
King's Indian Defence

1 c4 f6 2 c3 g6 3 e4 d6 4 d4 g7 5 f3 0-0 6 e3 e5 7 d5 a5 8 d3 a6 9 ge2 d7 10 d2 b4 11 0-0 f5 12 exf5 gxf5 13 f4 Qxd3 14 Wxd3 e4

15 ♖d2 ♜c5 16 ♜d4 ♜e7 17 ♜xg7
 ♜xg7 18 ♜b5 ♜f7 19 ♜ed4 ♜d3 20 b3
 ♜d7 21 ♜e3 ♜c8 22 a3 ♜f6 23 b4 c6
 24 ♜c3 ♜g6 25 ♜ce2? cxd5 26 ♜g3



26...♜xc4! 0-1

If 27 ♜dxf5 ♜xf5 28 ♜xf5 ♜xg2+ 29 ♜h1
 ♜cc2! 30 ♜xg7 ♜xh2+ 31 ♜g1 ♜cg2#.



Gene appears in the Artur Pomar documentary, 'The Little Pawn', about to appear on Spanish TV.

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This *CHESS* interview does a good job of covering Alekhine's chess influence on queen and knight combinations. Here is the game I played against Alekhine, with my own comments.

Alekhine, Alexander – Salomon, J. Eugene [C30]

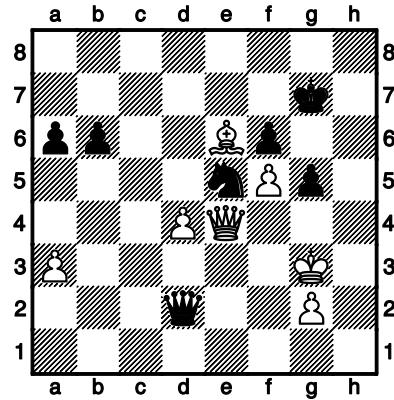
Clock simultaneous (10 boards), 08.1944

Alekhine was not only the reigning World Champion at the time this game was played, he was also my idol. I had played over all his games in awe. This game was published at the time, and the analysis was that the bishop vs. knight ending should be a draw. Computers today (as Alekhine then) know better.

1.e4 e5 2.♜c4 ♜f6 3.d3 ♜c6 4.f4 d6 5.♜f3 ♜e7 6.0-0 ♜g4
 7.c3 0-0 8.b4 exf4 9.♜xf4 ♜e5 10.♜b3 ♜g6 11.♜e3 d5

It was almost seventy years ago, but I clearly remember that with the move 11...d5, I felt that I had just equalized.

12.♜bd2 dxe4 13.♜xe4 ♜xe4 14.dxe4 ♜d6 15.♜d4 ♜f6
 16.♜d2 ♜ad8 17.♜ad1 ♜e7 18.♜e3 ♜xd4 19.♜xd4 ♜xd4
 20.♜xd4 a6 21.♜g3 ♜c8 22.♜e1 ♜e5 23.♜f5 ♜f6 24.♜f1 ♜h8
 25.♜e3 b6 26.h3 g6 27.♜h6 ♜e8 28.♜e3 ♜g7 29.♜h4 g5
 30.♜g3 ♜e6 31.♜f5 ♜xf5 32.exf5 f6 33.♜d1 ♜e7 34.h4 h6
 35.hxg5 hxg5 36.♜e3 ♜d8 37.♜d4 ♜g7 38.a3 ♜h8 39.♜e6
 ♜d8 40.♜e4 c5 41.bxc5?! ♜xc5 42.♜f1 ♜xd4 43.cxd4 ♜c1+
 44.♜f2 ♜d2+ 45.♜g3



After 40 moves, the position was dead even, according to *Fritz*. By then, Alekhine was no longer walking from table to table. He was just sitting across the board from me, as he had already defeated his nine other opponents. The diagram shows the position where I lost the game with 45...♜d3+?. This move was played out of panic; I visualized White's 46.♜b7+ and 47.♜f7 with checkmate to follow. One should never panic in chess. White could ill afford to move his queen away, as he would be checkmated first! As *Fritz* demonstrates, 45...♜d3 draws: 46.♜d5 ♜h6 47.♜h2 ♜f2 48.♜e8 ♜g4+ 49.♜h3 ♜f2+ etc.

I have played that game over and over again so many times, seeing how I could have saved it with 45...♜d3! instead of 45...♜d3+. That game became part of many of my chess lectures, and queen knight sacrifices became my claim to fame in chess.

My best-known game in the U.S, involving a queen-knight sacrifice, was played against Gene Shapiro. It was published by Steve Doyle and Pete Tamburro (two friends and luminaries in the U.S chess world) in their column in "The Star Ledger" on April 27, 2014. Here is that game:

Salomon, J. Eugene – Shapiro, Eugene P. [A02]
Westfield CC Championship, 05.1973

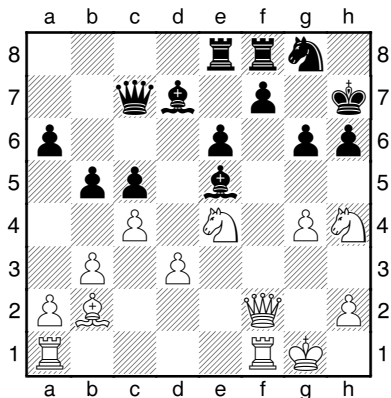
1. f4 ♖f6 2. ♜f3 c5 3. e3 ♜c6 4. b3 g6 5. ♗b2 ♗g7 6. ♗b5 0-0
7. 0-0 ♜b6 8. ♜e2 a6 9. ♗xc6 ♜xc6 10. d3 d6 11. e4 b5 12.
♜bd2 ♜b8 13. c4 ♗d7 14. ♜g5

Inviting the weakening 14. ... h6.

14. ... h6 15. ♜gf3 ♜be8 16. ♜h4 e6 17. g4 (17. e5!? ♜h5 18.
♜e4+/-) 17...♜h7 18. e5! (still good!) 18. ... ♜g8 19. ♜e4
dxe5 20. fxe5 ♜c7 21. ♜f2!?

21. ♜d6 was very tempting as it would win either the exchange or a pawn. However, I was concerned that 21. ... f5 might give Black counter chances. Anyhow, I could not resist the temptation of a possible queen sacrifice!

21. ... ♗xe5?



22. ♜xf7+! ♜xf7 23. ♜xf7+ ♗g7 24. ♜xg7+ ♜h8 25. ♜xg6# 1-0

They were reviewing my then-recently published book "40 Years of Friendship–100 Games of Chess" and commented, "Salomon's story is especially fascinating as he has a game he played with Alekhine...in 1944. Gene shared this photo with Garry Kasparov ..." 70 years later!!



Finally, an article published on May 24 by Manuel Azuaga in Spain's *SUR* newspaper, "*La Partida Infinita de Eugenio Salomon*" ("The Infinite Game of Eugene Salomon.") describes quite well the essence of my 85-year love affair with chess. The author also had an elegant way of coordinating the beginning and the end of his (my) story, connecting two of my treasured memories, Alekhine and Pomar, and noting how their impact continues today. The author has graciously given me permission to use parts of his beautifully written article, for which I am most grateful.

La partida infinita de Eugenio Salomón
El ajedrecista gijonés, de 96 años, es quizás la única persona del mundo que aún puede presumir de haber jugado contra Alexander Alekhine



"There are life stories that, due to their enormous flow, are Amazonian.....Today I'm going to tell you one of those stories. at least a fragment. And I want to start in 1943, at the exact moment when a 14-year-old boy defeated the Spanish chess champion, Jose Sanz

Aguado in an exhibition of simultaneous games. The next morning, the newspaper El Alcazar headlined, "Another Arturito Pomar has arrived." The boy was (and is) Eugenio Salomon, protagonist of one of the most fascinating adventures of the 64 squares."

"Since 1960, Eugenio has lived in the United States. At 96, he keeps his memory young. "I am history," he tells me. Perhaps the secret to this lucidity was playing chess. or bridge, another of his passions. The first time he heard the word "chess" was in 1939, at the age of 10. "I was in my first year of high school at Jovellanos in Gijón," he explains. "My classmate and lifelong friend was Manuel (Manolin) Gonzalez Rico. Manolin told me, amazed, that his uncle Anton was a champion of Asturias. This Anton was Antonio Rico, quite a personality. He won a tournament in Gijón ahead of Alekhine."



The youngsters of the tournament: Pablo Morán, Arturito Pomar, Eugene Salomon, Ramón del Olmo, and Román Torán

Azuaga also precisely recounted my interaction with the Champion, and my feelings about it.

"By that time, the Casino de la Union de los Gremios in Gijon had become the temple of the noble game of the 1940s, the 'Cafe de la Regence' of post-war Spain. In 1944, Félix Heras, a leading figure in Asturian chess, managed to convince Alekhine to participate in the first International tournament. During the Frenchman's visit, Dr Casimiro Rugarcia, a keen chess enthusiast and Eugene's uncle, became the Champion's personal physician.

"One afternoon, Uncle Casi asked Eugene to accompany Alekhine along Gijon's Corrida Street, from the chess club to the Comercio de Muelle Hotel just three blocks away. "It was a short walk, but unforgettable. I was arm in arm with Alekhine and, who, in addition to being a world champion, was my idol." Eugenio recalls. Suddenly, Alekhine stopped dead in his tracks and stared into the eyes of the 15-year-old. "Young man, chess isn't something we should dedicate our entire lives to," he told him. "It was very exciting," Eugenio admits. "He probably saw in me a boy in love with chess. In his own way, I think he wanted to look out for me, to give me advice that, by the way, I've always kept in mind."

"During the Gijon international tournament, Eugenio served as an assistant. Enthusiastic, he asked his mother to buy him a new set of pieces, pieces that ended up being placed on the French champion's board. At the end of the same year, Alekhine gave an exhibition of simultaneous games. Eugenio was one of the 10 chosen, and prolonged the fight longer than anyone else."

Azuaga finishes his article with a nod to Joan Gamero and Minifilms' excellent forthcoming documentary about my friend, Arturo Pomar.

"There's much to tell on this Amazonian and abundant journey, but I have one last note marked in red. A few months ago, Eugenio briefly participated in the documentary "El Pequeno Peon", directed by Joan Gamero. The film is a beautiful tribute to Arturo Pomar, with whom our protagonist maintained a friendship. In this documentary, we see Eugenio show the camera a black queen between his fingers- here the secret

is revealed. That Queen belongs to the set of pieces his mother bought for him in 1944. I am referring to the pieces Alekhine used during his participation in the Gijon international tournament, the same ones that have accompanied Eugenio on his extraordinary adventure, in this endless game."

As I've mentioned in other articles, Alekhine's advice has stayed with me since that memorable day in 1944 when he gave it to me. I remembered his words of wisdom in 1952 when, although I had qualified to go to Helsinki as a member of the Cuban Olympic Team, I decided to instead pursue my new career, setting chess aside completely for 16 years.

I also recalled his counsel from 1976-1980, while teaching chess to my children and taking my three sons to tournaments. I frequently repeated to them the old advice of Alekhine and discouraged them (in spite of their talent) from dedicating too much time to chess.

By now, you may have realized that the picture at the top of the "60 Seconds with..." which was taken from "El Pequeno Peon" documentary shows in effect the same "Black Queen" that Arturito proudly held in his hands 80 years before. The film maker, Joan Gamero, insisted that I had to bring back for the film my treasured set ("las piezas de Alekhine" as I call them) which have traveled with me for 80 years around the world...He wanted me to use them in the film!

My games with Pomar were not my only games against child prodigies. At age 70, 53 years after drawing a game with Pomar (Madrid 1945), I flew back to Spain to play at the Linares Open and bingo! I defeated a world champion-GM Gabriel Sargissian, the then-world champion of his age category (12 years old, and certainly a "child prodigy"). Notably the game was good enough to be selected among the best combinations for the quarter by *The Informant*.

Since I often mention "playing on the board of life", I would like to include in this chess article a reference to two exciting and long games that I played "on the board of life".

The first was from 1990-1997, when I worked as a Vice-President and later consultant in a large, Florida sugar company, I spearheaded an R&D program with a world leader in flavors and fragrances and came up with surprising results.

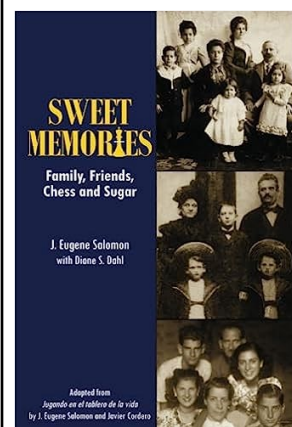
The second long game started when I visited Spain in 2017 for a meeting with a consulting client, La Abuela Carmen in Cordoba, Spain. I not only had a “revival” of my chess youth in the unforgettable meeting with Miguel Angel Nepomuceno, but also had an amazing visit with La Abuela Carmen, a world leader in black garlic. It took seven long years to develop my program of incorporating black garlic into specialty sweeteners, but now in 2025, I am ready, in cooperation with La Abuela Carmen, to introduce a new product line of these black garlic-infused specialty sweeteners.

These two exciting life games could not have happened without the advice of Alekhine, and the chess training in reasoning, analyzing positions, evaluating alternatives, and the entire “research” way of thinking, for which I am most grateful to chess. My son, Henry, to whom I pass the torch of my business ventures, summarized my life in the above passage.

As we said at the beginning, longevity and coincidences are making me a historical chess “somebody”.

Eighty-five years of chess is a long journey. Along the way, I was privileged to meet child prodigies and world champions, along with some of their biographers, including Miguel Nepomuceno (Lasker’s biography), J.A. Gelabert (Capablanca’s historian in Cuba),

Pablo Moran, with whom I shared “La Agonia de un Genio” in 1940s Spain, to Fischer biographer, Professor Emeritus Frank Brady, whose comments were key in my decision to convert my chess biographical book, *Jugando en el tablero de la vida*, into a family biographical book, *Sweet Memories: Family, Friends, Chess and Sugar*. I’m most grateful to chess for how much it has helped me throughout life.



Those readers who may be curious to read my chess story with a short selection of my best 36 games can go to Forward Chess and get a free copy of my electronic book, *40 Years of Friendship—100 Games of Chess* (written with Steve Pozarek and Wayne Conover, 2014).

From Sweet Memories to Black Garlic



In the late 1940’s, my father, J. Eugene “Gene” Salomon began his career in food science; First, as an agricultural engineer and later as a professor at the University of Havana. His career in food science blossomed during the 1960’s and 1970’s through the end of the century after he left Cuba to come to the United States - for “two years to learn English” as he put it.

He spent his 70 year career working with sugar, cane juice molasses and specialty ingredients from spray dried honey products to organic rice syrups.

This vast experience led to a position as Chairman of the Advisory Board at the Food Science Department of Cook College (Rutgers University) in the 1980’s as well as a position on the board of managers for the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

After his distinguished career as a food researcher and executive ended in 1993, he became a consultant to some of the largest food companies in the world. In 2017, he found his latest passion and last consulting client “La Abuela Carmen” in Cordoba, Spain. La Abuela Carmen is a global leader in organic and conventional garlic products. The idea for black garlic infused sweeteners came from that consultancy.



In 2023 at the age of 94, he published a book, *Sweet Memories: Family, Friends, Chess and Sugar*. In his book, he shared his experience as U.S Life Master in chess. Shortly after the release of his book, a Spanish filmmaker asked him to appear in a documentary about a child prodigy from the 1940’s in Spain. During his time filming in Spain, he was invited to participate as a panelist in a conference reviewing the World Health Organization’s program: “2021-2030 Decade of Healthy Ageing.”



Recently, and after several years of hard work, he asked me to join him in his final consulting effort - bringing heart healthy, quality black garlic and black garlic specialty products to the U.S. Market. Today, I am a proud participant, assisting my father with the introduction of the product line of “La Abuela Carmen” available to retail and industrial customers. Black Garlic is healthy source of anti-oxidants. La Abuela Carmen’s black garlic, and specialty products from honey to balsamic vinegar are sure to make your recipes more tasty and healthy.

Following are instructions how to download it:

How to get Gene’s Salomon’s book for free on forwardchess.com

- 1) Go to forwardchess.com
- 2) Sign up and create a new account
- 3) Enter Salomon in the search bar and click on the book title when it appears
- 4) “Buy” for free
- 5) At the top of the page choose to download app or goto the web app
- 6) Click on book and enjoy!

Book collecting is an obsession, an occupation, a disease, an addiction, a fascination, an absurdity, a fate. It is not a hobby! Those who do it must do it.

—Jeanette Winterson

The Andy Lerner Award for Excellence in Chess Education: Winners Announced

May 19, 2025. New York City. The winners of the 2024 Andy Lerner Award for Excellence in Chess Education were announced by Chess in the Schools at Temple Emanu-El. The Award was granted to individuals in two categories, "Coordinator" and "Educator," to honor the different roles people take to educate youth in the field. There were two winners and four finalists.



*From left to right
Jenny Ingber, Michael Herbst, Salema Jackson, Richard Abshire, Adam Geisler, Brian Ribnick, Yury Lapshun, Mitchell Fitzko, and Andy Lerner*

The two winners of the Andy Lerner Award for Excellence in Chess Education are:

David Heiser, Chicago, IL (no picture available)

David Heiser, co-founder and CEO of Renaissance Knights Chess Foundation and manager of CPS Chess, has nearly 20 years of experience expanding chess education in Chicago, especially for underserved students. He grew CPS Chess into a national leader reaching over 2,500 students in 120+ schools and created initiatives like the Cops & Kids Chess Initiative. He has organized major tournaments, including the Greater Chicago K-12 and Pan American Youth Championships. A recipient of multiple US Chess awards, including 2023 Organizer of the Year, David is recognized for his significant contributions to scholastic chess.

Brian Ribnick, Bloomington, MN

Brian Ribnick, a chess and math teacher with over 50 years of experience at Nicollet Middle School in Burnsville, Minnesota, has built one of the largest and most successful middle school chess programs in the state. Regularly bringing 30-40 students to national competitions, his teams have won 20 national championships and numerous

other titles. He also directs the Minnesota Middle School Chess League and a residency program that introduces chess to hundreds of elementary students annually, serving a diverse, including economically disadvantaged, student body. A Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame inductee, Brian has received multiple awards for his contributions to chess education.



The finalists of the Andy Lerner Award for Excellence in Chess Education in the Coordinator Category are:

Richard Abshire, Chess Club Coordinator, Bronx, NY

Adam Geisler, Founding Board Member of Chicago Chess Foundation, Chicago, IL

The finalists of the Andy Lerner Award for Excellence in Chess Education in the Educator Category are:

Michael Herbst, Special Education Teacher and Chess Club Coach, Bronx, NY

Salema Jackson, Chess Teacher, Bronx, NY

The winners received a monetary prize of \$10,000 that included a \$5,000 award to the educator and \$5,000 to the affiliated organization. Four finalists each received a \$2,000 award, split between them and their chess programs.

In addition to selecting the winners and the finalists, Mitchell Fitzko and Yury Lapshun will receive Chess in the Schools Legacy Awards in recognition of their remarkable

25-year dedication to teaching chess. As current CIS instructors, Fitzko and Lapshun have profoundly impacted the lives of countless children, fostering a love for the game and developing critical thinking skills. Their long-standing commitment and passion have inspired generations of chess players within the Chess in the Schools program, leaving an enduring legacy of excellence in chess education.

The winner and the finalists were selected by a panel of judges that included educators and representatives of the wider chess community:

Award Ceremony Participants:

- Kimberly Doo, Co-Chair of the USCF Women's Committee and Member of CIS's Advisory Board
- Andy Lerner, National Master, founder and namesake of the award, and Member of CIS's Board of Directors
- Beatriz Marinello, Women's International Master, The Dalton School Director of Chess Program
 - Pamela Price, retired NYC DOE principal and Member of CIS's Advisory Board
 - Dmitri Shneider, International Master and Vice President of Global Operations at Chess.com
 - Shaun Smith, USCF Expert and CIS Program Director
 - Abel Talamantez, 2024 Andy Lerner Award for Excellence in Chess Education Finalist, Hamilton K-8 Chess Program Director
 - Richard Wagner, USCF Expert

Chess in the Schools announced the Andy Lerner Award for Excellence in Chess Education in September 2023. The Award is made possible by Andrew Lerner, an esteemed member of the CIS Board of Directors. This nationwide annual award recognizes educators' impact on the chess community and students, through alignment with CIS's mission and values of youth enrichment through chess education. The committee took into account innovation and dynamism in teaching and programming (such as tournaments or other events), and awards, recognition, or other outcomes of the students, clubs, and communities served.

More information about the award is available online at www.chessintheschools.org **Inquiries** may be directed to Marilyn Lucero, Development Associate: (646) 688-0724, mlucero@chessintheschools.org

Chess in the Schools (CIS) is a New York City-based non-profit organization that fosters the intellectual and social development of low-income youth through chess edu-

cation. Since its inception in 1986, Chess in the Schools has taught chess to more than half a million students. All CIS programs are free of charge to all participants. Through classroom instruction in 40+ New York City public schools, after-school chess clubs, college access services, and weekly scholastic tournaments, CIS annually reaches 10,000+ students helping them develop analytic and social-emotional skills, confidence and self-esteem, enabling them to succeed in school and lead productive and fulfilling lives in the future.

Interview with Andy Lerner

Let's start with the Lerner Award. Can you tell me about its origins?

There's a bit of a history there. I've been a chess player for 50 years. I started when I was 7 years old, and I was very active. I won the National Elementary School Championship. I tied for first in the US Junior Open, so I was very much a part of the New York City chess scene.

I was fortunate to have great chess teachers, and to benefit from a lot of organizers and volunteers and chess educators who coordinated tournaments and trips—we took a lot of trips as a chess team. I look back at my chess-playing days as a child, and I benefited so much from all these volunteers and educators, who did it for the benefit of the children. It made a huge impact in my life.

When I was a young chess player, my father became involved as a volunteer, and he was on the Board of the American Chess Foundation, which started Chess in the Schools. So when I joined the Board a few years ago, I was thinking about the great work these educators do. There are thousands of chess educators around the country who don't get much recognition, and I thought we could start an award to call out their great work.

Since the award launched, it's been incredible to see these names come in from around the country. You really hit on how chess serves the youth. What do you think about chess and its potential across generations?

When I was younger, I was an extremely active player. Back then, there was no online chess, so you had to physically be at tournaments or clubs if you wanted to play. When I became an adult and went to college I made the determination that chess was not going to be my career—I'm an investor, today. But I've always stayed active in chess, and then online chess emerged, and that's really how I stay active now. But I have all these great memories of my father taking me to tournaments every weekend.

It was the whole community I really benefited from, and there's so many positive aspects of playing chess. It made me a better analytical thinker, it made me appreciate the aspects of preparation, and I think these things become true in life. Like how one mistake can be fatal—that's why you look both ways before you cross the street. I think I really owe it to the behind-the-scenes people that organized chess events. They did all the things that Chess in the Schools is a leader in doing today, for the New York City populations that need it.

That's totally reflected in the award, not just in the New York community, but more broadly across the country too. You mentioned online chess—has it surprised you, as someone who's been invested for so long, to see online chess become such a huge, vibrant community?

It has. Online chess has been a real revolution, and then it just accelerated during the pandemic. And now I understand that platforms like Chess.com are breaking records on membership, and it's exploding more than I ever thought. But still, around the country, communities still need help to access chess teachers, to access the clubs or chess facilities, and it still takes money to reach less-privileged populations. Chess just isn't as widely accessible as sports, or some other extracurricular activities, are for children. And there's tremendous benefit for the children that play, and I think schools want to make it accessible for those who want to learn the game.

I guess at first thought, it wouldn't seem like there are many barriers to entry for something like chess, but having the time and the instruction for it seems like it makes such a difference.

It's not the easiest game to learn. You do need a player on the other side, or you can play versus a computer online, but it's so much more fun to play a person. You need a little bit of organization to get it going and then to improve. You really, really do need instruction.

When I think about these online platforms and I see CIS instructors work with the students, I'm seeing chess being made more fun, you know? There's these really colorful personalities leading these platforms, making it super engaging and fun to follow.

There's something special about being in the classroom, teaching the kids in person. There's some magic to that, that you don't necessarily get when you're online. And so, again, the idea of this new award is to recognize outstanding chess educators. We know that there's so many people out there who deserve recognition, and this award is meant to thank the entire chess education community. It's

really to recognize everybody and what they're doing, not just in New York City, but around the country. And we're hoping in future years that this award gives more attention to what's happening out there. We hope it will grow, we hope we can honor more people in the future. So we're just getting started, and my hope is that it gets more prominent as time goes on.



Jenny Ingber and Adam Geisler



Michael Herbst with a couple of his students (CIS College Bound Students)

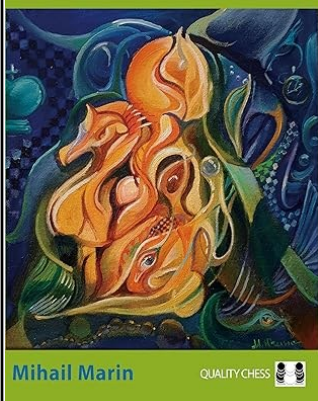


Learn From the Legends 2: Chess Heroes at their Best

By Mihail Marin

Reviewed by Mark Capron

Learn from the Legends 2



Mihail Marin's *Learn From the Legends*, first published in 2004, was such a huge hit that it had three editions and chess fans everywhere wanted a second volume. It took over 20 years, but volume 2, *Learn From the Legends 2: Chess Heroes at their Best*, has finally arrived. Ever since I read Mihail Marin's book *Reggio Emilia 2007/2008* I have been a big fan of his writing.

Legends 2 features five mid-20th-century masters: Leonid Stein, Lev Polugaevsky, David Bronstein, Paul Keres, and Lajos Portisch. All these players were near the top but never found a way to win the world championship. Marin describes this well in the first part of the chapter on Paul Keres:

"History mainly remembers the winners, but there is a certain magic in being an 'eternal second', as journalists and colleagues used to call Paul Petrovich Keres. We mere mortals can only imagine the enormous happiness of being a newly crowned World Champion, but supreme success also involves a small psychological trap. After having reached the highest level, more than one champion has at least partly lost their motivation and a clear goal, resulting in a gradual decline in their results and artistic creation.

From this point of view, players who repeatedly came close to the highest goal might be more fortunate. Results that some might regard as 'failures', could make such players determined to keep trying, maintaining their level of preparation and ambition. Keres' entire career is a perfect illustration of this."

Each chapter provides a small amount of biography material and several featured games by the highlighted player. Marin uses the player's games to help define their playing style. In some cases, Marin even uses other players' games (or game fragments) to get the point across. The games are heavily annotated and when I say heavily, I mean extremely in depth. They are anything but computer dumps! In one case, the author spends almost four full pages describing one move/position! To say deep annotations is an understatement.

Following each player chapter there is a summary test providing eight challenging tactical positions to solve. This is followed by extensive discussion of the solutions. For example, in the solutions for Leonid Stein there are 20 pages of solutions meaning, on average, over two pages of discussion per test diagram.

Personally, I would have preferred a bit more biographical information as sometimes it was quite short.

The book contains a nice selection of photographs and caricatures that offer visual and emotional texture to the narrative. I have always been partial to caricatures. Once I paid an artist to do a caricature of Victor Korchnoi and I used it as the cover picture for the October 2002 *Iowa Chess News En Passant*. It received a bundle of comments, both positive and negative, so I know it caught people's attention.

Marin even adds a bit of humor here and there. A couple examples:

"Engines prefer 11. ... Qd6 but in human terms, after 12.Qe2±, Black does not have any chances to free himself and is doomed to suffer from gradual suffocation."

"There was nothing wrong with 30.Bxc6 (or 30.Rxh6+), but Stein finds the quickest mate, without the need to consult a smartphone in the restroom."

The publisher, Quality Chess, has done a great job. The paper has a nice feel to it. The figurine algebraic notation stands out, is clear, and large enough to read easily. I purchased the hardback format (my preferred for many reasons), but I am sure the paperback has similar quality. It is also available as an eBook at Forward Chess.

The book is really aimed at players rated 1700 on up, but even lower rated players will find it useful, especially if they work hard at it. Solving the test positions will definitely fortify your tactical abilities.

This book lives up to its predecessor's reputation. I highly recommend *Learn from the Legends 2*. This book belongs on the shelf of any serious improver or chess enthusiast craving detailed analysis through the lens of legendary play. Mihail Marin has produced another winner. 5 stars out of 5 stars.

[Amazon Link](#): \$37.94 HB; \$27.50 PB; ISBN: 1784832170

Just a Passing Cloud

By Dennis L. Wasson

This all started when I was living in Des Moines, Iowa around 1987, and was a member of the board of the Iowa State Chess Association. It had been known that for several years in the history of Iowa Chess –the state chess champion was unknown. I took it upon myself to go to the library, day after day, to search through microfilm of the *Des Moines Register* newspaper to see if some answers could be found.

A word of caution if others attempt this type of activity—it is easy to get sidetracked! I mean, when looking through the newspaper from around 1920–1940 who would not be amused to take time reading some of the advertisements for things that are no longer around, and the amazingly low prices on items. Additionally, the comic strip section provided some needed relief from scanning page after page, hour after hour. Personally, I found myself distracted reading up on what Babe Ruth did the night before, or how Primo Carnera's boxing match ended. Your interests may vary, but sidetracked you will be.

My results were the following champions: 1926–W.F. Tyrell, 1927–Kenneth Davenport, 1928–Kenneth Davenport/Sayre (no first name found).

In addition to those state champs, the following are some of the more interesting excerpts from the *Des Moines Register* [DM] and the *Fort Dodge Messenger and Chronicle* [FD] on the dates indicated. Finding this type of stuff gives me a charge similar to saving a 'lost' position (and I know about having 'lost' positions).

10/23/1931–[DM] GANZ WINNER IN CHESS MEET

Rudolph Ganz defeated 19 of 20 players he faced in a simultaneous exhibition. The only winner was Henry Howell of Des Moines. (There is a photo with this article showing Ganz playing a lady AND that he alternated colors, taking the black pieces in some games.)

02/20/1935–[DM] FORT DODGE WILL HOLD STATE CHESS TOURNEY

The Fort Dodge Chess Club announced it will sponsor a state tournament here (Ft. Dodge) March 17. Entries have been received from Chris Bang, Spencer, 5-time state champ, Harry Jensen, Sutherland, former title holder and Victor Davis, former state checker champion.

03/20/1935–[DM] DAVENPORT WINS STATE TOURNEY

Kenneth Davenport, Creston, won the annual state tournament of the Iowa Chess Association by defeating W. S. Gilman. Gilman resigned the final game after 24 moves.

[FD] CRESTON MAN IS CHESS CHAMPION FOR THIRD TIME

Davenport won 12 of his games, drew three, and lost one (to Gilman). Davenport also won the title in 1928 and 1929. Chris Bang placed 3rd in the tourney, losing his third and eliminating game to Davenport Tuesday afternoon in a 3 –hour struggle. In the consolation event, J.H. Jensen, another state champion, won first place by defeating Augie Skow. F. H. Morris, president of the Ft. Dodge Chess Club, served as the TD.

06/22/1936 –[FD] IF YOU WOULD PLAY CHESS, START EARLY

Prospective Champions Must Be On Their Way In Their Teens, Reporter Learns at Convention Here. Little indication of his chess-playing ability is found in a man's choice of professions to judge from the wide variety of vocations represented by the contestants in the Iowa Chess Tournament of 1936 now nearing the end of its second day. No two men of 12 still in the running this afternoon follows the same trade or profession:

J.H. Jensen–creamery superintendent
L.T. Quinn–H.S. teacher,
Karl Bang–garage proprietor
Dr. W.A. Patterson–physician,
Kenneth Davenport–attorney
W.S. Gilman–former mayor of Sioux City and reputedly a retired millionaire
Chris Bang–building contractor
A.W. Davis–Buena Vista college professor
Fred Torrence–H.S. student
M.W. Nissly–grain elevator operator in Minburn
Walter James of Cherokee is the only one whose favorite game has any direct association with his business– he edits a chess journal.

01/11/1937–[DM] MUSCATINE WOMAN WINS CHESS LAURELS

Chicago–Mrs. Jean Moore Grau, Muscatine, IA, Sunday night won the Midwest Women's Chess tournament at the Oak Park Chess club. Already the Iowa Champion, the victory made her eligible to enter the national tourney at New York in February.

Some side notes to the excerpt about Jean, which I found (or rediscovered on the internet in 2025)—Jean Moore (17 years of age) participated in a 32-board blindfold simul at the Chicago Worlds fair in 1933, and got a draw against 'some guy' named Alexander Alekhine :).

In 1935 she won the class—A division of the trans-Mississippi tournament in Davenport playing against six men.

In 1936, she captured the Midwest chess championship for women played at the Oak Park YMCA.

The following article I found to be a bit amazing, as the town of Sanborn, Iowa has a population of around 1400:

5/22/1938 A WHOLE IOWA TOWN OF SKULL SCRATCHERS - - GOING TO SANBORN? BETTER LEARN CHESS! - -

Bridge, Mah Jong, Bingo Take Back Seat By Howard Dobson Sanborn IA—Trying to be a social success here without a chess set is like hunting polar bears with a buggy whip—pretty tough. Chess holds the town in a grip of consternation and skull scratching, and the casual conversation is 'queen's gambit', 'check in two moves', 'French defense' and other terms of the checkered board. It all began about two years ago when W. H. (Billy) Barker, a retired business man and inveterate Chess player, started inviting players from neighboring towns to battle with him and other local experts. This aroused Sanborn, and the game has now grown to proportions that dwarf the infestations of other pastimes that have captured communities from time to time. Any time of the day, a good chess game can be found at Ed Van't Slot's shoe repair shop. It was there, in fact, that local chess sharks trained for the state tournament held here in February. The Northwest Iowa Chess Assn. was organized here as a result of Billy Barker's vigorous evangelism. The membership totals 51 paid-up enthusiasts, divided into four classes for competition, championship, and classes A, B, and C. Members come from a total of 16 towns. Chris (Whiz) Bang of Spencer, state champion, is a member, as is Harry Jensen of Sutherland, a former champion. Another is Augie Schou of Spencer, who once played on an international team for Denmark. The only professional in the group is Walter James of Cherokee, editor of the Chess Bulletin of the Correspondence Chess League Of America.

Patron of the Northwest Iowa Chess Association is Sam Omer, hearty owner of the hotel here. He is host

to the group every week, and often 40 or more players crowd his dining room and lobby on meeting nights and play from 8 pm to 3 or 4 the next morning. 'We've got the best chess club in . . . well, make it the whole country.' Sam says. 'There's no use being backward about this thing'.

By far, my personal 'major find' happened while doing some research in the Dunlap, Iowa library. While looking through the microfilm, I took a break and looked at their chess books. Holy smokes! A bound copy of *The Pawn* donated by the family of Lee Edwards (a seven-time Iowa State Chess champ)! This publication ran from January 1910 through May 1911. I haggled with the librarian about getting this book from them for the Iowa Chess Archive (not my personal stash). She stated I needed to get permission from a family member. I got that permission from Lee's daughter, Eleanor Edwards-Knight of California. *The Pawn* was a 4-page newsletter published in Cedar Rapids, Iowa by Chas. H. Harmer—twice monthly. It had news articles (international, national, and state association), some chess traps, problems, endings, and games with light notes by 7-time Iowa champ Lee Edwards. In order to gauge its readership/subscription, I used the information found in the 'solutions to problems' submitted during the first several months of publication (they quit listing where people were from after about 6 months). The result was 21 of the 46 states:

(AL, CA, IA, IL, IN, KS, LA, MA, MI, MO, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, MA, TX, TN, WA, WI)

For those that now have the 'research bug', *The Pawn* on Jan 1, 1910 states that the problem editor was a L. P. Lawson who has several years of experience in this work, having charge of the chess column in the Effingham (IL) Republican. Apparently, there was a need for that type of material in that area—that may need looking into.

When *The Pawn* ceased publication on May 15, 1911, subscribers had the option to get the equivalent in subscription to the *American Chess Bulletin*. It further stated that, "the *American Chess Bulletin* is an excellent magazine, and being the only regular chess publication in the US it should receive our support."

To conclude, the meaning of this article's title—most (if not all) of the names listed in this article are like 'passing clouds', here for some time—making a contribution, then gone from sight.

MINNESOTA'S FIRST GRAND PRIX SCHOLASTIC TOURNAMENT

By Rachel Schechter

Flag It!



"What can I add to an already outstanding chess venue?"

That's what I asked myself upon moving to *The Land of 10,000 Lakes* three years ago and being named Scholastic Coordinator of the iconic *Chess Castle of Minnesota*. What? All the bases (squares) were well covered by higher-ranked players and more experienced instructors than *moi*. Chess education in Twin Cities schools, other major cities and outlying burbs flourished, and prodigy Alice Lee, already a WGM at ten, had just become the youngest American born female to achieve IM status at age 13.

What?

Fortunately, I brought a small group of youngsters to *The Castle* for a summer chess media workshop play—which gave me an idea.

"I *know* pawns can't go sideways and backwards unless they promote," said Jack, checking Henrik. "I *get* it. But wouldn't it be cool if they could."

"Yeah, very cool, said Indy, working a Knight's Tour.

"Why?" said Henrik, capturing Jack's rook for an unexpected smothered mate. "It would be a different game, different rules. It wouldn't be Chess."

The boys shook hands.

"But just imagine it!" said Jack, "pawns moving all over the board, like mini-cars, zig-zigging around..."

"Beep, crash," laughed Indy taking one of those small racing cars from his pocket and flipping it onto his board.

"I can't wait until I'm old enough to drive," said Jack. The others nodded.

"What kind of car do *you* have, Miss Rachel?"

I sat down quickly, excited. That's it! That's what we'd add to the venue: A *Scholastic Grand Prix*. We'd hold all matches at the *Chess Castle of Minnesota*—parents wouldn't need to drive all over the place—and we'd see how it played out. Kids, cars, chess. It was a natural. Yes,

Minnesota held very successful adult/open Grands Prix, but never a Scholastic Grand Prix. This would be the first. Would it be an auto-success? Or would it shift gears, cough, and die?

That night I phoned Dane Zagar, Castle President. He was up for it. We met the following afternoon at *The Castle* and roughed out a plan. Then we picked a few other chess folks' brains and by week's end, voila! Minnesota's first Scholastic Grand Prix was ready to ignite. Replete with USCF Membership packages.

"The purpose of a Scholastic Grand Prix is to encourage young chess players to play consecutive monthly tournaments throughout the school year. We believe that actively playing in rated chess tournaments is the best way to improve one's chess." from the *St. Louis Chess Club*

With this as our credo, we created a 6-tournament, 4-game, 3-section format. We keyed our ignition—bought a slew of surprise chess prizes—matchbook cars, chess socks, books, notation pads, checkbook chess, hats, pens, pencils, and the like—and on November 3rd we launched round #1. Twenty players registered, two more at the door—and we were off!



Five months (and a *lot* of work) later, we *tripled registration* to more than 60 players, mostly K-8, some high-schoolers, and rounded the final bend with modest chess success. While there were several outstanding trophy winners* for each section in each tournament (and tiebreaks) our final

Grand Prix points winners were:

Middle School—High School

Ryan Lee Elling	405
Jasper Leopold	390
Gracin Matthews	360
Samuel Herbert Herring	355
Emery Gehrke	350

Elementary

Tanush Varshney	410
Vihaan Prakhya	405
Prisha Singh	380
Guaraansh Singh	380
Kaleb J Grundhofer	365

Under 600

Nikit Krish Guntipalli	350
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**Please contact the Minnesota State Chess Association for individual tournament results.*



Special Thanks...

Bill Harrison, Brian Ribnick, Jiten Patel, Pat LaVone, Jenny Delaney, Janae Streufert, Ivan Wijetunge, Chris Weber, Anna Sherman, Scott Carpenter, Eddie Wasserman, JJ Lang, Zach LaVone, Logan and Cora Spresser, the entire Chess Castle Board, The Minnesota State Chess Association, all of the parents & their chess kids, and of course, CC President and TD, Dane Zagar.



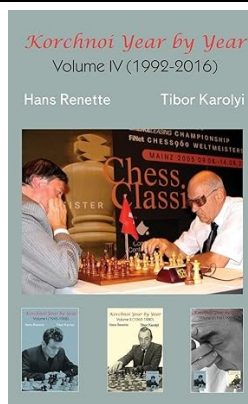
This year? We plan to build on our success: more tournaments, more prizes, more free pizza, more Grand Prix \$\$\$\$. Plus, *Drive-Size Car Giveaways*. Our next Scholastic Grand Prix includes *nine* monthly laps, September 2025 through April 2026, and we invite you to get on your respective roads and rev the good word.



Korchnoi Year by Year Volume IV (1992-2016)

By Hans Renette & Tibor Karolyi

Reviewed by Mark Capron



As most of you are aware, Viktor Korchnoi is one of my favorite players. I reviewed *Korchnoi Year by Year Volume I* back in issue 155 (October 2023). At the time I thought there were only three volumes, but to my happy surprise there are actually four. I have spent quite a bit of time with Volume 1 and now Volume IV. I will savor volumes II and III later.

Once again, the deadly combination of Hans Renette (historian) and Tibor Karolyi (analyst) strikes to create an amazing story summing up Korchnoi's last years, 1992-2016. As in the previous three volumes, they have a bit of biography material up front, but the majority is found inside and between the over 200 games. The four-book series contains 669 games.

Korchnoi has been labeled as a "grumpy old man" many times. An apt example from page 126: *Against one of his early victims, Teun Van der Vorm, Korchnoi lashed out at the end of the game: "First, you should have got up when I arrived at the board, because I am a GM and you are a patzer." Van der Vorm reacted: "I didn't want to be disrespectful. Maybe in your culture..." but Korchnoi interrupted him: "Secondly, why did you think so long on your 12th move. This has all been played by Fischer against Larsen." Van der Vorm: "I wanted to improve on theory." Korchnoi: "I doubt it," and he stepped away angrily.*

However, there are also stories of when Korchnoi was nice: *Oliver Kurmann: "When we played the first time together for the Swiss national team at the European Team Championship in Halkidiki, I played against GM Georgiev and got massaged and beaten in an endgame after several hours. Viktor Korchnoi had already finished his game a long time before, but was the only team-member to wait for me and watch my game. After my loss he encouraged and consoled me and told me that my opponent was a very strong and experienced player and it (the loss) could happen to anybody."*

Another time Korchnoi played a simul and a game versus a 12-year-old boy wasn't finished yet when time was called. A neutral master evaluated the position as winning for Korchnoi, but later that evening Korchnoi found a drawing line. Korchnoi put the analysis on paper and forwarded it to the arbiter and asked him to inform the boy that the game was a draw.

If I had ever met Korchnoi this is the side I would have liked to encounter: *Here's the impression Korchnoi left on the man interviewing him: "Viktor Korchnoi speaks softly at the beginning, but raises his voice when he gets going; he is cheerful, makes fun of himself and often smiles during the conversation. There is play-*

fulness in his eyes, and if he squeezes out a laugh he leans back and forces the laugh out of the back of his throat. But this is no simulation. It is not hidden, that laughter is sincere."

Speaking of laughing, the book had me giggling several times. Once when Korchnoi signed Spassky's scoresheet with "Learn French, idiot!" in Russian (the game was a French Defense). Another time when Korchnoi lost to Kasimdzhanov and as he got up from the table he said, "You won, but still can't play chess." And lastly, my favorite found on page 84: *At the prize giving ceremony, Plachetka praised him: Viktor Lvovich, it is really impressive to see how you battled in this tournament with the energy of a young bull. And even more impressive is your immense consumption of cigarettes!*

Korchnoi played in 17 Olympiads. In 211 games he won 93, drew 96 and only lost 22. Quite a nice statistic.

Throughout the 528 pages Karolyi's annotations are superb. I did find it frustrating on several occasions when there was discussion about a certain game, but the game was not presented. A couple examples: page 294, the last paragraph talks about Loek Van Wely playing an odd 11th move that caused both he and Korchnoi to laugh. But then the game is not presented. Page 313, at the Hoogeteven tournament, Korchnoi played Judit Polgar in the "most spectacular game of the tournament", but that game is also not presented. Yes, I could look up the games in ChessBase, but that is annoying.

A few pages suffer from smeary ink. I would be curious to see if this was the same in all books or if it was a random artifact of the printing process.

There is a wonderful 36-page section of photos in addition to the individual photos spread throughout the book.

The publisher, Elk & Ruby, offers a full color hardback, a black and white hardback, and a black and white paperback. In the full color copy, 70 of the 80 photos are in color. I purchased the black and white hardback in which the photos are very nice, but I would bet the color copy is pretty fabulous. Note that all covers are colored. The book can also be purchased for Amazon Kindle and Forward Chess.

I can't recommend this four-volume series enough. Yes...I am biased, because Korchnoi is one of my favorite players, but the work that Karolyi and Renette have put in is nothing short of breathtaking.

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Chess Keys: A Queen's Gambit

By Rachel Schechter

Fall 2024. A Minnesota suburb. I am invited to teach an advanced chess class at Washington Middle School in Wilson Springs. Upscale, Uber-Ed. I'm flattered, to say the least, and a bit nervous. Their 2023 instructor was a Chess Expert, well on his way to becoming a Master. I am not.

I scanned the seven student profiles—including their chess ratings—while on the phone with my new chess colleague, Adam Davis. I stumbled into his team room at the Minnesota Scholastic State Tourney in 2022; we connected immediately, strongly supporting each other in subsequent chess ventures.

"What can I *possibly* teach a student whose rating is 1800?" I bemoan.

Adam is configuring the ladder results from one of the many classes he oversees in Minneapolis.

"1800?" he asks, "How old is he?"

"13. Albert Xiang. Regular rating 1802. Blitz, 1907. Shy, academically strong, no emotional or familial issues; moved here from Texas. It's his first year at Washington Middle School."

"Sounds like an instructor's dream...", muses Adam.

I pour a small brandy:

"Bit of a nightmare for me, Adam. He's rated much higher than I *ever* was, *ever will* be."

"I'll check with a few other coaches, but I'm sure you'll think of something," Adam says, distracted. "You always do. That's why so many schools ask you to teach. Gotta run, another call, good luck."

That week I sifted through half a dozen chess manuals and twice as many sites. The other six students were between 600-900. No worries. Had that covered. But the Xiang kid? Would I have to create two game plans for one class of seven students? Experience proved it never worked well. Even when I was with an excellent Montessori school in Illinois.

So...nervous, unsure, and a bit overwhelmed, I survey the space in one of Washington Middle's state-of-the-art classrooms a few days before I'm scheduled to begin. Comes a voice from behind me:

"Ms. Brooks? Scott Sandler, principal." He extends his hand. "Pleased to meet you."

"Please call me Rachel," I smile, "What an impressive school..."
Principal Sandler nods:

"We try. Our budget is good, and our parents are extremely supportive. Youngsters work hard. And our Chess Kids can assist you with computers, white board, whatever you need."

Chess Kids? Hmm... I smile again:

"Thanks very much. I'm looking forward to teaching here."

"We have great hopes for this chess group," he says, "especially since the Xiang boy's transfer."

"What do you mean?" I ask cautiously.

He walks casually around the classroom.

"Well, with his rating, there's talk that these kids could win some hardware at the Super Nationals in Orlando in May 2025. You would coach; some parents would chaperone. The district would pay for it, of course. We're very proud of our youngsters' achievements here in Washington Middle."

I sit at a desk, swallow. I'd never been to the Super Nationals. Coached at a couple of state tournaments in Illinois, one in Minnesota, but the Nationals? No. I force a smile:

"Sounds like a plan. And it sounds like you know your way around the chessboard."

We shake hands again. He laughs.

"Well, I was second board at U of M back in the day. Glad to welcome you on board," says Scott Sandler, exiting. "Anything you need, just ask."

How about a winning curriculum? I think. I look out the window, set up a board, open d4 and—voila—an idea takes hold.

.....

Three days later I'm standing in front of the chess class, fumbling with a laptop/whiteboard connection.

"*ChessKid*?" says Jason Hawk, one of my new students. "You want us to play on *ChessKid*? Hee-haw knights and bug-eyed kings. We all play on *Chess.com*!"

"Yeah, and *Lichess*..." the other students chime in. All except Albert. He sits quietly, away from the group, at a desk in the back row, working on his netbook.

"Yes," I nod, exasperated, "Could someone please help me with this whiteboard set up?"

Two students rush to my assistance and within minutes the connection is made; *ChessKid* and all its crazy creative characters smile at them. They can't help but laugh.

"I learned that when I was seven," claims one student.

"I was six," says another, not to be outdone.

A small friendly argument ensues.

"Okay," I say affably, gesturing to the screen and muting the sound, "I'm sure nearly *everyone* in your generation learned on *ChessKid*. But did you know that the *ChessKid* learning, rating, and skill levels extend to 1400?"

The class grows quiet, shrugging, exchanging looks. Albert Xiang closes his netbook and scans the screen.

"Yes," he says evenly, "It's a 4.0 curriculum for players rated 1100-1400."

<p>Thank God, I think, nodding, smiling—he's joined the class. First step, successful. All the other students turn to look at him; Albert drops his eyes, embarrassed.</p> <p>"1400? Do they still use those ridiculous snorting knights at 1400?" cracks Jason, clearly the class leader.</p> <p>Everyone except Albert laughs. He clears his throat:</p> <p>"Not as much," he says quietly, thoughtfully.</p> <p>"You know," I always liked those knights," says another student.</p> <p>"And what about those ricocheting rooks?" giggles another. "Boing, boing!"</p> <p>I laugh with them, flicking through screens and scenarios on the white-board, intending to review their chess past before going forward.</p> <p>"How about those queens' eyelashes..." snaps one boy.</p> <p>"Like the witch in Snow White." snaps another.</p> <p>They all laugh, Albert included.</p> <p>"Look at this puzzle," I say nonchalantly. "It's for players rated 1000. Mate in three, White to play. Any ideas?"</p> <p>The boys talk among themselves. Albert looks out the window.</p> <p>"Set up boards," I instruct. "Each of you sets his own board."</p> <p>"Can we pair off?"</p> <p>I look at the roster. Seven boys, three boards. They're already pairing. What about Albert?</p> <p>"Uh, you are—?"</p> <p>"Anthony. Anthony James. Isn't it always better to analyze <i>together</i>?"</p> <p>I prepare to argue this point then glance at Albert.</p> <p>"Okay", I nod, thinking on my feet (perhaps my best strength), "Albert, would you set up a board with me?"</p> <p>Grateful eyes, quick to rise, he moves to the front of the classroom. The other boys watch him carefully. I can read their minds: <i>Who is this new kid?</i> Where's he <i>from</i>? What's he <i>about</i>? Albert sets up the board quickly, from memory. I caught my breath. So young to be so gifted.</p> <p>"You know," I say, "you guys all know each other, but Albert's family just moved here from Texas. Why don't you introduce—"</p> <p>The youngest boy, at 11, rises quickly, stands next to Albert.</p> <p>"I'm Benny Harris," he says, extending his hand. "I think you live just a few blocks away from us."</p> <p>"Michael Everett. We have math together."</p> <p>"Ryan Bashki. Nice to meet you."</p> <p>"Eric Solosky. Ditto."</p>	<p>Abashed and relieved, Albert shakes hands all around.</p> <p>"Thanks, I'm Albert, uh, Albert Xhiang."</p> <p>Everyone gathers around our board.</p> <p>"And what's your rating, Albert Xhiang?" asks Jason, highest among the others at 898.</p> <p>Albert blushes, looks away:</p> <p>"Uh, it's uh—"</p> <p>"Higher than yours, dude," I shrug, nonchalant, "higher than <i>all of yours</i>."</p> <p>"Higher than yours, Ms. Rachel?" snipes Jason.</p> <p>"It's 1802," Albert intervenes.</p> <p>This silences everyone. I caught my breath, relieved:</p> <p>"Let's look at the board, shall we?"</p> <p>All eyes on the board.</p> <p>"Qf4...no..."</p> <p>"Nc6?"</p> <p>"What about this bishop/queen battery?"</p> <p>"Too obvious."</p> <p>Pieces move; thoughts exchange. The mate remains elusive.</p> <p>"What do you think, Albert?" I ask casually.</p> <p>He clears his throat, quiet and decisive:</p> <p>"The pawn promotes then—"</p> <p>"The pawn?" echo the students. "How can that—"</p> <p>"Why don't we solve it on the big screen?" I say, suddenly exuberant. "Albert, would you show us? Just...take the controls."</p> <p>A sharp intake of breath, he looks at me, no self-confidence, no self-assertiveness. I fear he might disappear into the woodwork. I put the control in his hand.</p> <p>"Please, just study the board and just walk us through it..."</p> <p>Again, that quick, grateful blink in his eyes.</p> <p>"Thanks," Albert mutters.</p> <p>I push him gently toward the screen:</p> <p>"<i>How does that pawn even figure into the mate?</i>" I ask, stepping back, hands to the air.</p> <p>The students nod, echoing like questions. I smile encouragingly at Albert:</p> <p>"The board, please, look at the board and <i>explain</i> it to us."</p>
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<p>Albert turns to the board, his back to the class, and transforms into the Class A player he truly is. The other students scramble to duplicate moves on their boards.</p> <p>"Wait a minute—"</p> <p>"You're moving too fast for me—"</p> <p>"Can you rework that?"</p> <p>Benny Harris stands beside Albert:</p> <p>"What if we try the Qf4 check?"</p> <p>Albert reacts quickly, precisely:</p> <p>"Of course—Qf4 check can give you a mate in five depending on what Black does." He runs through a few scenarios. Students are engrossed over their boards, discoursing, arguing tactics, position.</p> <p>"But look here," Albert continues, "if we pursue the double knight attack, we're stuck with this impossible bishop on h7. There's no way to get rid of it."</p> <p>Anthony throws his black bishop up into the air. It teeters on a windowsill then slips into oblivion.</p> <p>"Bye-bye bishop good-bye..." he sings.</p> <p>Everyone, including Albert, starts laughing, throwing pieces into the air, singing. Jason stands on a chair and dances. Someone clicks on Apple iPhone music. Ah, middle school boys. How can you not love them?</p> <p>I scroll to a new position:</p> <p>"Let's divide up, play from here," I laugh.</p> <p><i>Everyone</i> wanted to play with Albert. <i>Everyone</i> wanted his advice. He was smiling, loose, confident, moving easily from board to board. I intervened as needed. And soon, a few parents were at the classroom door.</p> <p>"Yikes," I say, "We're 15 minutes over class schedule."</p> <p>I open the door, greet the parents and apologize. Students wave, leave with their parents. Jason and Anthony helped me reorganize the classroom. Anthony is polite: where else did I teach? Did I play tournaments? But Jason is all 13-year-old brass: Did I have a husband? A boyfriend? I laugh, pack up.</p> <p>They stand at the door:</p> <p>"Hey, if Albert's so good," Jason says, "What do we need <i>you</i> for?"</p> <p>I shake my head, grin:</p> <p>"To kick your skinny butt, dude, to kick your skinny butt. Now get out of here!"</p> <p>Hijinks in the hall:</p> <p>Anthony is shocked:</p> <p>"How could you <i>say that</i>? You're so <i>rude</i>!"</p> <p>Jason hugs himself:</p>	<p>"Are you kidding? I think she likes me. Did you see the way she smiled at me?"</p> <p>I laugh, sit down and pack up the last few pieces. Relief. It couldn't have gone better, I think. My <i>ChessKid</i> plan worked. We'd continue with it as the primary chess focal point going forward. I'd have to thank Mike Klein. Then—I'm nearly out the door, hand on the light switch— and Albert Xhiang stands up at his back-row desk.</p> <p>"Oh," I'm surprised. "I didn't know you were still here, Albert. Is everything alright?"</p> <p>He tightens his backpack, nods, and walks toward the door.</p> <p>"Yeah, I, uh—well, I—"</p> <p>Oh dear, I think there are a couple of tears in his eyes. He shifts his weight, awkward, uncertain, much like he was <i>before</i> class.</p> <p>Then:</p> <p>"Class was great, Ms. Rachel. I—I don't know how to thank you—"</p> <p>"Oh, that's okay, YOU were great, YOU—"</p> <p>"Thank you so much," he half-sobs, quick hugs me, and bolts out the door.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>A few weeks later, I'm on the phone with my friend Adam. Early November.</p> <p>"I told you it would work out," says Adam, readying for a math tutorial.</p> <p>"Yes, you did, thank you. Bolstered my confidence."</p> <p>"Well, <i>ChessKid</i> was <i>your</i> idea...and it's really working. I can't believe it. 100+ curricula out there... The Xhiang kid climbed 27 points in the Plymouth tournament. And your other students went up as well...</p> <p>"Thanks for suggesting it."</p> <p>"Get them in as many tournaments as possible. A couple of other coaches in Minneapolis are talking about your team."</p> <p>Is that good or bad? I wonder.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>December in Minnesota. Cold in Wilson Springs, but hot on Washington Middle chess boards. And getting hotter. We'd worked our way through the 1000 level on <i>ChessKid</i> and were into 1100-1150. Games, positions, puzzles, simuls, openings, endgames, theories, whatever curricula they offered, we devoured it. And while <i>all</i> the students developed a new and improved "chess sense", Albert Xhiang wore his newly acquired composure like a warm winter coat. Whatever chess occasion arose—and arise they did—Albert rose to meet it. To meet and defeat it—head on—and to teach his peers how to tackle it. That these seven vastly different youngsters developed into a true 'team'—encouraging, supporting, and mentoring each other—in just 2+ months impressed me more than I thought possible. Yes. I'd taught chess for 15+ years in four different states, but <i>never</i> had a group who meshed as did this one. Cheering each other on—even when opposed—lifting each other's spirits over blunders or losses.</p> <p>I brought in stacks of <i>Chess Life</i>, chess workbooks by several notable authors, and ran (my personal favorite) single and double knights' tours. They notated the tours—even timed them. Same with Eight Queens</p>
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Boards. Success after success. And the **key** to it, I deduced, was unity, their remarkable team unity. And Albert's confidence and leadership unified them.

Team name? They decided unanimously on Tiger Knights, paying homage to the school's mascot. Eric Solosky, 12, artistic, created a handful of designs for their team shirts. Even on this they agreed: black shirts, with subtle, menacing tiger stripe patches on the pockets and sleeves. I distributed copies of Blake's *The Tyger*. They loved it. Quoting. Misquoting. "Framing their boards in fearful symmetry..."

And as if all of this wasn't enough, they played in two more tournaments, increasing their team rating by 35%. Incredible. There was even a brief article about a rising powerhouse team by the Minnesota State Chess Association. After this, a handful of parents set up a 'Tiger Knights' Facebook page.

It was during the last session before the winter holiday break... I walked into the classroom to find them already assembled and up their eyeballs in notation sheets.

"What's up—?"

"Principal Scott let us set up early," said Eric, "Hope you don't mind."

"Of course not," I smiled, unloading more chess supplies on my desk.

"What—what are you guys working on now?"

"It's a surprise," said Benny.

They hide the notation in their books and backpacks.

"Can't I see it? What's going on boys?"

They smiled, a bit embarrassed, exchanging glances.

"Well," Benny continued, "It's for you. A surprise for you..."

I sat down:

"For me?"

"Principal Scott said we'll probably be competing in the 2025 Super Nationals in May," said Anthony "and...well..."

"You turned us into a *team*, a real 'chess team' Ms. Rachel," Albert said quietly.

"All our ratings are up," said Jason.

Michael and Ryan stood next to me:

"You're a really cool teacher," said Michael.

"Yeah," said Ryan. "Best we've ever had."

I sat down, swallowed the tears, fumbling in my purse for a tissue.

Jason jumped up on his chair:

"Oh, let's just tell her, okay? We're trying to create a *new* variation—" he looked to Albert.

"A new variation in the Sicilian, just a couple of lines, maybe a sideline.

And—" he looked back to Jason.

"And we're naming it after *you!*" Jason yelled, throwing a few pieces into the air.

"The Tygress," said Benny. "There's already a Dragon variation and we're the Tiger Knights."

"Plus, there's the Blake poem," said Michael.

"So, what do you think?" asked Anthony.

My knees felt weak; I sat back down. There are 'moments' in life. And this was one of mine.

"I uh, I, well, I—"

"Now *she's crying!*" said Ryan.

"I told you we should've kept it a surprise—" yelled Benny.

Albert and Jason shake their heads and suddenly they argue. For the first time since the first day—arguing, all of them. I stood quickly, composed:

"I think it's—it's the nicest thing—the most *amazing* thing— *anyone* has ever done for me. In truth. I, I don't know what to say except thank you." *The Tygress!* Oh God, more tears.

Benny Harris pats my hand, worried:

"Please don't cry, Ms. Rachel. You're our *Tygress*."

Covering my eyes, I sniffle into my tissue amid whispers of:

"What should we do?"

"Ask the office?"

"I'm worried..."

"Does this mean class is cancelled?"

I dry my eyes and smooth my clothes. Class cancelled? That will *never* do. I walked to their desks, their wonderful chess desks strewn with boards, notation, pieces, positions, workbooks, chess mags...pull up a chair, lean into their chess cave, roll up my sleeves, and smile into their anxious young eyes. Middle School boys.

"*The Tygress*, eh? Okay team, show me some teeth."

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Winter Break 2024/25. We compete against eight other middle school teams in the Winter Wonderland Tournament in Minneapolis a few days before schools reopen in January and tie for first place, knocking the pawns off the Killer Kings, the long-standing top middle school team in the entire state.

Adam, who oversees most of Minneapolis Scholastic Chess, suggested we—along with other coaches and parents—take all the players to the Minneapolis Grand Slam Activity Center to celebrate a tournament well-fought.

We catch a few minutes alone over pizza and fries.

<p>"I'm very impressed," said Adam. A few other coaches join us.</p> <p>"To the Royal Game," I say.</p> <p>"We all clink Coke cups."</p> <p>"It's how your team pulls together," says Dan Whiting, Killer Kings head coach. "The working, the cohesion, it's rare. And I've seen a lot of teams."</p> <p>The other coaches nod. I like the camaraderie I've seen among Minnesota coaches. Of course, there's healthy rivalry but there's this bond of support among them. And I'm suddenly proud to be part of it.</p> <p>"I like the tiger shirts," mock growls Will Harris, 2nd place Golden Bishops' coach."</p> <p>Everyone laughs.</p> <p>"Are you using the Steps program at all?"</p> <p>"<i>Lichess? Kasparov? Polgar?</i>"</p> <p>I shake my head:</p> <p>"<i>ChessKid</i> advanced on the big screen, issues of <i>Chess Life</i>, other magazines, yes, a Knights Tournament but that's it." I keep 'The Tygress' under wraps.</p> <p>Adam winks at me, finishing his coke:</p> <p>"Well, whatever it is, it's working, stay with it."</p> <p>.....</p> <p>February 2025. Chess class resumes. The Tiger Knights are on the prowl. We're working collaboratively on <i>ChessKid's</i> 1200 curriculum—and a dozen other projects, The <i>Tygress</i> variation chief among them—when for no apparent reason, Albert abandons his board and rushes out into the hallway, slamming the door behind him.</p> <p>The other boys roll their eyes.</p> <p>"What's that about?" I ask.</p> <p>The boys giggle.</p> <p>"He's in love," grins Anthony.</p> <p>I can't help but laugh.</p> <p>"With whom?"</p> <p>Michael glances at Jason, then turns to me:</p> <p>"With Layla Johansson, cutest girl in 7th grade."</p> <p>"The whole school..." muses Eric.</p> <p>"No doubt about it," says Ryan.</p> <p>The boys turn to Jason:</p> <p>"Did he really give her his King from his Isle of Lewis chess set?" Jason shrugs.</p>	<p>"That's crazy—his best king—"</p> <p>"I think it's kind of cool—"</p> <p>"Ridiculous—"</p> <p>"How's he going to play without the king?"</p> <p>"What do you think, Ms. Rachel?"</p> <p>"Yeah, you're a female, what do you think?"</p> <p>All eyes are on me. Middle School boys. First love. Bittersweet.</p> <p>"I think it's romantic. Any girl would love it. AND...only a male chess player can gift it. No other sportsman. Remember that. It's utterly unique to the royal game. And who knows? As you get older...chess could be <i>your key</i> to a good relationship. The <i>key</i> to capturing <i>your</i> queen."</p> <p>Silence while they considered this. After a couple of minutes, I rose and cleared my throat:</p> <p>"Okay, guys, enough of this talk. Let's play some chess."</p> <p>The boys are relieved, everyone's moving about, talking chess. Tiger Knights are on the prowl. Suddenly, Albert flings open the door and shouts:</p> <p>"I'm sorry everyone, I can't do chess class today. I just can't!" Slams the door behind him.</p> <p>I look at the class:</p> <p>"Keep chessing Tigers. I'll handle this."</p> <p>Quietly, quickly, I step out into the hallway. Just a few kids milling about. Albert looks as if he's either going to cry or smash his head against a wall.</p> <p>"What's going on?" I ask gently. "Is it this girl Layla?"</p> <p>"You know about me and Layla?" he asks, incredulously.</p> <p>"I hear things..."</p> <p>Albert lays his head against a locker, end of the world voice:</p> <p>"I love her so much, Ms. Rachel. And well, I thought she loved me—that's what she said. But now she's <i>mad</i>. She's <i>mad</i> and she's talking about breaking up."</p> <p>"Jewelry," I say matter-of-factly.</p> <p>"I—what?"</p> <p>"Jewelry. Girls love it. Give her a bracelet or a ring. A necklace or a broach. It'll solve everything. AND it'll say to the world: Albert loves Layla."</p> <p>Albert looks at me with hope and surprise:</p> <p>"You really think so?"</p> <p>I pat his shoulder.</p>
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<p>"It's mate in one, dude, one piece of jewelry. Jewelry from the heart—for <i>your jewel</i>, for Layla."</p> <p>His confidence restored, he throws back his head, flexes.</p> <p>"You ready for class now? The team <i>needs</i> you. You're the engine. Without you, the Tigers can't run, got it?"</p> <p>Albert nods, turns the doorknob and bounds into class.</p> <p>All eyes are on us; Albert pulls up a chair at one of the boards.</p> <p>"What were you talking about?" ask the students.</p> <p>I stand in front of my desk, collect my thoughts, and look into their inquiring innocent eyes:</p> <p>"I told Albert what I'll tell <i>all</i> of you. In life, when you encounter a difficult situation, something you don't know how to deal with—there's <i>always</i> one thing you <i>can</i> do. One thing guaranteed to shift your focus and get you through it. Just set up a board. <i>Chess is your key</i> to surviving tough times—and coming out on top. Savvy?"</p> <p>Additional boards materialize. The boys pridefully work independently, in pairs, collectively. I survey them with humility as I wander through their den. They were truly a tribute to the royal game.</p> <p>Out of the corner of my eye I watch Jason pull Albert aside—and hear Albert respond: "Jewelry. Girls love it."</p> <p>Ah, I thought, smiling, another <i>key</i> entirely.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>April 2025.</p> <p>The Tiger Knights continue to roll—growling, prowling, pouncing—and winning. A Tournament in Burnsville. Then one in St. Paul. Super Nationals fever took hold. And it gripped me tighter than I'd imagined. I strategized with the other coaches—we held a very serious, very closed tournament a week before 'showtime'. <i>All</i> the teams did well—but the Tiger Knights excelled. This remarkable team put the <i>Tygress</i> 'on hold' to work the lines they already knew. And the fruits of their labor were ripe. Suddenly it was May. Super Nationals at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. All travel and hotel arrangements had been made. Each student's rating had increased by at least 20 points but... Albert Xhiang?</p> <p>His father pumps my hand at the Minneapolis/St Paul Airport. His mother hugs me.</p> <p>"Albert is rated 1962," said his proud, excited dad. "You must be a chess wizard. A magician. And—you're a <i>woman</i>. How can we thank you?"</p> <p>I blush, stammer:</p> <p>"It was a <i>team</i> effort—and well, Albert took control—really came into his own." They showed me their Tiger Knights tee shirts. I smile. "Thanks for coming out to support us."</p> <p>Then I duck into an innocuous corner—hated airports, tight spaces, elevators and such—pop a mild tranquilizer and observe from a distance. We numbered about 40. Checking in had begun and was going smoothly. Dan Whiting and Will Harris, Killer Kings and Golden Bishops respective coaches, flanked me. Adam had unexpected business in Wisconsin and had to bow out.</p> <p>"No, no," says Dan.</p>	<p>"No hiding in corners," echoes Will.</p> <p>"You know I don't like crowds," I protest weakly.</p> <p>"We'll run interference, Ms. Rachel, this is <i>your time</i> to shine."</p> <p>And so, they did—checking in, boarding, on the plane, landing, shuttling to the hotel—they handled it all. And the Tigers never left my side.</p> <p>"Is there anything we can get you, Ms. Rachel?"</p> <p>"Are you hungry?"</p> <p>"Here's a slice of pizza."</p> <p>"Here's a lemonade."</p> <p>We're in the Hyatt Regency lobby. A whirlwind. A whirlwind.</p> <p>"Uh, where are the rest rooms?" I ask.</p> <p>The boys gather round.</p> <p>"Over there, look—"</p> <p>"I'll show you—"</p> <p>"Step aside. No, I'll show you—"</p> <p>Dan and Will reappeared.</p> <p>"We just found out the Team Rooms are ready and looking good. We're going to head over to the Convention Center. Do you want to check yours out?"</p> <p>Official play started the next day. I am uber-claustrophobic, hyped, but exhausted.</p> <p>"You know, I think I'll just rest up, refresh in my room for a bit. Could you handle the kids for me for now?"</p> <p>"Sure thing, Rachel."</p> <p>"Say no more. It's done."</p> <p>And thank goodness, it was.</p> <p>Fifteen minutes later I lay sprawled across a king-sized bed. I swallow another mild tranquilizer and, fifteen minutes after that, sleep until dawn.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>May 9, 2025. Day 1 of the Super Nationals, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando.</p> <p>Dawn. I wake, stretch, open my eyes, look about and remember where I am. Sit up quickly. Early. Thank goodness. Hours before round one. I survey the room, open the ceiling-to-floor draperies, admire the view, admire everything. What Hyatt isn't top notch?</p> <p>Comes a knock on the door.</p> <p>"Who—who's there?" I ask.</p> <p>"Room Service."</p>
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<p>Room Service? I hadn't ordered anything. I grab a robe from my suitcase and dash into the bathroom.</p> <p>"A few minutes, please."</p> <p>"No worries. Take your time."</p> <p>Ten minutes later, I opened the door.</p> <p>A pleasant young man wheels in 2 large carts. Hmm. There isn't a breakfast food it <u>doesn't</u> contain. I laugh.</p> <p>"What's this?"</p> <p>"Your chess team didn't know what you liked so they ordered nearly everything on the menu."</p> <p>My heart warms, eyes tear.</p> <p>"It's perfect."</p> <p>And it was. Omelets, toast, pancakes, fruits, coffees, tea. Hungry, I eat quickly and am ready to store the rest in the mini fridge when the team bursts through the door.</p> <p>"Woah—how was breakfast, Ms. Rachel?"</p> <p>"I <i>told</i> you she'd like the pancakes—"</p> <p>"There's a lot left over—"</p> <p>"Can we—"</p> <p>"Do you mind?"</p> <p>"Please, boys, be my guests, finish it off. But bring it outside on the patio. I need to shower and dress."</p> <p>And so, they did, as did I. When I emerged half an hour later, they'd eaten the plates clean and were playing.</p> <p>"I'm thinking of going with the King's Pawn Opening for Game one," says Benny.</p> <p>"Hmm... Four Knights Opening is your strongest," I say, "You might want to lead with it, if you play white, The Scandinavian, if black."</p> <p>Ryan, Eric, and Anthony pace.</p> <p>"When will they post first round pairings?"</p> <p>I look at the clock, the schedule.</p> <p>'Bout an hour..."</p> <p>Dan phones me.</p> <p>"Let's head down to the lobby," I say. "We're leaving for the Convention Center."</p> <p>"Yes, and our Team Room is so cool," grins Michael.</p> <p>They dash out the door—all except for Jason and Albert, who seems to be moping a bit. I nudge Jason:</p> <p>"What's wrong with Albert?"</p>	<p>"Oh, Layla's giving him a hard time. Her parents wouldn't fly down here, so she expects him to call her every ten minutes."</p> <p>"That's unreasonable, impossible. He <i>must focus</i> on the game."</p> <p>"Tell me about it," Jason groans, grabbing the last few sips of orange juice. "Meet you downstairs."</p> <p>.....</p> <p>I whistle, walking around the Team Room. What a room. What chess paraphernalia didn't it contain? Geez. The boys pair off and play, but Albert is in the back of the room arguing with Layla on the phone.</p> <p>This tournament is <i>too</i> important for middle school nonsense, I think, moving within earshot.</p> <p>"Albert," I say gently, firmly, "I need you here, right now."</p> <p>"I'll call you later," he whispers into the phone and looks at me helplessly: "What am I supposed to do? She won't <i>talk</i> to me! She says the tournament is more important than she is. That I love chess more than I love her. This is CRAZY, Ms. Rachel. I don't know what to do! This is the <i>Super Nationals</i>."</p> <p>I turn him around, sit him in front of a board. Inwardly, I am fuming.</p> <p>"Now you listen to <u>me</u>, young man, this IS the Super Nationals. This WILL impact your chess future. YOU are the Tiger Knights engine, and YOU KNOW IT. They can't run without you, Albert. Are you going to let them down?" He looks out a window, shaking his head. I block his view. "I'm serious now, dude. Set this board, pull yourself together and huddle with <i>your team</i>."</p> <p>"Okay Coach," he nods, "I know you're right. Let's set a board."</p> <p>The team gathers 'round him, patting him on the back and shoulders.</p> <p>"That's the spirit, dude—"</p> <p>"Yeah—the game is everything man—"</p> <p>I exhale. They're playing, arguing tactics, strategies. They're the Tigers, ready to pounce. First round pairings are posted. Half are playing black, half white. "Just like your tiger stripes," I say. They're max-pumped as we move into the hallway just outside the playing room. Parents abound with hugs and good wishes as the team files into the arena. I smile broadly as the doors open, and the Tiger Knights find their tables—then I look again—where's Albert? Nowhere to be found! I spin back into the hallway—there he is, talking with the girl, looking like a lovesick puppy. "What?! You're going out with—hello—hello?" He pockets his phone. Stay calm, I tell myself. Speak calmly.</p> <p>"Albert, honey, play starts in less than 20 minutes. Try her again AFTER you win."</p> <p>He looks at me, dazed, looks away, and sits down decisively: "I'm not playing," he says quietly.</p> <p>My heart starts palpitating:</p> <p>"Excuse me? What did you say?"</p> <p>"I said I'm not playing. Layla broke up with me."</p>
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My breakfast is in my throat. I sat down, swallowing, trying to catch my breath. His parents rush to his side:

"Albert, what's wrong? Why aren't you in there with your team?"

"My stomach hurts," he says. "I can't play."

"*Your stomach hurts?*"

"My stomach, my head, everything. I can't play."

His mother starts crying; his father shakes his shoulders:

"*Of course* you're playing! There's *nothing* wrong with you, Albert. Now get up—" He tries lifting his son from the chair. But this seems to strengthen Albert's resolve. His mother wrings her hands, desperate:

"What is it honey? You can tell us?"

His father's getting angry; curious people are edging toward us. I'm sensing chaos.

"Is it because I won't raise your allowance?" snaps his father. "Okay. We'll double it. Just play!"

Albert shakes his head.

"What about that Mandarin Ivory Chess Set you like? Just play—and it's yours," smiles his mom.

Nothing.

"DO SOMETHING!" his father shouts at me. 'YOU'RE HIS COACH! HE HAS TO PLAY!'

I close my eyes and rub my temples. This has stopped making sense to me. His parents continue to offer him monetary rewards. Then they're yelling at him in Chinese. His younger brother starts crying, runs into another parent who starts yelling in Russian, then another in Hindi. It's becoming an international incident. I stifle a gag reflex. The crowd edges closer. A TD steps into the hallway.

"What's going on here?" he says. "What's the problem?"

Coaches Dan and Will appear.

"What's wrong with your boy?" says Will.

Dan checks his watch:

"Play starts in 15 minutes. What's the problem?"

"He, uh, his girlfriend just broke up with him and—"

"Are you *kidding*?!" they shout. "This is the Super Nationals! What does he want?" Both coaches try to reason with him. But he's implacable. They turn to me: "He's *your* star, *your* ace in the hole. He **MUST** play. Give him whatever he wants and get him at the board!"

I rub my head, my chest, suddenly there's noise all around me. Impossible. I close my eyes, try to tune it out. Think. Think. Oddly, I find my good luck key chain in the bottom of my jacket pocket. Thought I'd left it in Minnesota. I take it out quickly, with a wry smile. A chain of charms. My mom gave it to me when I was a child—a baseball glove, their wedding cake, a clef, a Pittsburgh Pirates flag and a small key—my dad had been

drafted by the Pirates before he served and died in Vietnam. "What's the key for?" "Whatever you need to open," mom had smiled.

And suddenly I'm ten years old, on a bench, in a dugout. It's my first year with The Falcons, my softball team, last inning of the last game of the season, winner takes all. I hadn't seen any action yet—couldn't hit, field or throw—but I was fast, and I loved the game, loved it—which is why (I'm guessing) with two down and a runner on third, Coach Zigler pointed to me and said: "On your feet, Rachel Brooks, you're running for Kovalevsky. I unzip my jacket, hightail it to third base. "What did you say, Coach?" He bent to my height: "Next play is a squeeze and you're the fastest player on the team. This is your shot." I tremble, swallow. "Kovalevsky's fast, too." Coach Zigler smiles: "I know you're scared. But I also know how fast you are. Kovalevsky got us the triple. Manfredi will drag the bunt, and you'll bring it home. It's a team effort, Brooks. *And you have what it takes to win.*" I twist the key chain on my belt loop, angle my hat around my forehead, kicking the bag. "Now check out the Eagles' catcher, Myra Ames." I gulp. She's older, taller, and hefty. "She'll be all over the plate," says Zigler, "But I don't care if you need to knock her into the bleachers, get it? If that's what it takes to *win*—that's what you *need to do*, understand?" "Uh, she's pretty big, how..." "I know," says Coach Zigler, putting his arm around me, "Just take her down at the ankles." "What?" "You heard me—take her out at the ankles and you'll score." The ump is calling for us to 'play ball'. Coach Zigler pats my back, stands back. Pitcher readies. "Wait! I—you—want me to crash into her ankles?" Coach Zigler points to the trophies. "If that's what it takes to *win*, that's what you have to *do*." I step off the bag. "But that's not good sportsmanship." Coach Zigler kicks at the dirt, rubs his forehead, straightens his hat then folds his arms across his chest: "If you can't do what needs to be done, Brooks, then you can't play for me."

Fifteen minutes later, the Eagles walked off with the trophies.

And I walked off the field.

My head clears. I can smell the playing field. All of them. Having competed in more than a dozen sports, I can feel *all* the fields, pools, gyms, fairways, courts, whatever. Calm and focused, I study Albert Xhiang. What will induce him to play? I've taught K-College for 25+ years. Gifted, Special Ed, Adult Ed, private, pairs, and small groups. Writing, literature, history, politics—and chess. For the past ten years, chess. What can't it teach? What can't we learn?

Albert sits with his head in his hands. I set a board in my head. He's 13 years old. First love, first heartache. Yes. I remember the bittersweet of it all. But what will convince him to play? Not his team, not personal glory, not money, not merchandise, not—

And I have it. Mate.

TDs are shouting: "5 minutes, check your clocks."

The crowd is deafening but I tune it out.

I sit next to Albert.

"What are you going to get me? A car?" he snorts.

"No. A bye. A first-round bye," I say calmly, evenly, waving over a TD. "Apologies for the eleventh-hour decision," I say to the Tournament Director, "But Mr. Xhiang is unable to play and will require a first-round bye. We'll keep you posted regarding the second-round."

We work out the details, I turn on my heel, Albert follows me:

"Wait—what's going on?" he says.

I open the door to the Team Room, usher him in. I pour a cup of tea, sit at a board, and open d4:

Albert sits opposite me.

I shrug.

"Well, that's that," I nod, calculating.

"WHAT'S THAT?" Albert yells? A BYE? I'M TAKING A BYE?"

"Well, it's better than a forfeit," I muse, "At least you'll pick up a half-point, though the team may likely collapse...you left me no choice, son. I had to decide." Albert accepted the gambit (d5, c4 dxc4) "You might be able to take a few byes. Perhaps the team will want to resign or withdraw. (e3 b5) I'm unsure of protocol." (a4 c6) I sipped my tea. "I DO know that not playing—for whatever reason—is a breach of good sportsmanship. (axb5 cxb5) Letting the team down?" (Qf3 Nc6) He slowed and moved the pieces carefully. "Well, what's worse than that? (Qxc6 Bd7) The team never forgets. You'll never forget." (Qa6 Nf6) I touched his hand. "And you will never respect yourself again. As a player. As a person. Believe me. With your rating, your ability, chess will be a **key** to your future." (Nf3)

Albert Xiang lays down his black king.

"Is it too late for me to play the first round, Ms. Rachel?"

I shrug again, sip my tea:

"I don't know, dude, check with the TD."

He ran to the door, then ran back, and gave me his phone.

"Thanks Ms. Rachel, thanks for everything."

I leaned back, looked out a window, refreshed my tea. Three days later I returned to Minnesota forever flanked by my Tiger Knights' "burning bright" first-place team.



Continued from page 33

A very unpleasant move for White! This pawn move divides the board into two and keeps the White King in the centre. Notice that Black is also threatening the deadly 18...♙d4!!

18.♙a4

White liquidates the threat and involves the queen in the defense. An amusing mating finale was possible after 8. ♖xb7 ♜xc3 19. ♖b2 ♜fc8 20. ♜xc3 ♜xc3 21. g3 Black has the amazingly pretty 21... ♜b3!!

18...♜xc3 19.♞d1 ♜fc8

For the moment it seems that White is holding against Black's threats. If he could only castle...

20.g3

Preparing to castle in two moves.

20...♜c1 21.♞h3

White sets a cunning trap in a difficult situation. The tempting 21...♙c3+ 22.♙f1 ♙d2 is met with 23.♞xc8!! ♜xd1+ 24.♙g2 ♙xe2+ 25. ♙h3 (the king follows the trail blazed by its officer) 25...♜xh1 26.♙e8+ ♙h7 27.♞f5+ with a quick mate (27...g6 28. ♙xf7+ ♙h8 29.♙f6+ ♙b8 30.♞e6+ ♙h7 31.♙f7+ ♙h8 32.♙g8#)

21...♜xd1+ 22.♙xd1

The Black Rook is under attack and White threatens to castle. It seems as though Black is running out of ideas.... but Lipnitsky had foreseen a keen tactic.

22...♙c3+

The c-file serves as a wide highway for the black major pieces' invasion of the opponents back ranks.

23.♙f1 ♙d2

The only way to win. After the queen trade, the black e-pawn would accomplish its mission by turning into a new queen: 24.♙xd2 exd2 25.♙f2 ♜c1.

24.♙g2

Now it seems as though the worst is over for White: he has (artificially) castled and has defended against the immediate threats. To boot, he is attacking the Black Rook on c8 and has a passed pawn on d5. Now comes the surprising killer!

24...♜c1

A move of rare beauty! If White takes the Rook then Black has mate in 2 starting with ♙xe2. And if White exchanges Queens then the Black e-pawn will make a Queen before the White d-pawn even gets close to doing the same. So White resigns! A magnificent conception!!

0-1

The book also contains crosstables for the chess tournaments in which Lipnitsky competed. They confirm that Lipnitsky was competitive throughout every stage of his abbreviated chess career. When his illness robbed him of his ability to play competitively, Lipnitsky turned to correspondence chess and to his writing. Towards the end, Isaak Oskarovich had begun work on a new book and dreamed about working on a chess novel. Sadly, he left behind no evidence of work on either project.

Happy Birthday GM Jon Edwards!

Awani Kumar, Lucknow, INDIA

It is usually believed that Bobby Fischer is the only world chess champion America has produced. [Paul Morphy was undoubtedly of world champion calibre but there was no formal world championship match in his time.] Bobby was an over-the-board player. Correspondence chess too has a long history – over a millennium old. [The earliest is thought to be played between the Emperor Nicephorus (760-811) and the Caliph of Baghdad, Harun al-Rachid (763-809) in the 9th century. In the 1600s, Venetian and Croatian merchants played correspondence chess. The earliest known postal game was between a Dutch army officer named Freidrich Wilhelm von Mauvillon (1774-1851) stationed at Breda, Netherlands, and one of his friends stationed at The Hague (Den Haag), Netherlands in 1804.] But the World Correspondence Chess Championship started in the 1950s. Jon Edwards started playing correspondence chess in 1995. He won the 10th United States Correspondence Championship and became an International Master (IM) in 1997. He is a four-time winner of the American Postal Chess Tournament (APCT) Championship and has won the APCT Game of the Year Award twice. Jon was awarded the Senior International Master (SIM) title and won the 8th North American Invitation-al Correspondence Chess Championship in 1999. He received his Grandmaster norm in 2017, shared first place in ICCF Candidates 2019 and went on to win the 32nd World Correspondence Chess Championship in 2022. Jon is the first American to triumph in the event in nearly 40 years and only the third American ever to do so. He won a bronze medal in the Correspondence Chess Olympiad in 2023 and was conferred 'US Chess Grandmaster of the Year 2023'. Jon has written over half-a-dozen chess books and has been a columnist in *Chess Life for Kids* and *American Chess Magazine*. He happens to be the oldest American ever to earn the Grandmaster title (at 69 years, 2 months). No wonder Jon has appeared on the cover of prestigious magazines like *Chess Life* and *American Chess Magazine*. He is also actively associated with chess philately. Jon is the President of COSSU (Chess-on-Stamp Study Unit) and has been editor of its quarterly journal *Chesstamp Review* for over 15 years. Jon is one of the few world class players equally proficient in academics as well as chess. He did BA (History and Economics) from Princeton University and MA, PhD (African Economic History) from Michigan State University. Jon was born on August 24, 1953 and the author wishes to celebrate his 72nd birthday with interesting knight tours on 8x9 (= 72) and 8x24 (which corresponds to August 24) cell boards. Tour of knight is over a millennium old puzzle. The task is to move a knight over an empty board so that it visits all the cells only once. Figure 1 and Figure 2 are magic tours on 8x24 board. Here sum of all the move numbers along rows is 2316 and that along the columns is 772. These are open tours, that is, the starting cell 1 and the final cell 192 are not at knight move. So, the knight can't jump from cell 192 to cell 1. It is more challenging to get closed (or reentrant) magic tour. The bottom row of both the figures, highlighted in shaded color, has another interesting feature. It is a bi-magic line. The sum of the squares of the move numbers, that is, $170^2 + 167^2 + 18^2 + \dots + 119^2 = 297220$, the bi-magic constant. Both the figures are almost identical; move numbers 67 and 126 have exchanged places with 77 and 116. Ditto for the numbers 78 and 115 with 68 and 125 respectively. Figure 3 and Figure 4 are semi-magic knight tours on 8x9 board. Here sum of all the move numbers along rows is 292. Move numbers 27 and 28 are exchanging places with 47 and 48 respectively. Such 'twins' are rare.

23	26	175	162	177	10	159	40	7	42	191	146	99	90	55	142	111	130	59	86	113	128	71	74	2316
174	163	22	25	160	39	178	9	192	147	6	43	54	143	98	89	58	87	112	129	72	75	114	127	2316
27	24	161	176	11	158	37	180	41	8	145	190	91	100	141	56	131	110	85	60	115	126	73	70	2316
164	173	28	21	38	179	12	157	148	189	44	5	144	53	92	97	88	57	132	109	76	69	116	125	2316
29	20	165	172	155	14	181	36	185	4	149	48	93	140	101	52	105	136	61	84	117	124	77	68	2316
166	169	32	17	182	35	156	13	152	45	188	3	102	49	96	137	62	83	108	133	78	67	120	123	2316
19	30	171	168	33	154	15	184	1	186	47	150	139	94	51	104	135	106	81	64	121	118	79	66	2316
170	167	18	31	16	183	34	153	46	151	2	187	50	103	138	95	82	63	134	107	80	65	122	119	2316
772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772

Figure 1.

23	26	175	162	177	10	159	40	7	42	191	146	99	90	55	142	111	130	59	86	113	128	71	74	2316
174	163	22	25	160	39	178	9	192	147	6	43	54	143	98	89	58	87	112	129	72	75	114	127	2316
27	24	161	176	11	158	37	180	41	8	145	190	91	100	141	56	131	110	85	60	<u>125</u>	<u>116</u>	73	70	2316
164	173	28	21	38	179	12	157	148	189	44	5	144	53	92	97	88	57	132	109	76	69	<u>126</u>	<u>115</u>	2316
29	20	165	172	155	14	181	36	185	4	149	48	93	140	101	52	105	136	61	84	117	124	<u>67</u>	<u>78</u>	2316
166	169	32	17	182	35	156	13	152	45	188	3	102	49	96	137	62	83	108	133	<u>68</u>	<u>77</u>	120	123	2316
19	30	171	168	33	154	15	184	1	186	47	150	139	94	51	104	135	106	81	64	121	118	79	66	2316
170	167	18	31	16	183	34	153	46	151	2	187	50	103	138	95	82	63	134	107	80	65	122	119	2316
772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772	772

Figure 2

1	70	35	40	3	68	33	42	292
36	39	2	69	34	41	4	67	292
71	8	37	30	65	6	43	32	292
38	29	72	7	44	31	66	5	292
9	46	19	62	21	64	17	54	292
<u>48</u>	61	<u>28</u>	45	18	55	22	15	292
<u>27</u>	10	<u>47</u>	20	63	16	53	56	292
60	49	12	25	58	51	14	23	292
11	26	59	50	13	24	57	52	292

Figure 3

1	70	35	40	3	68	33	42	292
36	39	2	69	34	41	4	67	292
71	8	37	30	65	6	43	32	292
38	29	72	7	44	31	66	5	292
9	46	19	62	21	64	17	54	292
<u>48</u>	61	<u>28</u>	45	18	55	22	15	292
<u>27</u>	10	<u>47</u>	20	63	16	53	56	292
60	49	12	25	58	51	14	23	292
11	26	59	50	13	24	57	52	292

Figure 4

Figure 5 and Figure 6 are monogram tours (knight move delineating letters) with square numbers $1^2, 2^2, 3^2 \dots 8^2$, that is, 1, 4, 9 ... 64 delineating letters 'J' and 'E' respectively, the first letters of his name. Figure 7 has the multiples of 9 along the middle row. Figure 8 is the prettiest of all. It has all the consecutive square numbers at knight path and when joined form the shape of heart – the universal symbol of love. We love, adore and admire you Jon and wish you a very HAPPY BIRTHDAY.

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

Figure 5

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

Figure 6

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

Figure 7

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

Figure 8