Carlsen Takes Home Inaugural Sinquefield Cup

Nakamura, Aronian, & Kamsky round out strongest-ever American tournament
What’s New in the USCF Sales’ Library?

Grandmaster Preparation - Attack & Defence
Jacob Aagaard
B0087QT $35.95
In this book, the author presents the main principles of how to attack and defend in chess. By carving dynamic chess into separate areas of ability, he gives the reader a clear way to expand his or her understanding of this vital part of the game. The Grandmaster Preparation series of books are designed to change the ‘chess map’ in your brain, transforming the narrow path of finding good moves into a freeway where good moves flow!

Sacrifice and Initiative in Chess
Ivan Sokolov
B0133NIC $29.95
The sacrifice is one of the most beautiful, rewarding and complex aspects of chess. During a game the decision to give up material in order to get an advantage is probably the most difficult one a player has to take. This book presents you with a set of practical tools that will help you to master the art of sacrifice. By concentrating on the aim you are trying to achieve, you will look at the art of risk assessment and how to trust your intuition.

Grandmaster Repertoire 14 - The French Defense - Volume 1
Emanuel Berg
B0088QT $29.95
The French Defence is one of the most popular and reliable responses to 1.e4. Black invites his opponent to gain space in the centre, with the intention of undermining the enemy position and launching a counterattack. Volume 1 introduces the Winawer Variation and provides expert recommendations against all of White’s major possibilities, with the exception of the most critical 7.Qe4 line which will receive special coverage in Volume 2.

60 More Memorable Games
Paul Powell
B0076OB $24.95
The author explores the games of Bobby Fischer from a unique point of view. Focusing on his own personal journey, he continues the battle to help the average player become a chess master. What’s truly unique about these sixty games is they are the games the author came back to over and over as a young man studying the games of Bobby Fischer, and they are presented with the wonderment and lessons that he learned on the road from Patzer to Master.

Botvinnik - Move by Move
Cyrus Lakdawala
B0374EM $29.95
Mikhail Botvinnik was a three-time World Chess Champion and possessed a universal, all-round style with an emphasis on logic and strategy. In this book, the author invites you to join him in a study of his favourite Botvinnik games. He examines Botvinnik’s renowned skills in the key areas of attack and defence, initiative, exploiting imbalances, accumulating advantages and endgame play.

Techniques of Positional Play
Bronznik & Terekhin
B0134NIC $29.95
Opening preparation is useful, but understanding the middlegame is much more important. This book, an improved edition of a Russian classic, teaches amateur chess players 45 extremely effective middlegame skills. Quite a few of the ideas presented here will surprise the reader, because they offer solutions for problems the club player is only subconsciously aware.

Mastering Endgame Strategy
Johan Hellsten
B0375EM $34.95
Mastering Endgame Strategy is a product of Hellsten’s many years’ work as a full-time chess teacher and is specifically designed as part of a structured training programme to improve strategic thinking. In addition to the many examples there’s an abundance of carefully selected exercises which allow readers to monitor their progress and put into practice what they have just learned.

Pump Up Your Rating
Axel Smith
B0089QT $29.95
Everyone knows how to increase their physical strength, but how exactly does one increase their chess playing strength? The author’s tested training methods have guided his friends, teammates and pupils to grandmaster norms and titles. Hard work will be required, and it will take time, but it will Pump Up Your Rating. Every area of chess is covered – opening preparation, through middlegame play, to endgame technique.

A Cunning Chess Opening Repertoire for White
Graham Burgess
B0184GB $29.95
A good opening repertoire need not require an enormous amount of study to be highly effective. A cunning choice of lines and move-orders can steer the game to positions that favor white. This book presents a repertoire based on 1.d4 and Nf3 with precisely those aims. Black’s possibilities for counterplay – and sharp gambit play – are kept to a minimum with a focus on giving black exactly the type of position he DOESN’T want.

Lisa - A Chess Novel
Jesse Kraai
B0077OB $11.95
The chess pieces knew how they moved. They knew what they wanted too. It wasn’t like school, where kids pretended they were masters of the teachers’ game. The adults didn’t know anything anyway. The real world was a big push to nothing. But Lisa escaped from all that. She found Igor Ivanov. He taught her how to play.

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PREMIUM USCF MEMBERSHIP RATES

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REGULAR USCF MEMBERSHIP RATES

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A $3 affiliate commission will apply to all memberships submitted by affiliates.

(1) 13 and under at expiration. (2) 16 and under at expiration. (3) 25 and under at expiration. (4) New sustaining memberships will not be allowed after 11/30/08. (5) $5 and over. (6) Parents and children younger than 25 at expiration living in one household with one address. (7) All younger than 25 at expiration living in one household. Both Family Plans include one monthly Chess Life. (8) Life and sustaining members have the option of choosing either Premium or Regular benefits. This selection may be changed at any time. USCF intends to contact these members approximately every three years to ask for confirmation of this choice. (9) Age restrictions apply. (10) Includes Life Membership, a special membership card, and recognition on a Benefactor page of our website and periodically in Chess Life. $25 foreign surcharge applies for magazine (not applicable to Canada or Mexico).
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Editor’s Letter: Through the Looking Glass

Last month I wrote how as a young Chess Life reader in the late 1970s I was reading about our top players for the first time. So you can imagine how strange it was for me to attend the Sinquefield Cup at the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis (our report starts on page 16). Being up close and personal with four of the top players in the world (and quite possibly the next world champion by the time you read this) was a chess fan’s dream come true. Meeting Magnus Carlsen was especially interesting—I could sense the magnetism emanating from him. Perhaps it is the aura of the “top dog”? This is helped a bit by the exquisitely tailored, sponsored clothing he wears, but mostly it comes from the confidence projected by a young man at the top of his game.

What is equally amazing about the wonderland that is chess in St. Louis is that merely having the strongest American tournament ever isn’t all they have to offer. Directly across the street is the World Chess Hall of Fame, yet another must-see for the chess fan (including getting your obligatory photo in front of the building with the Guinness Book of World Records-certified largest chess piece in the world). During the match, they had a preview exhibit of their now-open Jacqueline Piatigorsky exhibit. Most interestingly for me, this exhibit includes a number of Chess Life issues from the 1960s. It is both thrilling and a little sad that this issue you are reading now may someday be a museum piece itself.

You owe it to yourself to make a pilgrimage to St. Louis when you can. Keep an eye out for details on next year’s Sinquefield Cup; if you attend you will find yourself given the royal treatment. From grandmaster commentary in multiple locations, to the chess tables on the sidewalk, to being mere feet from your chess heroes as you hope to absorb through osmosis some of their genius, it will be an experience you will tell your grandchildren about, whether those children are decades in the future or by your side now. Here’s to your chess life.  —Daniel Lucas, Editor

CHESS LIFE ONLINE PREVIEW: DECEMBER

Disney in December

It’s an early Christmas for chess kids. The National K-12 Grade Championships head to Lake Buena Vista, Florida near Disney World from December 13-15. The intense seven-round event crowns thirteen new national champions, one for each grade. Popular writer Melinda J. Matthews, and mom of 12th grade contender Nicky Rosenthal, will report for CLO.

PAN-AMS IN TEXAS: Texas Tech will host this year’s Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Championship from December 27-30 in Lubbock, Texas. At last year’s “Pan-Ams” in Princeton, New Jersey, Program Director Al Lawrence talked about the incredible grandmasters that participate each year, “In the ’70s after [Bobby] Fischer, we had Pan-Ams with 100 teams, but nothing this powerful—these teams are Olympiad-level teams.”

WORLD YOUTH IN DUBAI: Our World Youth delegation heads to Abu Dhabi, in the United Arab Emirates from December 17-29, right over the Christmas holiday. Root on our team online and look to CLO for reports on medal hunting and adventures.

STUFFED WITH GRAND PRIEIXS: Major tournaments held over the holidays (December 26-30), include the North American Open in Las Vegas, Nevada, the Eastern Open outside Washington, D.C. and the Empire City Open in New York, New York. Find games and stories on CLO and share your own chess holiday plans on facebook.com/uschess or twitter.com/uschess.
The Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis, host location of the Sinquefield Cup.

30 Personalities / Chess Changing Lives

THE GAME
BY PAUL KARRER
What event or events could lead one to play a single chess game for nearly three years? A chess game which had the potential to save a life. A chess game, which unbeknownst to one player would open up to him a soul-wrenching trek through the dark underbelly of humanity.

34 USCF National Events / 2013 U.S. Masters

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The Dark Knight Rises

THE DARK KNIGHT SYSTEM

I would like to thank GM Ben Finegold for his time and his opinions (October “Looks at Books”). I hope you will allow me to clarify a few matters that pertain to The Dark Knight System. Like GM Finegold, I would be very concerned about recommending a position with a computer evaluation of +.55 pawns advantage to White. That is why I selected a threshold of +.25 pawns, which corresponds to an evaluation of “plus over equal/equal,” which is the normal result of an opening. I broke this rule a few times, not because it was necessary, but because sometimes the computer assessments were contradicted in actual play. GM Finegold appears to have detected at least one of these exceptions (though he did not respond to my attempt to confirm this) which occurs after 1. e4 Nc6 2. Nf3 d6 3. d4 Nf6 4. Nc3 g6 5. d5 Nb8 6. h3Bg7 7. Be2 0-0 8. 0-0 e5?! If White fails to free and develop Black’s en passant, White retains an advantage of exactly +.55 pawns, according to Houdini 3. GM Finegold suspects that this type of position will play even worse, but there is no need to guess. GM Tiger Hillarp Persson, GM Ilia Smirin, and six other grandmasters (GMs) have all been willing to play black. Their confidence is supported by a 10%-4% (70 percent) advantage for Black in 15 games. No one over 1850 has ever lost this position with black according to ChessBase’s online Megabase.

Like GM Finegold, I am also aware that positions can play worse than their computer assessment. I rejected countless variations with evaluations of +.22, +.17, and even +.07 because of concerns over king safety, database statics, static weaknesses, a lack of “human” logic, or because they had no conceptual connection to other Dark Knight variations.

If an evaluation of +.20 or +.25 is accurate in human play, it can normally be best understood as some extra difficulty in constructing and executing plans, or some lack of resiliency to error. That is why I made a special effort to develop and present plans in such positions. +.25 does not correspond to tangible dangers that require special treatment or difficult defensive techniques. If White has an advantage in space or development, it is obvious—routinely pointing it out is not objective, it’s pedantic.

Thank you to all the people who have contacted me to let me know how much they are enjoying reading and playing the Dark Knight System. The most detailed and specific review available is on Michael Goeller’s Kenilworthian blog: http://kenilworthian.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-dark-knight-system-review.html

Despite my best efforts, those of 3100+ rated Houdini, and my GM editors, it is unlikely, to say the least, that I have produced a 200+ page chess book with no debatable conclusions or mistakes, which is why I welcome any substantive (meaning specific) comments and criticism.

James Schuyler via e-mail

I thought GM Ben Finegold’s October book review of James Schuyler’s The Dark Knight System was horribly unfair. GM Finegold believes that uncommon openings must be bad, that trying to entertain a reader must be an attempt to cover for other shortcomings, that repertoire books should not try to advocate their openings, and most importantly, that FIDE masters should not write chess books. These fallacies, which make up the bulk of the “review” are unworthy of refutation.

Where in a typical review there would be examples, here we have only rhetoric. Without ever referencing any specific position, he estimates a computer assessment of +.55. I’m not a grandmaster, but when I wish to speak of a computer assessment, I get it from a computer. Also, if I want to know whether a position plays better or worse than its computer assessment, I don’t speculate—I check my database.

It is fairly common to read reviews that say more about the reviewer than the book, but rarely do the reviewer’s criticisms apply so thoroughly to his own writing. Finegold’s “review” pontificates about objectivity but demonstrates none, and rails against style over substance without saying anything substantial. According to USCF’s website, when Finegold was asked which books he would recommend, he replied, “I’m not a fan of books.” Perhaps then not the best candidate to review one.

As it so happens, I have read the book and I find it to be excellent. It’s a great weapon for the club player as the positions are easy to play with the help of Schuyler’s lucid explanations. It’s always nice when the author actually plays the opening he’s writing about. GM Finegold is entitled to his opinion just as I am. The question is, why would Chess Life choose to publish a gleeful, self-indulgent tirade written with all the intellectual rigor of an Internet troll, in place of a fair and balanced review?

Glenn Bidari
Las Vegas, Nevada

WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

Seeing the article “Benko’s Ultimate Truth” (October 2013) reminded me of the fictional chess story I wrote over 20 years ago about computer analysis of Vladimir Vukovic’s analysis of the Emanuel Lasker-William Napier game in his book The Art of Attack, “The Ultimate Truth”: danheisman.man.home.comcast.net/~danheisman/Articles/Vukovic_story.html

Since in the early 90’s most players were more distrustful of computer analysis than they should have been, I put it into fictionalized setting to make it more interesting and palatable. Today no one would blink an eye if you told them pre-computer analysis in a classic book was now shown to be incorrect, and it would not be news.

Dan Heisman via e-mail

Send your letters to letters@uschess.org or post on the Chess Life Facebook group page. If Chess Life publishes your letter, you will be sent a copy of Test, Evaluate and Improve Your Chess by Kopec and Terrie. We regret that we cannot reply to all letters.
Who will Reign Supreme in 2014?

2014 U.S. Championship
2014 U.S. Women’s Championship
2014 U.S. Junior Closed Championship
2014 Sinquefield Cup

THE BEST IN THE U.S.
GM Gata Kamsky | 2013 U.S. CHAMPION
GM Irina Krush | 2013 U.S. WOMEN’S CHAMPION
GM Daniel Naroditsky | 2013 U.S. JUNIOR CLOSED CHAMPION

THE BEST IN THE WORLD
GM Magnus Carlsen | 2013 SINQUEFIELD CUP CHAMPION

Who will Reign Supreme in 2014?

2014 U.S. Championship
2014 U.S. Women’s Championship
2014 U.S. Junior Closed Championship
2014 Sinquefield Cup
The City of Sunrise, Florida is home to the 20,000 seat, world class entertainment venue known as the BB&T Center where the NHL Florida Panthers call home, one of the largest malls in the nation visited by millions each year, and headquarters for many companies in our bustling corporate park.

Sunrise, with 87,000 residents, is also home to 11 public schools where thousands of students are educated each day—eight elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. Our schools are part of the Broward County Public Schools, the sixth largest school district in the nation.

What’s missing? Scholastic chess.

There is no need to recite the mountain of literature supporting the direct correlation between scholastic chess and development of academic prowess in young students. We know the facts and it makes common sense. So we, in Sunrise, set out on a journey to bring chess to the community and classrooms.

One challenge, the City does not control the education of our children. Because there is a separately elected school board, the City does not designate where our children go to school, the curriculum or the budgetary priorities. Therefore, our plan to introduce chess would require a cooperative and grassroots approach. Fortunately, our superintendent of schools understands the academic benefits of scholastic chess.

Our journey began when, as a PTA president at an elementary school, I helped start a chess club. Even though I am a casual player at best, a dynamic teacher and I worked together to build a fledgling chess club for that particular elementary school. We were soon overwhelmed by the number of students who wanted to participate.

A couple of years later, after I was elected mayor, we began working on a plan to promote chess in our community. We made some important first moves to prove there is a strong interest from parents, students, teachers and schools in developing scholastic chess:

- Two years ago, each of the 11 public schools received 20 chess sets for the purpose of starting a chess club. Most schools started a chess club that first year. However, one limitation was that after-school clubs, by design, eliminate participation for many students who would otherwise be interested and who would benefit.
- After giving the chess clubs some time to grow, the City Commission held a year-end “Champions of Chess” tournament for the students and schools. Now into the third year, this fun and free “tournament” has prizes for the elementary, middle and high school winners.
- In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, Broward Chess Club and local restaurants, we developed “Family Fun Chess Nights”. Held at local restaurants, this has brought business together with players and families. When we introduced “bughouse”, we brought a new level of excitement to young players and families.
- Local organizations began “adopting” the after-school chess clubs. Building a bond between the community and the clubs has proven to be an important part of the grassroots effort.
- We invited additional schools outside the geo-
graphic borders of the city of Sunrise into our chess network.

● The City Commission created a free city program of open chess play every Saturday morning. This allows students (and adults) of all ages and talents to play in a fun and supervised environment. Importantly, our City staff has been quite enthusiastic about this program. We were amazed at the number of children who attended even though they did not know the first thing about chess, proving parents want their children to learn chess. We just need to give children exposure to the game and the opportunity to learn.

Then, with the building interest in our community, we pressed forward to bring chess into the classroom and curriculum. Through a grant from the America’s Foundation for Chess “First Move” program and with gap funding from our police department, we initiated a pilot program for the first time in our school district—establishing chess classes in every second and third grade classroom for three of our eight elementary schools. The program is designed to track academic benefits and gains. We are confident once the other elementary schools, teachers and parents see the benefits of this pilot program, we will expand the program to more schools next year.

We keep looking for new ideas to expand the opportunity for chess. The United States Chess Federation staff and advisors have been a great resource to learn about successful strategies from other communities. While we have further to go towards the goal of putting chess permanently in our academic environment, we think we are making the right moves.

For more information on chess in Sunrise, go to www.sunrisefl.gov/chess or e-mail the mayor at mryan@sunrisefl.gov.

Adventures of the Mind Looking For More Chess Players

Adventures of the Mind is a different kind of summer camp—one that helps high-potential teens explore their futures, including career paths that stoke their intellectual and creative passions. For a student to be accepted to the program is to achieve de facto national recognition given the in-depth nature of the selection process, world class stature of the mentors, and the intellectual rigor of the program. Next summer, gathering on the Los Angeles campus of our academic partner Occidental College, our 200 talented teens will meet dozens of adult achievers at the top of their respective fields, tour area colleges, go behind the scenes at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and explore their famed facility on Friday, June 20th while meeting their top scientists. Curiosity: The Mars Exploration Program is based at JPL.

Adventures of the Mind—often referred to as a mentoring summit because of the high ratio of mentors to students—happens June 15-22, 2014. Our students will investigate one of the major societal shifts shaping their futures: Now that technology has made information instantly accessible, what you know is not as important as what you do with it! As a result, young people need to think critically, collaborate effectively, and communicate persuasively. As they explore these skills, they will have at their sides an all-star faculty of mentors: tech entrepreneurs and Pulitzer-winning writers, astronauts and archeologists, Nobel-winning scientists and public servants, many of whom are also professors from leading universities.

In seminars, workshops and informal gatherings, these mentors will share their own triumphs, setbacks, and lessons learned, with the goal of inspiring and better preparing the next generation of thinkers and leaders. And we have seen how these messages are taken to heart.

We need your assistance to ensure a diverse and talented class of 2014. Please nominate two students aged 15-18 whom you believe have the intellect and imagination to be worthy of this honor. Nominations must be completed on our website: adventuresofthemind.org. (Select the ‘Nominate’ button and log in with the e-mail address at which you received this letter and password mindtrek2222.)

We hope you will nominate students you feel will both benefit from this program and also contribute to this stimulating environment that inspires campers to achieve. We are especially interested in welcoming young people who may not fit the traditional standards of academic excellence. For students who qualify for financial aid, we offer full scholarships—covering lodging, meals, events, materials and books—funded by generous individuals and foundations. We also have transportation grants available. There are a limited number of scholarships and grants per state, so please submit your nominations at your earliest convenience.

Accepted students will receive a formal letter of invitation accompanied by general program information. We will select the first half of the class by December 15, 2013, and the remainder by April 15, 2014.
If you are a high school junior or senior looking for scholarship money, read on! If you are also a current USCF member and have demonstrated outstanding merit in academics, sportsmanship, and chess, you are eligible to apply for a 2014 National Scholar-Chess Player Award.

A total of five scholarships are available at $1,500.00 each for a total of $7,500.00 in scholarship money. Previous recipients are not eligible.

These annual scholarships, awarded by the U.S. Chess Trust and the USCF, are intended to recognize and encourage high school students who promote a positive image of chess. Applications are available online.

Contact Susan Houston, Scholastic Associate, at the USCF office, (931) 787-1234 x136 or e-mail shouston@uschess.org with any questions.

Applicants: To apply, e-mail ONE copy of the following documents to shouston@uschess.org or mail FIVE copies of each document to the address on the right. We prefer e-mail submission.

1. Your application form;
2. Your high school transcript showing all courses and grades;
3. A letter of recommendation from a teacher in a current or former school you have attended;
4. A letter of recommendation from a chess coach;
5. Your essay of no more than 500 words describing the positive influence chess has had on your life;
6. A recent photograph of yourself—submit ONLY as a high quality jpeg photo.

Your application must be postmarked no later than February 1st, 2014. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Send your completed application to:
U.S. Chess Federation
Attn: Susan Houston, SCA
P.O. Box 3967
Crossville, TN 38557-3967
or e-mail—Attn: Susan Houston at shouston@uschess.org.

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**2014 Executive Board Election**

The USCF will hold an election in 2014 for three at-large positions on the USCF executive board. For full details, please refer to the call for nominations published in the November 2013 issue of *Chess Life*.
Writing on the theme of “[t]he feeling for danger” in an early issue of New in Chess, Mark Dvoretsky mournfully noted that:

... [o]f utmost importance is to solve a series of problems on one’s own, but this is exactly where one is confronted with a basic problem. As far as I know, no chess reference book exists in which the problems are arranged according to the skills which could be developed by solving them. (85/8, p. 44)

I have always found it curious that Dvoretsky, a trainer whose methods revolve around the solving of carefully chosen positions by his pupils, did not confront this predicament in his many books. Certainly readers are faced with ‘exercises’ and ‘questions’ in most of his works, but the positions are comparatively few and they are given in the body text, making solving difficult. Dvoretsky was said to have commissioned a computer program in the mid-1990s that would feature his collection of problems, but to my knowledge, the program never gained wide release.

Now Quality Chess, the upstart publishing house founded by Jacob Aagaard and John Shaw, has stepped to fill this need with two series of books. The first, a nine-volume effort, was penned by Artur Yusupov, Dvoretsky’s pupil and collaborator. Designed for players rated 1400-2100, Yusupov’s ‘training course’ was widely praised and the just winner of the 2009 Boleslavsky Award for chess literature. The second, Jacob Aagaard’s Grandmaster Preparation series, is in the midst of its publication run, and its second volume, Positional Play, is the subject of this review.

The Grandmaster Preparation series is, as its title suggests, designed for would-be grandmasters and their ambitious friends. Of the six projected volumes—Calculation, Positional Play, Strategic Play, and Attack and Defence have been released thus far, with Endgame Play and Thinking Inside the Box (on chess philosophy and improvement) still to come—Aagaard rates Positional Play as least taxing, suitable for players roughly 1800 and above. Calculation, Endgame Play, and Attack and Defence are progressively more complex, and Strategic Play is rightfully said to be fendishly difficult. If “improvement begins at the edge of your comfort zone,” as Aagaard (citing Rowson) has recently reminded us, then even we ambitious B players can feel justified in our study of Calculation or Positional Play.

All of the books in the Grandmaster Preparation series are workbooks. The chapters consist of short introductions to specific themes followed by dozens of illustrative problems to solve. Positional Play, Aagaard’s favorite in the series thus far, is unique in that it offers readers a training plan for improving positional awareness based on three questions: (1) Where are the weaknesses? (2) Which is the worst-placed piece? (3) What is your opponent’s idea? The first three chapters in the book (‘Weaknesses,’ ‘Pieces,’ and ‘Prophylaxis’) take up each question in turn, beginning with illustrative analyses of the questions at work, and followed by thematic problems for solving. The book concludes with 150 mixed problems and their detailed solutions.

While Aagaard claims that players of all strengths have found these questions helpful, there remains the potential for some misunderstanding of their utility. I do not understand Aagaard to claim that these three questions are ‘all you need’ during over-the-board play; rather, much as professional baseball players hit off tees to hone their swings, chess players can use these three questions during training to sharpen their positional acumen. The questions can be used during the game, but the real aim of the questions and solving is training one’s focus and intuition.

Aagaard is an excellent writer and a skilled pedagogue. His examples clearly illustrate the themes he is trying to describe, and the exercises to the exercises are clear and comprehensive. In some cases, because what is obvious to stronger players is not always obvious to me, I had to work through small tactical nuances—why can’t she take that pawn?—glossed over in the notes. I saw this as a feature, not a bug; if the point of the book is to learn by doing, a little additional work is actually beneficial.

Positional Play, like all of the books in the Grandmaster Preparation series, is not a book for the faint of heart. Effort, however, will be repaid with increased understanding and perhaps even Elo points to boot. It can be warmly recommended to players over 1800 and those slightly lower if plucky and willing to work.

NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART
A workbook for budding grandmasters

By JOHN HARTMANN

Once every 12 months we test readers’ knowledge of the ephemeral facts that may have gotten stuck in your long-term memory. These bits of information won’t boost your rating, improve your openings or make rook endgames any less confusing than they already are. Being somewhat sneaky, Chess to Enjoy has given some multiple-choice questions with multiple correct answers. When you’re ready to give up, the answers are on page 69.

1. Peter Millican is an international correspondence chess grandmaster. He made front-page news this year in a different realm. How?
   (a) His scientific research demonstrated a dramatic shift in global warming.
   (b) He swam from Cuba to Florida using the backstroke.
   (c) He used computers to identify “Harry Potter” authoress J.K. Rowling as the real writer of a detective novel.
   (d) He was elected to London’s city council.

2. Mikhail Tal, Leonid Stein and Yefim Geller were famous for it. Andre Lilienthal did it his entire life. Arnold Denker did it in a magazine ad when he was U.S. champion. But today Alexander Grischuk, Etienne Bacrot and Wang Yue are among the few world class players who do it. What is it?

3. True or False: A player born in the 21st century became a grandmaster this year, the first time this has happened.

4. And by the way, when the international grandmaster title became official in 1950, who was the world’s youngest grandmaster?
   (a) 17-year-old Boris Spassky
   (b) 19-year-old Tigran Petrosian
   (c) 21-year-old Larry Evans
   (d) 26-year-old David Bronstein

5. In the following position White blundered with 1. Kh2?? and was lost after 1. ... Kf2!, which threatens 2. ... Rh4 mate.
   (see diagram top of next column)

6. Which of these is the title of a published book?
   (a) *Disney’s Chess Guide* by Anatoly Karpov
   (b) *Putin Must Go!* by Garry Kasparov
   (c) *Vegetarian Chess* by Viswanathan Anand
   (d) *Meditation and Chess* by Vassily Ivanchuk

7. And which of these books was published in 2013?
   (a) *Chess Devotionals*, which explores the links between chess and religion.
   (b) A biography subtitled *The Doctor Zhivago of Soviet Chess.*
   (c) *My Best Games* by Magnus Carlsen

8. Wilhelm Steinitz is buried in Brooklyn’s Evergreen Cemetery. What is unusual about his gravestone:
   (a) His birth date is wrong.
   (b) The inscriptions are in German.
   (c) It calls him “William” Steinitz.
   (d) There’s a chessboard on top depicting his most famous game.

9. What is distinctive about the final moves of this game:

10. Lothar Schmid, the grandmaster and famed international arbiter who died this year, came from a family whose business was based on:
   (a) Publishing novels about cowboys and the American West
   (b) Currency speculation in post-World War I Germany
Nezhmetdinov Centenary

Rashid Nezhmetdinov, born 100 years ago this month, won no great tournament and never became a grandmaster. But his dazzling, original games show he was one of the greatest players of the 20th century. (He was also a great checker player.) The Russian’s combinations provide us with this month’s quiz. In each of the following six positions you are asked to find the fastest winning line of play. This will usually mean the forced win of a decisive amount of material, such as a rook or minor piece. But since this is Nezhmetdinov, keep an eye out for checkmates. For solutions, see page 69.

11. He popularized terms like theoretical continuation, blunder, hole, initiative, book position and transposition of moves. He was:
(a) Aron Nimzowitsch, in My System
(b) Wilhelm Steinitz, in the tournament book of New York 1889
(c) Alexander Alekhine in My Best Games
(d) Paul Morphy in his newspaper articles

12. Which event happened in 2013?
(a) An “Art of Chess” corner, packed with Bobby Fischer memorabilia, was opened at the Reykjavik, Iceland hotel that Fischer occupied during his 1972 world championship match.
(b) Magnus Carlsen signed a three-year deal to be sponsored by Nordic Semiconductor.
(c) A “Fischer Memorial” tournament was held in Sousse, Tunisia, where Fischer stormed out of an Interzonal in 1967 in a scheduling dispute.
(d) The World Junior Championship was moved from one Turkish city to another to shift it away from the Syrian civil war.

13. Who won a master tournament held in New York with a perfect 13-0 score?
(a) Bobby Fischer
(b) Jose Capablanca
(c) Emanuel Lasker
(d) Walter Browne

14. Before the first game of a world championship match, the champion’s supporters charged that the challenger’s “patrons” had “agreed with one of the big computing centers” to transmit “every move of the match as it is made” and analyze the best continuations for the challenger. This happened in:
(a) 1972
(b) 1978
(c) 1993
(d) 2006
(e) 2008

15. During World War II Reuben Fine:
(a) Finally won the U.S. Championship.
(b) Used his psychology training to predict where enemy submarines would strike.
(c) Wrote Basic Chess Endings and four other books.
(d) Worked in Washington as a government translator.

16. This position was notable because of a sacrifice, a blunder and a record:

An I, a ?, and a !!
GM Miguel Cuellar Gacharna
GM Jan Hein Donner
Skopje ol (Men) prel (2), 1972

White played 111. Qxd4! exd4 112. d7 and should have won after 112. ... Qa3+ 113. Kd5!. But he played 113. Kc6?? instead and Black drew after 113. ... Qa8+ 114. Kc7 d3! 115. Be3 d2!.

What was the record?
(a) It was the 37th time these two grandmasters had played one another.
(b) By drawing, Black earned a board prize for the ninth time.
(c) White was in time trouble a record-setting six times.
(d) It was the longest drawn game played in an Olympiad team tournament.

GM Soltis had too many good questions for us this year and we couldn’t print them all. To see some bonus questions, go to Chess Life Online at uschess.org.
The Gathering Storm

Before he was world champion, before the world was at war, Capablanca shows that he was already a potent force.

By BRUCE PANDOLFINI

IT WAS 1913. THERE WERE NO OFFICIAL grandmasters yet. Emanuel Lasker was chess champion. And the world was about to change for good (for bad?) and forever. To be sure, Lasker was the game’s top player, but with the gathering storm of world war on the horizon, another chess player, as bright as any star in the heavens, was on the verge of seizing Lasker’s mantle. That luminous force was José Raúl Capablanca, who in 1921 would finally dethrone the great Lasker. But it’s still 1913, it’s Berlin, and Capablanca’s opponent is the wily Jacques Mieses (Black). No matter, clever or not, Mieses was no match for the Cuban wunderkind, as the following game illustrates. It began:

King’s Indian Defense,
Classical Variation (E91)
José Raúl Capablanca
Jacques Mieses
Berlin, 1913

1. d4 Nf6 2. Nf3 c5 3. d5 d6 4. c4 g6 5. Nc3 Bg7 6. e4 0-0

Now make sure you have the above position set up on your chessboard. As you play through the remaining moves in this game, use a piece of paper to cover the article, exposing White’s next move only after trying to guess it. If you guess correctly, give yourself the par score. Sometimes points are also rewarded for second-best moves, and there may be bonus points—or deductions—for other moves and variations. Note that ** means that the note to Black’s move is over and White’s move is on the next line.**

7. Be2 Par Score 5
White prepares to castle.
7. ... e6
8. 0-0 Par Score 5
Accept only 4 points part credit for 8. dxe6. Capablanca prefers to keep his cramping pawn on d5.
8. ... exd5
9. exd5 Par Score 4
Receive full credit for 9. exd5, making it a full-fledged Benoni, with unbalanced pawn majorities for both sides. This is what Mieses was figuring on. Capablanca keeps the pawn structure balanced: four to four on the queenside, three to three on the kingside, but with a spatial advantage for White.
9. ... Ne8
As the game goes, Mieses has no luck with this knight. Probably best is 9. ... Re8, and then 10. ... Ne4, trading for White’s queen’s knight.**
10. Re1 Par Score 5
There’s only one open file, so that’s where “Capa” puts his rook.
10. ... Bg4
In his somewhat cramped position, Mieses sees no future for his queen’s bishop, so he sets about trading it off for White’s king’s knight.**
11. Ng5 Par Score 6
White crosses up Mieses. White has no objection to exchanging the light-square bishops, but he wants to keep his knight. It could then post up at e4.
11. ... Bxc3
Black makes this exchange to bring his knight to g7. But this is shortsighted. First, he can’t exploit the doubled c-pawns and, second, he leaves himself with dark-square weaknesses on the kingside.**
12. bxc3 Par Score 4
12. ... Bxe2
The plan was to trade this bishop for a minor piece, and so that’s what he does.**
13. Qxe2 Par Score 4
White commands the e-file.
13. ... Ng7
If 13. ... f6?, chasing White’s knight, Black runs into 14. Ne6, winning the Exchange (1 bonus point).**
14. Ne4 Par Score 5
White pressures d6 (if 14. ... Nd7, then 15. Nxd6—1 bonus point), but he mainly clears g5 for his bishop.
14. ... f6
Black stopsBg5. If 14. ... Re8, then 15. Bg5, followed by Nf6+, gains at least the Exchange (1 bonus point).**
15. Bf4 Par Score 5
The bishop develops with tempo on the d6-pawn.
15. ... Ne8
Black retreats to e8 to guard d6. After 15. ... Re8, White unpins with 16. Qf3, and Black is unable to save his d-pawn. Meanwhile, 16. ... Nf5 encounters 17. Nxf6+ (1 bonus point).**
16. Bh6 Par Score 5
And now the bishop comes to h6, with tempo on the rook. That’s why 15. Bf4 was better than 15. Bh6. Add 1 bonus point if you realized this ahead of time.
16. ... Ng7
So it’s back again to g7. But 16. ... Rf7?
ABCs of Chess

These problems are all related to key positions in this month’s game. In each case, Black is to move. The answers can be found in Solutions on page 69.

December Exercise: Once again you’re thinking of a new opening for white, or perhaps a new defense for black. So you get out the opening manuals and check out various offerings on the Internet. After spending some time learning the fresh ideas, you’re ready to complete the picture. Simply turn the board around and reconsider the same lines, this time from the point of view of your future opponents. From the new perspective, don’t be shocked if you get a whole new take on the opening arsenal you’re preparing. You may even, possibly for the first time, get to see who you really are.

17. Rad1 Par Score 5
White plays this with the idea of bringing the rook into play by lifting it to the third rank.

17. ... Na6
Black has to connect his rooks, and 17. ... Nd7 is ruled out by 18. Nxd6. Failure to connect the rooks carries its own set of problems. For example, if 17. ... Re8, then 18. Nxf6+ Qxf6 19. Qxe8+ Nxe8 20. Rxe8+ Kf7 21. Rf8+ Ke7 22. Re1+ Qe5 23. Rxe5+ dxe5 (2 bonus points), and it’s hard for Black to untangle his queenside.**

18. Rd3 Par Score 6
Add 1 bonus point if you had this in mind when playing your previous move.

18. ... f5
Black chases the knight from e4. On 18. ... Qd7 White triples major pieces with 19. Re3 and Black cannot compete for the e-file: 19. ... Rae8? 20. Nxf6+ Rxf6 21. Rxe8+ Nxe8 22. Qxe8+ Qxe8 23. Rxe8+ and so on (2 bonus points).**

19. Ng5 Par Score 5
No credit for 19. Bg5, when Black has 19. ... fxe4! 20. Bxd8 exd3.

19. ... Nc7
Black brings the knight into play, where it guards e8 and e6. If 19. ... Re8, then 20. Re3.**

20. Qe7 Par Score 5
The invasion begins; there’s a mate threat at g7.

20. ... Qxe7
Or if 20. ... Nce8, then 21. Rh3.**

21. Rxe7 Par Score 4
White’s command of the king-file is paying off. The rook replaces the queen with threats to c7 and g7.

21. ... Nce8
This is the only knight move, since 21. ... Ng8 drops the Exchange.**

22. Rh3 Par Score 6
Receive only 3 points part credit for 22. Rxb7, which means White is getting sidetracked. The attack is on the kingside.

22. ... f4
Black makes f5 available to his knight, but it doesn’t matter anymore.**

23. Bxg7 Par Score 5
True, 23. Nhx7 Kxh7 24. Bxg7+ is cute (3 points part credit), but not convincing because of 23. ... Rf7.

23. ... Nhx7
24. Rhx7 Par Score 5
Once again, there’s a mate threat at g7.

24. ... Nf5
The knight is tired of e8, so it moves to the square made available by Black’s 22nd move.**

25. Re6 Par Score 6
Accept only 3 points part credit for 25. Rxb7. Let’s repeat: the attack is on the kingside.

25. ... Rfe8
The text vacates f8 for the black king and sets up a mate, if White’s rook leaves the e-file. But neither point alleviates Black’s problems.**

26. Rxf6+ Par Score 5
If 26. ... Kf8, then 28. Rf7 mate (1 bonus point); or 26. ... Ng7, then 27. Rhxg7+, and it’s mate next move (1 bonus point).

26. ... Black resigned. 🤚
If you build it, they will come.” Substitute a posh chess club for an Iowan cornfield, a philanthropic investor for an impoverished farmer, and go a little farther down the Mississippi, and you have an apt description for what happened in St. Louis from September 9-15.

Like in that pastoral ballfield, chess fans came out in droves. But it was not ghosts of a distant past they were there to see. Instead, the top two players in the world and the top two U.S. players would play an intimate and historic double round robin. The inaugural Sinquefield Cup, which tournament and club patron Rex Sinquefield sponsored and reluctantly lent his name to, one-upped even the best of the various national championships that the Chess Club and Scholastic Center of Saint Louis had ever hosted.

The number of superlatives was itself a superlative. Consider:

The Chess Club of Saint Louis takes the logical next step: the strongest-ever tournament on American soil.
Highest average rating of any American tournament (2793); first time the highest-rated player ever, GM Magnus Carlsen (FIDE 2862), played in the U.S.; seven grandmaster commentators on-site; a $170,000 total purse for only 12 games of chess. That is $14,167 per game, or $305 per move! Every time a player touched a piece, he earned more than most high-end chess sets cost.

Joining Carlsen was world number two, GM Levon Aronian, top American GM Hikaru Nakamura, and reigning U.S. Champion GM Gata Kamsky. The players came to play. Half of the games were decisive, all but one extended past the first time control, and Carlsen’s insistence on principles instead of sewing up first place (more on that later), all made for a rewarding week of chess.

Chess fans took the bait. At a rare autograph session, around 200 fans paid just to get their pictures taken and posters signed. Several fans drove hundreds of miles and lined up three hours early in the rain to secure their spot. The line rivaled the opening of a new Apple product, extending out the door for an entire block down Maryland Avenue. The sidewalk became so congested that the police ordered the queue to stay single-file.

“I’ve never done this before,” Kamsky said while the fans streamed by, one by one. “It’s pretty cool actually.” Which square did he prefer to sign? “I am Gata. I like to sign on the ‘g.’” Aronian entertained several contingents of Armenian families, all adorned with their country’s flag.

Unofficially, the tournament probably sold more tickets to a chess tournament than any time in American history. Eager enthusiasts plopped down $15 per day to see the action, or as much as $120 for the entire event, which included other perks. They got food and the players provided fireworks.

In the opening round, Sinquefield made the ceremonial first move 1. d4 in Carlsen-Kamsky. The top seed immediately returned the pawn to d2. Rex’s wife Jeanne Sinquefield opened Nakamura-Aronian with 1. e4. “You can take that move back,” Chief Arbiter Chris Bird instructed. “No, I’ll keep this one,” Nakamura said. In a little more than three hours, it would be Aronian who needed the takeback option.

In a completely equal position, Aronian inexplicably played 30. ... Qb5??, allowing an elementary tactic. “When he played it, I didn’t realize it was a blunder,” Nakamura said of his initial thoughts. “If he played ... Qc6 I was going to offer a draw. I think he thought it was way too simple. It was unfortunate for him but I’ll definitely take it.”
Carlsen had white. Curiously, Kamsky (and probably one of the few in the world)

Carlsen had white. Curiously, Kamsky (and probably one of the few in the world) was the only player in the Sinquefield Cup against whom Carlsen had a lifetime chance to win the tournament.

During the live commentary, Ian Rogers went for a break about three minutes before Gata played this move. I was in complete shock! When Ian came back, I asked what he thought, and he had the same reaction as I. Later that day I spoke to all the commentators, and they all felt the same way. Gata was certainly in an aggressive mood this event! This seems quite weakening, but Magnus’ slow and unsure play makes this move look great!

15. Ne5 Qc7 16. Nxd7 Qxd7 17. Qe2

The beginning of Magnus’ ineffective play.

17. ... Nf6 18. Rfd1 Qc7 19. h3 Rad8 20. b3 Rd7 21. Rc2 Qd8 22. Rcc1?

What? Magnus isn’t doing anything, and now Black is completely equal.

22. ... h4 23. Be1 Ne4 24. Qg4 g5

I think 24. ... f5 is more accurate, but Black should still be fine here.

25. cxd5 f5! 26. Qf3 cxd5!?

This is playable, but Black is at least equal after 26. ... Rxd5! and the “c” file is sealed off.

27. Rc2 Rg7 28. Rd1 Nf6?

Retreating the knight to a worse square! Now Magnus is clearly on top. Black was totally fine after 29. ... g4!

29. Qd1!

Magnus’ play was nothing special the first 28 moves. Now, however, he plays like a super machine on a good day! I have nothing but the highest praise for the way White plays the remainder of the game. The Qf3 retreats to d1 to prepare the later f2-f3!
29. ... g4 30. f3! gxh3

Now we see why 29. Qd1 and not 29. Qe2? The g2-pawn is defended by the Rc2.

31. Bxh4 Kf7 32. Qe1!

Very impressive. Defending a5, and now the white queen has access to either flank.

32. ... hxg2 33. Rc7+ Re7 34. Bxf6 Kxf6 35. Rc8 Qd6 36. Qh4+ Kf7 37. Qh5+ Rg6 38. f4!

Magnus thought Black would resign, but said he missed 38. ... Qa3. Now White can’t swing his c8-rook to g8 or h8 since the c1-rook hangs. Still, Magnus finds the win.

39. Qh8 Rg7 40. Qh5+ Rg6 41. Qh8 Rg7 42. Qf8+ Kg6 43. Kxg2!

Now the Rc1 has g1 and h1 to surround the black king.

43. ... Rgf7 44. Qd8 Rh7 45. Rg1 Qa2+ 46. Kf3+!

46. Kf1+? Kf6 is just a draw!

46. ... Kf6 47. Qg8 Rh3+ 48. Rg3 Rxg3+ 49. Qxg3, Black resigned.

Just incredible accuracy from Magnus once he was winning.

Kamsky had the bad fortune of getting black twice in a row to open the event, while Nakamura was white again. The two played for the first time in St. Louis since their dramatic 2012 U.S. Championship game, when Nakamura won late in the tournament to leapfrog Kamsky and eventually win the title.

A confident Nakamura played the first dozen moves in negative time, thanks to the 30-second increment. His teeth came

“I am Gata.
I like to sign on the ‘g.’”

KAMSKY
out early, with the typical knight sacrifice on d5 and the less common early queen sortie to h5 (though not as atypical as his youthful experiences with 2. Qh5). Both players labored in the complicated middlegame. Nakamura had two minutes to play nine not-obvious moves to make the time control at move 40. One of the best blitz players in the world, he found the right path.

Nakamura’s on-the-spot analysis was that Kamsky’s activity again got him in trouble. He said that 27. ... e5 and 28. ... Qd6 is where Kamsky “probably went wrong.” He added that, like Carlsen in game one, he understood the desire to get activity, since White’s passed h-pawn will eventually become a nuisance. A few moves later, Nakamura said he became fully confident after the piece redirection 32. Be2.

Sicilian Defense, Kan Variation (B43)
GM Hikaru Nakamura (2857)
GM Gata Kamsky (2824)
Sinquefield Cup 2013 (2), St. Louis, Missouri, 09.10.2013


This is rare with 9. ... Bc5 being the main line. Who was the best player to play 9. ... Qb8 previously? Nakamura!

10. a4 b4 11. Nd5

Both players got to this position playing very rapidly. Now they start to slow down. White has to be better, with his more active pieces.

13. Nxe7 Bxe7 14. b3 a5

Ian and I did not like this move during our live commentary. This is slow, and gives White time to start a nice attack.


Black is in a lot of trouble.

17. ... Rg8 18. g3 Rg5

(see diagram top of next column)
19. Qh6!

This is much better than taking on h7. I thought Kamsky would lose quickly, but he is incredibly resourceful!

19. ... Rxe5 20. Qxf6 Rh5 21. Be4

Probably not the best. Simply bringing the a1-rook to the center with Rad1 gives White a clear advantage.

21. ... Qd8 22. Qf3 Rc5 23. Qe3?


23. ... Qe7?

The following line is equal 23. ... Re5! 24. Qd4 Rxe4 25. Qe4 Bxe4 26. Qxe4 h6 according to the engines, but, for some reason, both players liked White here.

24. Bxh7 f5 25. Bg6+ Kd8

Also possible was 25. ... Kf8. Both sides are playing for a win!

26. Rac1 Kc7 27. Bh5 e5?

Time trouble was approaching, and even though Hikaru had less time, he was able to keep a cool head. Better was 27. ... Qd6.

28. f4?!

How about playing 28. c3! The point of Rac1!.

28. ... Qd6 29. Rf1 exf4 30. Qxf4 Be4

30. ... Qxf4 31. Rxf4 Be4 32. Bf3 d5 should be a draw but Kamsky wants to win!

31. Qf2 Re3 32. Be2

(see diagram top of next column)

32. ... Kb7?

Played after long thought, but not a good move. Instead 32. ... Bb7 or 32. ... Qh6 should maintain a dynamic equality.

33. Rcd1 Qe6 34. Bc4! d5 35. Qc5!

Hikaru plays perfectly with little time on his clock!

35. ... Rd8?

Also winning for White is 35. ... Qc6 36. Qxd5!! Rxc2 37. Qf7+ Kb6 38. Rf2.

36. Qxa5!

(see diagram top of next page)

36. ... Rxc2 37. Rf2! Rxf2 38. Qxd8 Rg2+ 39. Kf1 Rb2 40. Bxd5+ Bxd5 41. Qxd5+ Qxd5 42. Rxd5, Black resigned.

“I wasn't expecting so many people to come to watch chess.”

ARONIAN
Hikaru played amazingly well in time trouble, and now has a winning endgame. Gata has seen enough.

Meanwhile, fans had to bounce their attention back and forth like a tennis match to the other game, Aronian-Carlsen. The sands of their hourglass fell just as quickly, with Aronian needing to make seven moves with 90 seconds remaining on his clock. In the end, he saved what he called an “unpleasant position.”

Both players tried to surprise each other out of the opening. Carlsen played the Dutch, something he employs less than one percent of the time in response to 1. d4. Aronian attempted a line with 5. Bf4, which historically has not troubled Black. Nor did it this game, as a few moves later, the bishop dropped back to h2 and struggled for daylight all game. Carlsen owned the only open file but chose not to take any chances and the game petered out into a draw.

“The position that I received because of my brilliant variation wasn’t very good,” Aronian said, sarcastic of his choice of variations.

“I used to play the Dutch a bit 10 years ago,” Carlsen said. “There was an IM [international master] on ICC [Internet Chess Club] who played Bf4 all the time, but I never could understand it.”

To remain coy before his world championship match, Carlsen was expected to keep his secrets opaque and vary his repertoire. His choice of the Dutch was also based on nationalism.

“I thought Aronian’s games with the Dutch haven’t been clearly impressive,” Carlsen said. “And also my friend Jon Ludvig Hammer, he got beat by Kamsky with the Dutch in the World Cup. I thought, ‘Why not give it a try?’ ”

After only two rounds, the players were already on unique scores. Nakamura and Carlsen, arguably the most anticipated matchup, led with 2/2 and 11/2, respectively, and would play in round three. Nowadays, when the two play, the subplot is always when will Nakamura break through against Carlsen? Going into the Sinquefield Cup, he was winless against seven losses and 13 draws lifetime. Aronian had a lone draw and Kamsky would try to get on the board with his first white.

Both Americans managed their time better in round three. Nakamura decided to wear sunglasses, in an homage to this magazine’s long-tenured columnist GM Pal Benko, who needed an edge when facing GM Mikhail Tal in 1959. Nakamura admitted that the day had special significance beyond his esteemed opponent. It was the 12th anniversary of the September 11 attacks on his home town, New York City, and also the 62nd birthday of his stepfather, FM Sunil Weeramantry (for more on the importance that he places on family, see the sidebar).

Though playing black, Nakamura took the initiative early and was the aggressor. GM Nigel Short, calling in to the live show, assessed him as a “phenomenally good tactician, whereas Magnus’ strength is a Karpovian strength... Hikaru has not been able to land those tactical blows that he is able to against weaker opponents.” Once again, this proved true, as Carlsen found a fortress-like defense.

King’s Indian Defense, Fianchetto Variation (E62)
GM Magnus Carlsen (2970)
GM Hikaru Nakamura (2857)
Sinquefield Cup 2013 (3), St. Louis, Missouri, 09.11.2013

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nf3 Bg7 4. g3 0-0 5. Bg2 d6 6. Nc3 Nc6 7. 0-0 Rb8

Nakamura is never timid, and plays a sharp King’s Indian against Magnus. At this point, Hikaru was 2-0 in the event!

8. Bf4 a6 9. Rc1 h6 10. b3 g5?

Super sharp play from Hikaru. Magnus is up to the challenge.

11. d5

11. Bd2 leaves d4 weak, and 11. Be3 Ng4 looks good for Black, so Magnus more or less needs to play 11. d5.

11. ... gxh4 12. dxc6 fxg3 13. hxg3 b5?

Again, Hikaru plays the most challenging move. The engines like White, but as Shabalov would say ‘Black’s dynamic potential is through the roof!’

14. cxb5

Engines prefer 14. Qd3! trying to keep Black bottled up.

14. ... axb5 15. b4 d5 16. Qd3 Qd6

17. Nd4 Qxb4 18. a4!

Many times during the event, the engines would suggest “computer” moves that humans would never consider... then ... Magnus would play those moves!

18. ... Ne4 19. Nxb4 Nxc3 20. Nxc3 Bxc3!

Is GM Eddie Gufeld turning in his grave at this voluntary relinquishing of the King’s Indian bishop? But, again, the dynamism of the position demands calculation and the capture of many pawns!

21. Rxc3 Bf5

22. Qxd5 Qxc3 23. Qxf5

Hikaru thought Magnus’ decision to sacrifice the Exchange instead of trading queens with 21. Qxc3 was absolutely correct.

23. ... Rfd8 24. Bf3

Black has a very difficult task winning with his extra material. White is super solid and has a strong c6-pawn.

24. ... Ra8 25. Qe4 Qf6 26. Qb4 Ra7 27. Kg2 Rda8 28. Qg4+ Kf8 29. Qd7 e6 30. Rd1 Qe5 31. Rh1 Kg7

Better chances were offered by 31... Rxa4. Hikaru later said this was his last chance to play for a win. 31. ... Rxa4 32.
“[Aronian is] playing so badly against [the Dutch], I think he's going to single-handedly revive it.”
I decided no more active chess. Draw, and go home.” He managed just that, despite admitting that “I screwed up and Black was even better.”

During the rest day, all four players and their small entourages went to the St. Louis Cardinals baseball game. It was not really a “Field of Dreams” moment, since Carlsen had never been to a baseball game before. But how many first-time fans are on field before the game, recognized by the public address announcer, get their picture on the Jumbotron, and sit in a private luxury suite? Though the home team lost, he got his sporting wish.

You don’t have to be a baseball fan to know a “home run.” With two outs and two strikes in the bottom of the ninth, the 260-pound and decidedly un-chess player like Matt Adams crushed a pitch into the Cardinal bullpen in right-center field. Despite the excitement, Carlsen said he liked football better (the players were also guests of honor at the St. Louis Rams’ opener, where they beat the other Cardinals, of Arizona, on a late field goal).

For the two players in the bottom half, the rest day energized Aronian, but did little for Kamsky. The next round also threw the leaderboard into disarray.

Aronian took white against Nakamura. Lately, when the two go head-to-head, it is more like baseball—ties are not possible. Counting their first-round game, the two had played six consecutive decisive games in classical time controls.

Neither man had shaved since the tournament began, and the game could have produced some gray hairs for the leader. Aronian played faster out of the opening, choosing a quieter system than Carlsen did against Nakamura’s King’s Indian. White punched holes in Black’s king’s shelter, prompting the second player to sacrifice a piece to liquidate the center in hopes of distracting White. “I’m just much worse, maybe a computer could hold it,” Nakamura said of his position.

He succeeded in razing the queenside of all pawns for the coming endgame, and Aronian made life much more difficult by exchanging queens, Still, Aronian converted with fine technique to earn his first win over the world number one on classical time controls.

Too many risks
GM Levon Aronian (2913)
GM Hikaru Nakamura (2857)
Sinquefield Cup 2013 (4), St. Louis, Missouri, 09.13.2013

(see diagram top of next column)

44. ... gx4 45. g3

Most things should win for White.

Personally I don’t like this method, but, I’m not Aronian!

45. ... fxg3 46. f4 Bxh5 47. Kg2 Kf6 48. Kxg3

This “should” be winning for White, although, during the live commentary, Ian and I could not see anything clearly. Both players thought this was not difficult, but, I wonder ...

48. ... Be8 49. Kh4 Bb5 50. Ne5 Be8 51. Bc2 Ke7 52. Bd1 Kf6 53. Bf3 Ba4 54. Bc6!

I like getting the black bishop away from e8.

54. ... Bd5 55. Bd7 Be6 56. Ba4

Black has run out of bishop moves due to Levon’s nice maneuvers. Now 56. ... Ba6, for example, allows the white king to penetrate via Kh5.

56. ... Ke7 57. Bb3 Kd6 58. Kg3 Bh5 59. Kf2

Levon tries to penetrate with his king in the center.

59. ... Bg4?

Stronger resistance is provided by 59. ... Be6!

60. Ke3

White either avoided or missed 60. Nxg4! fxg4 61. Kg3 h5 62. Bc2! with the idea of Bg6 winning easily.

60. ... h5

61. Nf7+, Black resigned.

61. ... Ke7 62. Ng5 wins e6. Nice technique, although Hikaru made things a bit easier with 59. ... Bg4?.
Nakamura, On the Record

Recorded 9/15/13 after the Sinquefield Cup ended; spurred by a desire to recognize the effort and contributions that his teammate, GM Gata Kamsky, has given to American chess, GM Hikaru Nakamura sat down to discuss this and other issues about his career.

“I feel like Gata’s given a lot to American chess over the years and I’m not sure he’s received the due gratitude that he deserves. I think he’s given a lot. At the end of the day, I hope his accomplishments, everything he’s achieved, is respected and appreciated.” ~ Nakamura

On the 2012 Olympiad:

I view the last Olympiad as being our last opportunity to win a gold medal. It’s one of the few achievements that has eluded me thus far in my career outside of the individual world championship title. It was a great run (in 2012). In many ways I feel like I gave it everything that I had, especially in the match against Russia. Out of all the Olympiads, probably out of all the tournaments I’ve played, I’ve never felt greater joy from winning an individual game. It was truly an achievement when we won that match. I remember the team camaraderie after we won that match against Russia—Gata pulling through (against GM Alexander Grischuk) and myself winning that very long endgame against Vlad (Kramnik). It’s probably one of the top two or three highlights of my career thus far.

On the last round game:

You know, it’s strange, there have only been two moments probably ever in my life where … well let me rephrase. There are moments in time where you feel like you just don’t have it. I very vividly recall a moment in 2006 in Turin where prior to our match against Israel, I remember [IM John (Donaldson)] coming to me and saying, ‘Gata is not feeling well. He doesn’t have a good feeling about playing against [GM] Boris Gelfand on board one.’ And I will always remember this, but both Sunil [Weeramantry], my stepfather, and I, we went to Gata and we said, ‘Relax, just play well. Play solid. Everything will be fine.’ Of course, Gata went on to lose the game. My win against [GM] Emil Sutovsky was very pivotal. I think we lost the match but it was still only 2½-1½ because of my victory. Eventually we recovered to win a few future matches and we got the bronze medal. But I just vaguely recall that because prior to my game against [GM Radoslaw] Wojtaszek in the last round I had this very unpleasant feeling. I have to say the only other time I felt that way was ironically when I played against [GM Anton] Koroiov in the recent World Cup. Obviously we all have to play and deal with it. It just reminded me of that moment back in Turin where both Sunil and I, we had to convince Gata to play. I actually considered sitting (in the final round) to get the gold (individual) medal, but at the same time I felt like it was probably the last chance for [GM] Varuzhan Akobian to play in the Olympiad for the U.S. Team, being as how he would not qualify for the future teams. So it was a very difficult situation, but at the end of the day, I am still the number-one player and I had to do my duty. Unfortunately I lost my game, but based on that loss, Gata found a way to win on board two and he got a silver medal. I honestly felt, prior to that Olympiad, it was probably our last opportunity to win a gold medal. Having been given that second chance and opportunity to try and compete again— I am really, really looking forward to Tromsø and I am going to give it 110 percent.

On preparation for Tromsø:

It’s difficult to say, but I think Gata is kind of realizing he’s reaching the end of his career and I think ultimately the team aspect, the team perspective is more important. Certainly I hope we can work together prior to the tournament. Before the last Olympiad I was playing a tournament so it didn’t quite work out. For me at least, I think this is a golden opportunity. To not take advantage of the chance we’ve been given would be reminiscent.

On teammates he would prefer in addition to Kamsky:

I don’t think it’s about a “dream team.” When it comes to a team event, I’m just going to put everything on the line, win or lose. I’m just going to give it my all because there are many different teams—Russian, China, Armenia and so forth—where, as you go down the boards, they become stronger, and we become weaker. I feel both Gata and I, we are world-class players, and we can beat anyone on a good day. I’m just going to focus on my game and try to win. I feel like our strengths are on boards one and two. Both Gata and I are strong players. We’ve been around so long now. If Gata plays a good game and I play a good game, we really are unstoppable. As long as someone can find
a draw on boards three and four, then we will be unstoppable. I don’t mean it in a negative way, because both [GM] Alex Onischuk and [GM] Timur Gareev are very strong players, but I do feel Gata and I are in a different class. One of us will be able to carry the team.

On the Sinquefield Cup:
I’m actually very disappointed not to have won the tournament. In many ways I felt like I owed it to give it my all here. More so than perhaps the world to me. Certainly in Europe I don’t have that support, and I’m not as well known. I have to say, that having someone walk up to me when I entered the club, saying, ‘Good luck’ or, ‘All the best,’ meant the world to me. Certainly in Europe I don’t have that same reception. Just knowing that there are people that understand what I am doing for American chess and trying to compete against the best players in the world, it means a lot knowing that there are players following me. In the past there have been a lot of people who aren’t following me were saying negative things.

On being an ambassador for chess in the U.S.:
There’s no greater feeling in the world than having people rooting for you. Certainly coming into the club and having people say good luck and hoping you do well, it means a lot. Especially in America. You look at [GM] Levon Aronian in Armenia or [GM] Magnus Carlsen in Norway, they have the support of their countries. Here in America it’s not the same. I’m certainly not a household name. I don’t have the same support; I’m not as well known. I have to say, that having people walk up to me when I entered the club, saying, ‘Good luck’ or, ‘All the best,’ meant the world to me. Certainly in Europe I don’t have that same reception. Just knowing that there are people that understand what I am doing for American chess and trying to compete against the best players in the world, it means a lot knowing that there are players following me. In the past there have been a lot of people who aren’t following me were saying negative things.

On having a manager:
At the moment there is not. Recently I was reading this book, as a tennis fan, called The Outsider by Jimmy Connors, of St. Louis. One of the things I very strongly recall about reading his memoir was about his mother managing his affairs, keeping it in the family and keeping it loyal. In many ways you can’t buy that loyalty—people who will support you at any cost. I feel very strongly that I consult my family.

My great mother, she is off in Tanzania climbing Kilimanjaro at the moment. Hopefully everything goes well as she approaches the summit in a few days. Without my mother and my stepfather Sunil, none of this would have been possible. I consult them on everything, and with my fiancee as well. I try to keep everything in house. Their loyalty, their support, is invaluable moving forward. I trust that when I keep it that way, everything will work out.

On having a chess player as a significant other:
I don’t know if there are any advantages but certainly I’d have to say that being engaged to someone who can understand chess, it means a lot. Whether you win, lose, or draw, you have someone who can understand it. In many ways I think it is similar to picking up a language. If someone doesn’t understand the language, they just do not understand it, plain and simple. I feel like I have someone who can understand the game and understand the ups and downs of winning and losing. I’m very lucky to have someone like that.

On the possibility of Rex Sinquefield bringing a Candidates tournament to the U.S.:
Rex has done a lot for American chess, I have to say that. As far as the wildcard or any of this, I’m just going to focus on my next tournament, play well and so forth. If I play well, I should probably solidify my spot as a potential wildcard. But it’s FIDE, there’s so much bureaucracy involved, it’s quite difficult to figure it all out. If I play good chess I believe that everything will work out. Hopefully I will have a chance to play for the world championship.

On Kamsky:
Much of my rise and becoming a strong player has been during his absence. Gata returned to chess in 2003 or 2004. I think back in many ways to this story—I think it’s well known. I think back to the time I played in the New York Masters, I think it was 2003. He was really wishing me good luck. He’s like, ‘You’re playing in this tournament, you’re a very strong player, all the best.’ At the time I wasn’t a very strong player, certainly not where I’m at now. I did not perhaps view him as a rival so much as someone who could give me advice. Having someone encouraging you, hoping you succeed, meant a lot. Knowing his time is perhaps coming to an end, he’s been great for American chess. He’s a very strong player and it would be a real pity to see him quit, but times go on. Hopefully I can use the encouragement and all the advice he’s given me over the years to my benefit.

Going back, going way, way, back in time, back in New York, I don’t know where it is anymore. Back in 1993, this is actually before I even started playing chess, my brother was already playing, and my mom has a signed chess board somewhere. Two of the signatures are from [GM] Gata Kamsky and [GM] Yasser Seirawan. I think Gata’s signature, it’s already kind of erased. I feel like Gata’s given a lot to American chess over the years and I’m not sure he’s received the due gratitude that he deserves. I think he’s given a lot. At the end of the day, I hope his accomplishments, everything he’s achieved, is respected and appreciated.

I don’t mean this in a bad way, but surely I’m in the league he was in against [GM Anatoly] Karpov when he played 17 or 18 years ago. I hope that he is successful going forward.

On world championship versus Olympiad goals:
Assuming nothing goes wrong in my personal life, I feel like I have another good 15 years to compete for the world championship. I feel like I have one final opportunity for the world team championship and for the Olympiad to go for gold. At the moment my main focus is winning the gold in the Olympiad.

On beating Carlsen in a match:
I just have to be Bobby Fischer, plain and simple. He did not beat [GM Boris] Spassky prior to their match and I view myself in very much the same way. I just have to focus on improving, and when I have a chance in a match against Carlsen, I just have to prove that I can play with him. If I can play well like I did here, I’m just going to keep the pressure on and eventually he will crack. I had two positions where I was a little bit better. I don’t see any reason why I can’t win.

On personal relationship with Carlsen:
To put it in the words of John McEnroe, ‘We don’t have dinner very often.’ He’s OK as a person, but he’s my competitor and I want to beat him. At the end of the day, chess is a competitive sport. If I stay true to who I am and my style of play, I will beat him.

On whether he is stronger psychologically than Carlsen:
That’s a very difficult question. About three or four months ago, I would have said no. Now I would certainly say that I am. I’m very proven, maybe not in matches, but in tournaments. I’m used to everything; I’ve seen it all now. I’m looking forward to playing better in the future.
The top of the tables then changed completely as Carlsen created complications despite Kamsky’s choice of the Exchange Ruy Lopez. Though he missed a relatively facile simplification for a super-grandmaster, Carlsen duly converted to push himself to 3/4, while Nakamura sat on 2½/4.

“Today in the fourth hour of play I was playing so badly,” Carlsen said. “The same against Levon the other day (round two)— hesitating and burning huge amounts of time.”

It was Carlsen’s first-ever win as black against Kamsky, who was experiencing his first period of extended hardship in St. Louis. In five previous tournaments there, all for the U.S. Championship, he had lost a grand total of once in 50 games. He had now lost three times in only four contests. Though he was the most buoyant of the quartet pre-tournament, Kamsky’s mood had shifted. “I’m still not over this game,” he said.

Although Nakamura surrendered his lead, he still controlled his own destiny with two rounds to go. Taking white against Carlsen in round five, he sought the elusive point to come to watch chess,” Aronian said. “Do we have Houston on the line?”

The broadcast went smoothly, but for a partnership with Fox Sports Midwest, they called in a satellite truck overnight, the last in the fleet (they are in high demand during college football season). The five-man production team now sounded like a NASA mission control center as they communicated with Fox’s uplink in Houston.

“Do we have Houston on the line?”

“We are for Houston. Power-up and hold for confirmation.”

The broadcast went smoothly, but for many, they preferred to attend in person. The fans turned out in droves and players had a hard time getting through the bodies just to reach their tables. The press corps tripped over each other while taking their pictures. “I wasn’t expecting so many people to come to watch chess,” Aronian said (he had played in the U.S. once before, at the 1999 FIDE World Championship in Las Vegas).

The sports bar next door was completely rented out—every one of the roughly two dozen televisions showed the day’s chess action (selling the game to unaware football fans that walked up was too much—most turned around to find a pigskin-friendly establishment).

Nakamura again appeared bespectacled, though this time it was less of a spectacle. He said the only pity about the shades was that technology now exists to make “smart” sunglasses. “Of course, they’re just regular Ray-Bans,” he joked.

The day produced no winners, the only one of the six rounds to end in two draws. Nakamura surprisingly said, “I didn’t even prepare for this game. After yesterday, I didn’t want to play anything too crazy. I decided to play a quiet line in the Berlin.”

He had a few chances, but Carlsen was never in serious danger. Nakamura said he missed the final subtle queen maneuver that caused a repetition. “I was starting to think I was better at this point.”

“I was hoping that he would over press and he would play for a loss,” Carlsen said. “But obviously he is much too good of a player for that.”

Meanwhile Kamsky played his best game of the tournament, as Aronian again got nothing in the 5. Bf4 line against the Dutch. The American pressed down the h-file, but it was not quite enough to earn his first win. Aronian’s curious second usage of the sideline caused Carlsen to flippantly comment, “He’s playing so badly against [the Dutch], I think he’s going to single-handedly revive it.”

Aronian reminded everyone that he had won many games in his career against the Dutch.

With one round to play, three of the four players still retained chances to win, but only Carlsen controlled his fate. If Aronian could beat the leader with black, and Nakamura drew with Kamsky, there would be an improbable three-way tiebreak!

That possibility nearly came into play. Kamsky took a perpetual against an uncastled Nakamura. Although the game was the only one of the entire tournament not to reach the time control, the play was sharp throughout, as Nakamura chose to play uncompromising, risky chess. “If I had won the game, I would have been number three or four in the world,” Nakamura said. “I have to take a shot.”

“It looked really good, but that’s why Hikaru is Hikaru,” Kamsky said of his position. The tournament having concluded for him, Kamsky reflected on his play. “I felt this tournament is for the fans. We don’t have to worry about the result. Sometimes the aggression doesn’t pay off.”

Having hinted in the past that his career starts is not. Best was 25. ... Nb5 and try to infiltrate on c3 and d4. The idea of winning the a5-pawn is bad, since Black gets completely tied down.


(see diagram top of next page)

Now Black has trouble moving his
Magnus always finds these computer moves! Now White has no trouble at all, and the game should be a draw. But Levon needs to win, and as a result, goes too far!

31. ... Ke7

31. ... Rxe4 32. Nd3 Rb5 33. c4!! is the tactical justification of 31. Ne1!!

32. f3 Rd2

Gata came to analyze with us after his draw with Hikaru, and he opined here that he preferred White!

33. Rd1 Rd6 34. Rda1 Kd7 35. Nd1 Rd2 36. Nf2 Kc8 37. Nfd3 Rb5 38. h4 Kb7 39. R1a2

Ka7 40. Kg1 Kb6 41. Kf1 g6 42. Kg1 Kb7 43. Kf1 Kc8 44. Nf2 Rd8? 45. Ne3

White was content with a draw, and we could see from the last few moves, but after this voluntary rook retreat, Magnus started to play for a win!

45. ... Kb7 46. Ke2 Kb6 47. Ke3 Kd7 48. Nd1 Kc8 49. N1b2 Rd6 50. Ra1

50. ... Kd8?? 51. Nc4

50. ... Kd8?? trapped the rook on d6, and now Levon needs to go through contortions to avoid big material loss. Levon offered a draw (and clear first to Magnus) somewhere between moves 43–47, but Magnus wanted to win!

51. ... Nxc4+ 52. bxc4 Rb8 53. c5 Rd7 54. Rxa6

Levon plays the rest out of frustration, but the result is no longer in doubt.

57. ... Rb3+ 58. Ke2 Rb2 59. Rc1 Ra2 60. Ke3 Kf7 61. f4 Kf6 62. exf5+ Kxe5 63. Ne1 Ra3+ 64. Kf2 Rd2+ 65. Kf1 Rd7 66. Nf3+ Kf4 67. Rxe6 g5 68. hxg5 Kg3 69. Rf6 Ra2 70. Ne5, Black resigned.

Though a draw was good enough, and the $70,000 first place was within reach, Carlsen rejected Aronian’s offer on move 48. “I had the better position and I wanted to use it. It was a little bit of a gamble, but I thought, ‘ Winning the last game would be so sweet.’ ” Declining the draw made his father, Henrik Carlsen, proud. It was also consistent with Magnus’ previous comments about his general dislike of draws.

“I had a big advantage and then I played like an idiot,” a somber Aronian said. “I played all the wrong ideas. I felt like I had to win immediately. Losing that position is embarrassing.”

“He completely outplayed me in the middlegame,” Carlsen said. “All White can do is wait. Fortunately my position has some inherent solidity.” His plus-three score of 4½/6 put him a full point ahead of second-place Nakamura. “The final margin of victory is flattering.”

The push to win created one last superlative. Before the event, the USCF assigned him an estimated rating of 2970.
That was too conservative. Carlsen’s first six USCF games produced a typo-like provisional rating of 3004.

The tournament served as Carlsen’s final tune-up before his match with Anand. He said he was not worried about his openings, and he felt generally prepared. “Most of the games were decided in the middlegame and endgame, not in opening preparation,” he said. One of his main goals for the rest of September and October was rest.

As for the future of the tournament, all signs point to an impressive 2014 edition. The club announced its intentions to host again next year. The tournament may include more players—this first edition was mostly arranged to ensure Carlsen’s participation. “I want Linares, Wijk aan Zee, all the other cities around the world that you think of about chess—I want St. Louis to be the same way,” Club Executive Director Tony Rich said.

Carlsen hinted that he would like to return, schedule permitting. “I liked everything, except for the end of my game with Gata. They were playing music across the street. That was really annoying. If you could have a banner next time that says, ‘No Music Within a Mile,’ that would be great.” Club officials actually interceded during that game, pulling the plug on the street performance.

Nakamura relished the chance to play in front of his fellow Americans. Previously, he had stated that playing in your home city created distractions. This time around, he saw the support from fans and changed his tune. “I felt more comfortable here than in Europe generally,” he said. “There are lots of fans who were rooting for me, and that was really nice.”

Sinquefield’s Kevin Costner moment came five years ago, when he took a city not known for chess, erected the finest structure in the country, and waited to see what would happen.

For chess fans, you could ask, “Is this heaven?”

No, it’s St. Louis.”

Rex Sinquefield (above left) lent his name and financial support to the Sinquefield Cup (trophy, above). Plans are already underway for an even grander event next year.
What event or events could lead one to play a single chess game for nearly three years?

A chess game which had the potential to save a life.

A chess game, which unbeknownst to one player would open up to him a soul-wrenching trek through the dark underbelly of humanity.

BY PAUL KARRER
teach elementary kids in a desperate, poverty stricken hole-in-the-wall town just outside of Monterey, California. I've taught in many other places too: Samoa, Korea, Connecticut, and England. And in each of them I've played and taught the game. In this little town in California I've taught fifth-grade for well over 15 years and every time it rains I pull out a chess set, put it on the overhead projector and I let the kids watch me play the one or two sharp kids who already play the game. Usually by the end of the week the kids are begging to play chess and are doing a series of rain dances so they can stay in at recess time instead of going outside.

Year after year though I have to straighten out a few false assumptions on the kids’ part.

A. The game is not, nor will ever be referred to as CHEST!
B. Except for knights there is no jumping.
C. Those little twerps in the front lines are not PONDS.

Then I excite their little impressionable minds with juicy facts. Like the fact that the term “checkmate” is originally from the Persian term “shah mat”—the king (the Shah) is dead some say “trapped”. I tell them about the nearly eight-hundred-year-old Lewis (Uig chessmen) walrus ivory chess set found near Lewis Bay on the Outer Hebrides Islands in Scotland. And found by some kids

Persian term “shah mat”—the king (the Shah) is dead some say “trapped”. I tell them about the nearly eight-hundred-year-old Lewis (Uig chessmen) walrus ivory chess set found near Lewis Bay on the Outer Hebrides Islands in Scotland. And found by some kids...
Rojelio was transferred from Tracy, to Corcoran Prison. Because of his age, small size, and violent tendencies he was put in isolation. We played chess whenever we could. And as his rules stated one letter was a move. To make things easier I photocopied each game and sent it in my letter to him. My letters to him took between three to seven days. Rojelio’s letters to me took two to three weeks. The prison censors had to read his letters looking for gang code, secret messages, information, or ghost writing. Rojelio later informed me about ghost writing.

“Inmates write a letter on paper using citrus juice, lemon or lime is the best, but lots of other liquids work. Then write a regular ink or pencil letter over it. The person who gets the letter holds the letter near a lamp and the dried juice heats at a faster rate than the rest of the paper and it shows up brownish like a ghost just wrote it.”

Our game started fairly normally and cautious—we each inched the kings’ pawn out two spaces. Rojelio figured he was white since he initiated the whole idea. Unknown to Rojelio I set up a chess set on a regular three-dimensional set at home. My wife said I was cheating and had an advantage, but I countered, “He’s in total isolation. He has nothing else to ponder all day and he can get assistance from the inmates on the other side of his walls.”

Sometimes the prison guards messed with Rojelio because he had taken up an oppositional/defiant stance to them. Something which never endears those in power to those they often hold in contempt or are afraid of. This played itself out more than once when his letters showed up as empty envelopes. Or the envelopes contained letters addressed to someone else. The guards were saying, “Hi,” and letting him know they held sway over him and unfortunately our game.

One day I received a thick letter; inside it a newspaper had been folded many times. It was a Christian Science Monitor. Four completed Sudoku puzzles were folded inside the paper. Rojelio’s accompanying note was brief.

“Mr. Karrer you might want to keep this paper and the puzzles..."
but only you showed up. Thanks, Mr. Karrer.”

“Young man! Not 10 any more. I recognized a once-upon-a-time-a fifth-grade Rojelio Garcia. But the problem was he was in level-four maximum security, isolation. And he would only be allowed a 45-minute non-contact visit.

I had to check-in in the parking lot, check-in again in the visitor’s center, present myself to a guard, spread my arms out, empty my pockets, take off my shoes, take off socks. Have my inner wrist stamped with an invisible ultraviolet ink (to be checked on the way out to make sure I was a visitor not an escaping inmate) then I got three shots at passing through the mother of all metal detectors, failure a third time meant no visit. And a body cavity search could be requested, denial meant no visit.

I passed all requirements and passed through two sally ports (four-sided fenced enclosures with a sliding gate). Once inside the prison, I walked by myself and noticed the lovely Gavilan mountain range loom in the distance. Finally in the prison in the visitor’s section I waited against a wall and absorbed everything. My God, these are inmates walking freely near me. I counted 12 of them. They’re all wearing denim shirts and pants with black and white tennis shoes. I couldn’t help but notice the two correction officers behind a podium—

Tape on the floor in front of their podium read: DO NOT ENTER CORRECTION OFFICER AREA.

An officer pointed at me and then a window. He mouthed the word, “YOU.”

The window had a phone near it and a metal seat attached to the floor. On the other side of the window a similar phone awaited. Behind the window a purely muscled Latino gangster stood and stared at me. He had no hair, Chinese tattoos from his ears to his collar bones. He was chained at the ankles, and at the waist with a connecting chain from his waist to his ankles. A thick Fu Manchu moustache hid any expression. Wrong guy, Jesus H! The inmate backed into the door he had just come through watching me the whole time. He placed his hands behind himself and in a slot in the door. A guard must have unlocked his wrist chains. I turned to call a guard and a tapping on the window redirected me. The inmate smiled. It was a smile I recognized a once-upon-a-time-a fifth-grade Rojelio smile. My God it was HIM! Of course he’d changed. He was a young man! Not 10 any more.

We both picked up a phone.

“Hey, Jefe (boss) you made it. Lot’s of people say they will come but only you showed up. Thanks, Mr. Karrer.”

Eventually we got around to chess. “You got my last letter and move?” Rojelio asked.

“Yes, sorry about your queen.”

“Yeah, right. My bad.”

“I have a question for you.” I asked, “What’s the story on the paper you sent? And the Sudoku puzzles?”

“A present. You used to always bring cool stuff in to school. Thought you might like it.”

“Like it! Holy cow it scared me.”

“You keep it?”

“Of course.”

“Well ole Charlie Manson was on my tier. So we played a game.”

“Get out! You played chess with Charles Manson?”

“Swear on the Bible Mr. Karrer.”

“Jesus H. How do you do?”

“To be honest my … associates told me I couldn’t play with him. So we only played half a game.”

“Associates?”

“My crew.”

“Wow! His gang refused him the right to play with Manson. Why?”

“He’s too evil. Hey, you know them word puzzles I sent?”

“Have them at home.”

“That dude and Charlie used to play a lot. The dude begged me to use my paper cuz he loves puzzles and stuff. I told him OK as long as I got the whole paper back. Him and Charley got separated on account of Charlie cheating at chess. I played chess with him too. Ever heard of Sirhan Sirhan?”

“Rojelio … Oh my God.”

“Sirhan, him I played a lot. He kicked my butt all the time. I didn’t have a chance.”

I learned over the years to believe what Rojelio told me. “He had preface it succinctly once. “Mr. Karrer. I won’t BS you ever. Not you. But there’s some things I AIN’T gonna tell you.”

So I believed him 100%.

And so it went over the years. I visited as often as I could. We developed a routine on my visits, I’d tell him a joke, he’d tell me of outrageous incidents inside the prison, I’d tell him about his hood, he’d request some books and we’d end it with confirming the latest status of our game.

On a Friday in October I received a phone call.

“Mr. Karrer, it’s Rojelio. You aren’t gonna’ believe this. I’m out! No chains on me. The sky is looking down on me. Want to meet? We got to finish our game?”

Rojelio had been early released. I met him and gave him a hug and pulled out our game. Our game was a month short of three years. We played, but to be honest it wasn’t a fair game. He was wired, filled with joy just to be out. Energy and life pulsed in him and the borrowed cell phone he had rang time and time again. He was distracted and I massacred him. But teachers get to do that. As of this writing Rojelio at age 29 is free.

But the odds are very much against him.

The 2013 U.S. Masters was up for grabs until the very last moment, but in the end GM Rauf Mamedov of Azerbaijan emerged victorious. The event took place for the second year in a row in Greensboro, North Carolina. Walter High goes through great pains to organize a high-caliber event, and this year was no exception. The largely international field consisted of 21 grandmasters (GMs), several international masters (IMs) and FIDE masters, top female players (including current U.S. Women’s Champion Irina Krush), and many of the nation’s top juniors. Not only does this make for a strong and eclectic field, but it presents norm opportunities for those pursuing their titles. These opportunities certainly weren’t squandered, as there were a total of seven norms achieved! Justin Sarkar scored his second grandmaster norm. Damir Studen, Bradley Denton, Tatev Abrahamyan, and Denys Shmelov all scored IM norms. Sabrina Chevannes clinched her woman international master (WIM) title and scored a woman grandmaster norm, while Sarah Chiang captured a WIM norm. It should also be noted that Alex Ostrovskiy added a fourth IM norm to his collection just in case three don’t do the trick. There were several other strong performances as well, and with just a few changes in the wind I can imagine of even more norms being achieved.

The strength of the field, while impressive, isn’t the only aspect of the tourney that made it appealing. The playing halls were quite nice, with sets and clocks provided on all boards. While in Europe this is standard practice, it is a rare bird in American events, and it always increases my respect for the organizers. Players were well provided for off the board as well, with a VIP room with snacks and refreshments available for player analysis. This also gives the participants a good opportunity to socialize, and often people would hang around chatting long after the game analysis had dissipated. Another plus was that the hotel was quite upscale. All the rooms were large suites, and a complimentary breakfast was provided each morning. If I had a knock on the location, it would be the food situation. If you had a car there was no issue, but there was nothing within walking distance from the hotel, so an atypical percentage of the chess population tended to stick to the hotel restaurant. Despite this, I don’t think anyone had issues with starvation, and otherwise there was little to complain about.

I noticed that the organizers also paid attention to the minor details well. For instance, last year one of the playing rooms was a bit overheated to say the least. I debated with my roommate that year, Eugene Perelshteyn, about the effects playing in a sauna has on the brain. He felt that it fried the brain, whereas I was...
adamant that mine was being poached. In any case, this year they made sure the temperature of the rooms was much improved, and it is always refreshing when details like this are attended to. Both literally and figuratively.

The tournament itself had a somewhat unusual start to it. While the number of decisive upsets was low, there were a high number of draws, and among them involved three of the top four seeds! German GM Georg Meier drew against Bradley Denton, GM Bartlomiej Macieja of Poland drew against the veteran WGM Camilla Baginskaite, and eventual tournament winner Mamedov drew a marathon game with rising junior Adithya Balasubramanian. In fact, Mamedov was worse for a large portion of the game and only barely managed to escape unscathed. Now, for one round this isn’t that shocking, even given that most outrated their opponents by over 300 points. However, not only did they give up draws in round one, but in round two as well! It isn’t often you see 2500+ players floating around in the middle of the pairings after two rounds, and it speaks to the strength of the event as well as how many dangerous players are out there in these Swisses. The days of coasting for the first few rounds are over, and a player has to remain vigilant from the first game to the last. Towards the end of the tournament, however, the top players were able to show their class by finishing at the top of the table.

White has been pressing, but it looks like the game should be heading towards a draw at this point. However, as often happens, one misstep can let it slip.

44. ... Rc7?!

White doesn’t have much of anything after 44. ... Re7.

45. h6!

... and now Black has a slight piece coordination problem. Note how there are no good discoveries with the knight.

45. ... gxh6 46. Rhx6+ Ke7 47. Nc5

Now Black is in for a difficult defense.

47. ... Na7

I prefer waiting with 47. ... Rc8 rather than letting White’s rook in.

48. Kd3 Nc6 49. Kc3 Na7 50. Re6+ Kd8

The alternative 50. ... Kf7 51. Rb6 is annoying, but perhaps it was still the lesser evil.

51. Rd6+ Kc8 52. Rxd5

White is now a pawn to the good, and his pieces are still better.

52. ... Rh7 53. Ne6 Kb7 54. Nd4!?
White calculates accurately that the b-pawn can’t be saved.

70. ... Nxg6 71. Nf6 Nh4 72. Nd5+ Kb7 73. Kc5 Nf3 74. c3, Black resigned.

The final touch.

GM Georg Meier of Germany, who is now a member of the powerful Webster University chess team, finished in the four-way tie for second. True to his style, he showed solid chess throughout, but somehow he wasn’t quite able to get enough wins to reach first place. He had some nice wins to his credit, however, and showed his strength with a savage beating of GM John Fedorowicz in round six with the black pieces. While Fed may not have the strength he once did, I can tell you from experience that beating the resourceful GM is never a simple task.

Symmetrical English (A37)
GM John Fedorowicz (2490)
GM Georg Meier (2702)
U.S. Masters Championship (6), Greensboro, North Carolina, 09.01.2013

1. c4 c5 2. Nc3 g6 3. g3 Bg7 4. Bg2 Nc6 5. Nf3 d6 6. 0-0 Bf5 7. d3 Qd7 8. Nd5 Nf6 9. Nh4?! 

I really don’t care for this idea, as the knight becomes a source of mild embarrassment.

9. ... Bg4 10. f3 Be6 11. Nf4 d5!

I really like this move. While normally it is ill-advised to open the position against the two bishops, in this case it is the best way to take advantage of White’s awkward pieces.

12. Nxe6 Qxe6 13. f4 dxc4 14. f5 Qe5 15. dxc4 0-0 16. f6 Qg6 hxg6

White has the two bishops in an open position, but due to White’s awkward pieces and weak pawns it is Black who is better.

17. e3?

This creates another weakness. 17.

Bxc6 It looks a bit crazy to give up the g2-bishop, but Black’s pieces are simply too good, so I believe this was White’s best bet. A likely continuation would be 17. ... bxc6 18. Nc3 Qe4 19. Rfd8 20. Qxe4 Nxe4 21. Rb1 and while Black is definitely better, there are some drawing chances.

17. ... Bh6 18. Kh1 Rad8 19. Qb3 Rd7

Despite not being down anything, White is totally lost here. There are simply too many weaknesses, and the c1-bishop isn’t coming out anytime soon.


Fed understandably decided to end the suffering.

GM Bartlomiej Macieja, who earlier this year became the coach of the University of Texas at Brownsville chess team, was leading the tournament going into the last round. Had he not lost to Mamedov, clear first would have been his. As it was, he had to settle for shared second. This maybe wasn’t what he had hoped for, but still not too shabby. His round eight victory against GM Alojzije Jankovic was particularly nice.

Sicilian Defense (B53)
GM Bartlomiej Macieja (2556)
GM Alojzije Jankovic (2624)
U.S. Masters Championship (8), Greensboro, North Carolina, 09.02.2013


(see diagram top of next column)

After the overly passive 25. ... Nb8, Black is against the ropes. In this position his sense of danger eludes him.

27. Kg7?

Something like 27. ... f6 or a similar move was necessary, trying to glue the position together. White is still the one calling the shots, but at least finding a breakthrough should be difficult.

28. Qb2 f6 29. Kg2?!

More to the point was 29. g5!

29. g5!

Black should almost certainly take this opportunity to lock down the kingside with 29. ... g5.

30. g6!

There we go!

31. gxf6+ Bxf6 32. Rd6 Qe8 33. Nc5 Re7

Only a bit better is 33. ... Rc6, but after 34. Nxe6+ Kg8 35. Bd8! Black is still lost.

34. Rd8 Rxd8 35. Bxd8 Rf7 36. Rd6!
Black is busted.

White may have been able to finish Black off a bit quicker, but with technique the important thing is having it all under control, and from here on in the result was never in doubt.
39. ... Nxe5 40. Qxe5+ Rf6 41. Qd4 e5 42. Rd8 Qe6 43. Qd7+ Kh6 44. Qxe6 Rxe6 45. Rd7 b6 46. h4 Rc6 47. Kg3 b5 48. cxb5 axb5 49. Rd5 b4 50. Re5 Rb6 51. Re7 Rb5 52. Kg4 Rb6 53. Ra7 Rb5 54. Qc7 Qf8 55. e5, Black resigned.

Gata Kamsky had to win an Armageddon game to stop the Costa Rican-born GM from becoming the U.S. champion. Since then, the Dallas-based Alejandro Ramirez has been racking up one strong performance after another, tying for first at the National and World Opens, as well as nearly knocking out Super-GM Evgeny Tomashevsky at the World Cup (who also was taken to an Armageddon). While his result here certainly can’t compare to all of that, he turned in a solid 6 ½/9 performance with no losses, including a long, grinding win against fellow second place finisher IM Justin Sarkar.

New York’s GM Alex Lenderman had a great event in his own right. He was leading for most of the tournament, as it seems he’s been doing a lot of lately, but just fell short of first due to his loss to Mamedov in round eight. Despite this, he bounced back and won his last round to finish with a solid six points. Alex has been knocking on the door of several big events lately, and he takes his chess as seriously as anyone I know, so I’d imagine it is only a matter of time until he finally breaks that door down with heavy explosives. His win from round three against IM-elect Aleksandr Ostrovskiy was a particularly brutal Caro-Kann (yes, I see the irony) that ended with a nice queen sacrifice.

Classical Caro-Kann Defense (B19)
IM Aleksandr Ostrovskiy (2503)
GM Aleksandr Lenderman (2642)
U.S. Masters Championship (3), Greensboro, North Carolina (3), 08.30.2013


White doesn’t quite sense the danger yet.
22. Rhe1 Nd5

White is already in trouble, but here he blunders.
23. Nf4

23. Nc1 is probably the best try, but after 23. ... Rde4 White has a miserable position.
23. ... Qc6 24. Nxd5

24. ... Qxc2+! 25. Kxc2 Bxa2+!

Zapata doesn’t miss his tactical opportunity.
23. Kxa2 Rxg4

White is lost.

... and White resigned, trusting Black to realize that the pin on the d-pawn is a sarcastic one.

See more games here:
www.uschess.org/live/

Article continues on the next page.
Most of the upsets from the early rounds were pulled off by the same group of players. Bradley Denton drew GMs Meier and Mamedov, Damir Studen drew Meier and GM Alexander Fishbein, and Baginskaite also drew against two GMs. Denton and Studen ended up scoring norms, though unfortunately Camilla ended up falling off pace later in the event. The most notable round one upset was probably Jonathan Chiang’s win over GM Mikheil Kekelidze. Alex Ostrovsky showed early on that he was not to be taken lightly by crushing GM Jankovic in round two. Dominique Myers, rated 2037, had an amazing start. He beat IM Nazi Paikidze rated 2378 in round one, and then drew GM Macieja in round two! Unfortunately, he was unable to continue his run, and managed only another point in the next seven rounds. Nevertheless, he is most certainly a player to watch for in future events. Wisconsin’s Awonder Liang, while not scoring any norms, had a very strong performance and gained 37 points. This puts this country’s youngest-ever master at well over 2300, and I’d advise everyone to be extremely wary of this young man. If I neglected any strong performances, my apologies, but there were so many that mentioning all of them would probably get me in hot water with the editor!

As was already mentioned, a whopping seven players earned title norms. While some I know rather well and others I’ve never met, here is my effort to introduce all of them:

**Tatev Abrahamyan**

Tatev has been one of the top female players in the U.S. for awhile now, and in recent years has shown to be the biggest threat to the Krush/Zatonskih stranglehold on the U.S. Women’s Championship. She’s been on a bit of a tear of late, turning in strong results in both the U.S. Women’s Championship (clear third with 6½/9) and the USA-China match (3½/5 in the classical games with a 2600+ FIDE performance). This tournament continued the trend, as she managed to clinch her IM norm with one round to spare. At this rate, the title itself won’t be far behind it.

**Denys Shmelov**

Denys, who hails originally from Ukraine, has been largely absent from major tournament chess in recent years in pursuit of a career in the actuarial field. Nevertheless, when he does find time to play, he seems to have a knack for finding his form. In 2011 he had a breakthrough performance at the Berkeley International, scoring a GM norm in the process. While his result here wasn’t quite as strong, he still managed to snag an IM norm rather comfortably. Not to imply that it was easy, as he had to defeat reigning U.S. Women’s Champion Irina Krush on the way. She’s been playing strong and solid chess as of late, and in fact it was the only loss of the tournament for her.

**Damir Studen**

The young master from Georgia won the state championship in 2009, and since then has been on the rise. He had a breakthrough tournament at the Masters, earning an IM norm and gaining over 40 points in the process.

**Bradley Denton**

Birmingham’s Bradley Denton, who coincidentally won the 2009 Alabama State Championship, also had a killer event. He showed some very solid chess, turning in an IM norm and crossing 2300 FIDE in one go. His solid draw as black against the 2600+ GM Meier in round one was a strong start to his tournament.

**Sabrina Chevannes**

The always upbeat Sabrina, who is based in London and has her own chess academy there, has played in several tournaments in the states over the last couple of years. While her results and tournament experiences here have been mixed, this one will almost certainly have her coming back. She gained almost 50 FIDE points (and well over 100 USCF!) and scored her first woman grandmaster (WGM) norm, thus completing her woman international master (WIM) title with a bang.

**Sarah Chiang**

At age 15, Sarah has already had quite a lot of experience playing on the big stage. Lately she’s had some rough first-time experiences, playing in both the U.S. Women’s and U.S. Junior Championships, and as the lowest-rated competitor in both. While she can’t be happy with how either of those tournaments went, I’m sure she gained a lot of wisdom, and she was able to use some of that here as she scored a WIM norm. This was very nice to see, as Sarah is one of the kindest young players you’ll ever meet, and she has an excellent attitude regardless of how her tournament is going.

I’d like to take this opportunity to thank organizers Walter High and Gary Newsom, the tournament directors, and the other people who made the event possible. Your efforts didn’t go unappreciated. The great tournament experience is an elusive creature. Sleeping poorly, lack of time to eat or relax, and having poor playing conditions are only a few of the roadblocks. Even if none of those issues arise, there is nothing worse than playing poorly, and a chessplayer who is not in form is rarely in a good mood. Nevertheless, when the setting is pleasant and the tournament is a quality one, the opportunities for a great experience are there for the taking. I’ll almost certainly be going there next year to see if I can do it.

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**2013 U.S. Masters**

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OBJECTIVITY IS THE KING—BUT IF YOU have to err, err on the side of over-confidence and over-optimism. The winner of this month’s award, Jonathan Ritter, did so with gusto. He banked everything and gave away everything on a chance to give a certain check. He gambled, and he won. Writes Mr. Ritter (my further comments in italics):

I played this game at the Marshall Chess Club in New York City. It was round four of a FIDE event that the club was hosting every Monday night. I am rated 1585, although I only have played 12 over-the-board official tournament games. I do believe my playing strength is much higher than what my rating would reflect and wanted to see how I would fare against the high-level players that the Marshall Chess Club attracts.

Giuoco Piano (C50)
Jonathan Ritter (1585)
Edward Kopiecici (1981)
FIDEMON (4)—Marshall Chess Club, New York City, August 12, 2013


6. a3

This gives me breathing room for my bishop. If I do not play this move then after he plays ... a6 he can play ... Na5 winning bishop for knight.

ECO doesn’t mention this move, concentrating mostly on 6. Be3 and 6. Bg5. “Winning bishop for knight” isn’t a real threat here: for example, 6. Na4 Bb6 led to full equality in Pal Benko-Andrzej Pytlakowski, 1951. Note that the natural 6. 0-0 allows 6. ... Bg4!, ready to meet 7. h3 with 7. ... h5.

6. ... Bg4

Did Black, playing 6. ... Bg4, plan to play 7. ... Be6 after 7. h3—or did he plan to do something else (7. ... Bk5, 7. ... Bxf3) and change his mind later?

7. h3 Be6

In this position, if 8. Bxe6 fxe6 and my opponent has a better centralized pawn structure.

8. Nd5

I played Nd5 because I thought that my opponent wanted to play ... N(c6)e7-g6 with a very good game.

8. ... Ne7 9. Nxf6+ gxf6

10. Be3

This puts my opponent in the same situation I am in. If he takes on e3 then I take back on e3 with a superior pawn structure.

10. ... Bb6

My opponent wanted to avoid Bxc5 however I believe this is a wasted move because Bxc5 would not be in my favor as it leaves my opponent with a nice bind on the d4-square.

This branch of the Giuoco Piano (The Quiet Game), as shown on our first diagram, indeed looks very quiet—unless the feisty cousin 4. c3 shows up. This quiet (or lull), could however be very misleading, as the imbalances, difficult to assess, can occur at any moment. Just in the last three moves we saw several important changes, and opportunities to make such changes, in the pawn structure—by capturing the opponent’s pieces or allowing capture of your own pieces. On his last move Black could, for instance, double-isolate White’s e-pawns: 10. ... Bxe3 11. fxe3 Bxc4—but would it really favor Black?

11. Qe2 Rg8 12. 0-0-0

Ignoring his threats and lining up my rook with his queen. I plan to bust open the center with d3-d4.

Some players would prefer 12. g4 here—but why even consider such a move when you are so convinced that 12. ... Rxg2 deserves a question mark?

12. ... Rxg2?

13. d4

13. Nh4 and later Rdg1—using the g-file, with Qh5 at some moment—may offer White even better compensation.

13. ... Qd7

He realizes that he needs to castle quickly but it is too little too late.

Black holds with 13. ... exd4!.

14. d5

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Forcing him to take the pawn on h3.
14. ... Bxh3 15. Bxb6 axb6
This gives him an open a-file, however I had a specific idea.
16. Qe3!
Setting up a tactical minefield. Bf1 is the threat so he has to move his rook away, which allows me to win back a pawn with Nxe5.
16. ... Rg8
17. Nxe5
While the pre-planned 17. Nxe5 looks nice, much stronger was 17. Ne1, with a big advantage for White, as the black bishop is doomed.
17. ... fxe5 18. Rxh3 Ng6
I decided that his knight on f4 looks much stronger than it really is as it is not near my king and doesn’t really have many targets on the kingside to attack.
I like the black knight on f4, and I’d prefer Black’s position. White’s “dream” here should be to exchange his not-so-good bishop for this great knight—and this is, alas, only a dream.
19. Rxh7 Nf4 20. Qb3 Ke7
He saw that I had plans to attack on the queenside so he decides to keep his king in the center and use the open a-file to attack. The only problem is that it is very easy to swing my queen back to the other side of the board and attack his king. I think that both 20. ... Ke7 and the more solid 20. ... 0-0-0 favor Black.
21. Rdh1 Qa4 22. Qc3 Qa5
I played Qc3 with the idea of playing 23. Bb5, sacrificing the bishop and after 23. ... Qxb5 I come crashing down on the c7-pawn with my queen and the game is soon over. However he correctly played Qa5 keeping up the pressure and again offering to trade.
A very nice trap. Both players should be commended for seeing through it.
23. Qf3
I have plans on sliding my rook over and placing my queen on h1 where it can later come to h4.
23. ... b5 24. Bb3 b4 25. axb4 Qxb4 26. Kb1 Ra5 27. c4
Creating an escape square for my king as well as taking away the b5-square.
27. ... Qd2
The sharp 27. ... b5 was even stronger.
28. Rd1 Qe2 29. Qh1
29. ... Qxf2 30. Rf1 Qg3
Houdini, guided by Roman Dzindzichashvili, suggests: 30. ... Qe3, and on 31. Qh4+, the calm 31. ... Ke8, with White’s king being checkmated in a few moves.
31. Bd1 Rga8
My bishop now eyes the kingside and can soon join in on the attack. Both of our plans now come into fruition and it is time to see whose plan will prevail.
32. Rf3 Ra1+ 33. Kc2 Qg6
34. Qh4+ Kd7?? 35. Rxf4!
This Exchange sacrifice simultaneously defends the e4-pawn so the queen cannot interpose with check. This also allows my bishop to come into the game.
35. ... exf4 36. Bg4+ Qxg4 37. Qxg4+ Ke7 38. Qf5+ Ke8 39. Qg6+ Kd7 40. Rxf7 mate.
Kopiecki immediately started analyzing the game and felt that after 34. ... Qf6 he was winning.
(Black was much better, but the winning wasn’t easy—L.A.)
I think that this is an instructive game because it illustrates how important it is to formulate your own opinion about a certain position and trusting that opinion, especially when you are playing against a higher rated player. Sometimes you have to play defensively. Sometimes the best defense is a good offense. However, sometimes the best defense is to simply let your opponent go along with his plan as long as you calculate correctly and see that it is not dangerous and allow him to accomplish his plan. This game also illustrates how important it is to keep your concentration when you are in the “heat of the battle”. 34. ... Kd7?? allowed me to win the game immediately with a tactical shot.
Jonathan made an excellent summary—except that he still doesn’t fully appreciate the powers of the f4-knight. In this game, his overconfidence in his position, well combined with tactical alertness, paid off. The strength of your beliefs and their usual companion, self-overconfidence, are good things, as long as they are not going too far, as well as being checked by reality (Houdini? Dzindzi?) after each game.

Send in your games!

If you are unrated or rated 1799 or below, then GM Lev Alburt invites you to send your most instructive game with notes to:
Back to Basics, c/o Chess Life
PO Box 3967 Crossville, TN 38557-3967
Or e-mail your material to backtobasics@uschess.org
GM Alburt will select the “most instructive” game and Chess Life will award an autographed copy of Lev’s newest book, Platonov’s Chess Academy (by Lev Alburt and Sam Palatnik) to the person submitting the most instructive game and annotations.

Make sure your game (or part of it) and your notes will be of interest to other readers. Do not send games with only a few notes, as they are of little instructive value and can’t be used. Writing skills are a plus, but instructiveness is a must!

www.ChessWithLev.com
I AM OCCASIONALLY ASKED WHERE I get my ideas for studies. For my last col-
umn, I thought it would be instructive to give my thoughts on this subject. Mainly,
the ideas come from my own ideas, from games, and from other studies that contain
ideas ripe for development or enrichment. However, lately original ideas are harder to
come by. The computer has taken us in new
directions and helps composers, but to a
certain extent we lose human creativity—
especially with miniatures.

This position, where I had sealed my
move, led to my first serious study. The
main threat is 57. ... Bg3 (but not 57. ...
Rxf2+? since after 58. Kxf2 Bg3+ 59. Kxf3!
Bxe1 60. Kg2 and the position is drawn.
I knew that without the h3-h4 pair of
pawns it would be drawn. I acted accord-
ing to that, but too early.

57. Rxe5+?!

A hasty sacrifice. Objectively 57. Bxh4
Bd4 58. Rd1 is stronger resistance. Be-
cause the white bishop can never get back
to the vital a7-g1 diagonal, computers
show this is winning after 40 more moves.

57. ... Kxe5 58. Bxh4 Kf4 59. Bf6 Rd2?

In case of 59. ... f2?, White can draw
with 60. Kg2! Ke3 61. Bh4 Rb2 62. Bg3
f1=Q+ 63. Kxf1 Kf3 64. Be1 Rb1 65. h4.

60. Bc3 Rd5?

The shortest win here was 60. ... Re2.
61. Kf2!

The only drawing chance.
61. ... Ke4 62. Bb4! Rb5 63. Bd6 Rh5 64. Bc7

While analyzing the adjourned position,
I began thinking about what would happen
if Black succeeds in advancing his
pawn to f2. I found a problem-like save.

1. Bd6! Kh3

If 1. ... Kg4 2. Kg2, or 1. ... Ra6 2. Bc7!
Rf6 (2. ... Ra7 3. Bb6!) 3. Bd6! draws. Black
wins only if his rook gets behind his pawn.

2. Bc7!

Mutual Zugzwang (ZZ).

2. ... Rb2 3. Bd6! Rc2

If 3. ... Rb6, 4. Bc5 and this repeated
motif assures the draw.


Holding on to the opportunity of always
being able to move to an adequate square.
6. ... Ra2 can be answered by 7. Bc7! (not
7. Bc7? since 6. ... Ra2 would then win).

6. ... Re8 7. Bg3!!

But not 6. Ba7?, which loses after 7. ...
Kg3! 8. Bxf2+ Kf3.

7. ... Kxg3, Stalemate.

The profundity and special logic of this
endgame started me on the path of com-
posing studies and problems.

Naturally, published studies provide
ideas. This usually takes the form of a cor-
rection or improvement. Here is the story
of how one study developed from one I
saw in André Cheron’s textbook.

After King and Horowitz
Henri Rinck, 1926

WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN

But Cheron claimed it is a draw after 3.
... Rxf6 4. Qxf6 5. Qc6 6. Qe8
Kb7 7. Kb4? c3. Later, computers showed
that after 6. ... Kb7 7. Qe4! mates in 34
moves. The computer version (giving the
estimated best moves only) starts with 7.
Qb4+ Ka6 11. Qb8 Ka5 12. Qb7 etc. Therefore
Rinck’s study is correct.

With pieces on the board like this, it is
hard to discover the full truth. Therefore
I improved the study by eliminating the
pawn and thus the doubt.

White to play and win
Pal Benko, 1999

(see diagram top of next column)

1. Qa1+ Kb5 2. Qb1+ Ka5

In the case of 2. ... Kc6, 3. Rh6+ Rf6 4.
Qe4+ Kb5 5. Qf5 wins while after 2. ... Ka6,
Benko’s Bafflers

Most of the time these studies resemble positions that could actually occur over the board. You must simply reach a theoretically won or drawn position for White. Solutions can be found on page 69. Please e-mail submissions for Benko’s Bafflers to: pbenko@uschess.org


If we use the same motif multiple times during the course of a study it becomes thematic. A critic’s comment that this is a computer study stung me—at the time, I had no computer, and in any event the six-man endgame database did not yet exist.

Chess Clinic 1st Internet Tourney, 2000
First prize
Pal Benko

BLACK TO PLAY AND DRAW

WHITE TO PLAY AND WIN


2. ... Rc4+ 3. Kd3 Rd4+ 4. Kc3


4. ... Qd6

Otherwise 4. ... Re4 5. Qxe4 Qc7+ 6. Qc4 wins for White.

5. Qe3+

The obvious 5. Qd4? Qxg3+ 6. Qd3 Qe5+ only draws.

5. ... Rd2 6. Rb4!

Black arrives at a crossroads.

6. ... f5

Now 6. ... Qd5? Qg3+ 6. Qd3 Qf5+ only draws.

6. ... Rd2 6. Rb4!

This is a sharp dual with unexpected repositionings and quiet moves. The well-known IM V. Afek wrote that mine is “one of the best studies of all times”!

Problem I:
Henk Nieland
(Nederland)

Problem II:
Hank Nieland—Pal Benko

Magyar Sakkelet 1–2 Prize, 2000
Pal Benko

(see diagram top of next column)

1. Rg5+ Kf8

A pretty win follows 1. ... Kh8? 2. Qh1+ Rh7 3. Qa1 Rg7 (since after any Black checks would be answered by a winning discovered check.) 4. Rh5+ Kg8 5. Qa8+ Kf7 6. Rf5 wins.

2. Qb4+

But not 2. Qf2+? Rf7 3. Qc5+ Re7+ 4. Kf6 Qh7 and Black escapes.

2. ... Re7+ 3. Kf6 Qe4

The best defense. In case of 3. ... Qh7?,
"IT'S LOOKING VERY BAD FOR YOU," PROCLAIMS PATRICK, A CLUB REGULAR, TO Poom, his Thai opponent, as he hovers over the board eagerly awaiting checkmate. A few moves later, Poom is beaten, and the two share a laugh over a table at Roadhouse Barbecue restaurant in Bangkok, where tables are prepared with chess mats and signs let patrons know this area is reserved for the Bangkok Chess Club. The group had begun filtering in around 7 p.m., a mix of regulars and visitors, foreigners and Thais.

The atmosphere is laid back as players wait for more to arrive for the tournament. Patrick, a pianist who has played with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, uses the last of his iPhone battery to show everyone some piano humor from the piano comedy duo Igudesman & Joo. Reviews at the table are mixed and before long players have moved over to a long table for blitz.

The mood is light before the matches begin, but once the tournament starts up the room quiets down. Players focus intently on their matches and a serious blitz session is underway.

Eric, a professor from Vancouver, watches over his son, Max, as he makes his way through the tournament. The duo is in town for a few days and decided to stop in to find a few matches. Eric found the club online and in his second visit, Max is kept busy with a constant stream of matches.

Kai Tuorila, a Finnish expatriate and entrepreneur, founded the club in 1999 after having trouble finding matches in town. His mission was to create a regular meetup where regulars and travelers could stop by twice a week for a friendly game. The club also hosts an annual tournament, the Bangkok Chess Club (BCC) Open, in April. "For us, it's a combined vacation and chess," Kai explains. The event is held in Bangkok every other year, and a new location otherwise, to give players a new experience in Thailand. This year's tournament is in the beach town of Pattaya at the five-star Dusit Thani resort. The event boasts over 200 registered participants including some of the top players in the world.

If You Go
From travel.state.gov:

- If you are a U.S. citizen tourist staying for fewer than 30 days, you do not require a visa, but your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your passport's expiration.
- You can enter Thailand without a visa for up to 30 days. You will need a passport valid for at least six months beyond the date of your entry.
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Thailand is a popular travel destination with tourist facilities available throughout much of the country. Political demonstrations take place from time to time, and travel to certain areas may be restricted. However, you should check with the Thai government for specific travel warnings before you travel to Thailand.

Things to Know
- Use caution when traveling in Thailand, especially in remote areas. Be aware of your surroundings, and avoid suspicious or crowded areas.
- Be sure to take adequate precautions to protect against the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including gonorrhea, hepatitis, and HIV/ AIDS.

Tourist Information
- You can find more information about Thailand, including travel tips and safety information, on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Be sure to check the latest travel advisories from your country's government before you travel to Thailand.
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2013 TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIX STANDINGS

The following point totals reflect all rated event information as of November 7 for the 2013 Grand Prix. All Grand Prix updates are unofficial and subject to change during the year or until year-end tabulation is complete.

OVERALL STANDINGS

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 GM Aleksandr Lenderman</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 GM Mikheil Kekelidze</td>
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<td>3 GM Alexander Ivanov</td>
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<td>4 GM Sergey Kudrin</td>
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<td>11 IM Ricardo De Guzman</td>
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<td>15 GM Alejandro Ramirez</td>
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Though he only finished in a tie for 6th-11th at the U.S. Masters (see page 34), GM ALEKSAN DR LENDERMAN still managed to put more distance between himself and his nearest competitor in this year’s Trophies Plus Grand Prix race.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB AND SCHOLASTIC CENTER

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB AND SCHOLASTIC CENTER

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JUNIOR GRAND PRIX TOP OVERALL STANDINGS

ChessMagnetSchool.com is the sponsor of the 2013 Junior Grand Prix (JGP). Official standings for events received and processed by November 6, 2013 are unofficial and subject to change during the year or until year-end tabulation is complete. 2013 JGP prizes were not available as of press time and will be announced at a later date. The method for calculating points has been modified; see uschess.org for the most up-to-date information.

Chess Magnet School provides computer-based online chess training for both adults and children, including those who study independently and those who study under the guidance of a coach or teacher, as well as support for chess coaches and others who teach chess. Chess Magnet School has been a partner with USCF on a number of projects and activities since 2006, and has provided the free program that teaches new to Chess section of USCF’s website. USCF members are invited to learn more about Chess Magnet School at www.ChessMagnetSchool.com.

## 2013 CHESSMAGNETSCHOOL.COM JUNIOR GRAND PRIX TOP OVERALL STANDINGS

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- **Class B**: 1600-1799 (strong)
- **Class C**: 1400-1599 (intermediate)
- **Class D**: 1399 and below (beginner level)

**Note:** Prize fund based on 200 entries and may be decreased proportionately per number of entries assigned.

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**Note:** This may slow down your assignment.

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    - ENTRY FEE: $10.
  - Victor Palciauskas Prize Tournaments
    - Seven-player class-level pairings, one game with each of six opponents. 1st-place winner receives $130 cash prize and a certificate signed by Victor Palciauskas.
    - ENTRY FEE: $25.
  - John W. Collins Memorial Class Tournaments
    - Four-player, double round-robin with class-level pairings (unrateds welcome). 1st-place winner receives a John W. Collins certificate.
    - ENTRY FEE: $7.

**Email Rated Events (need email access)**

- **Lightning Match**
  - Two players with two or six-game option.
  - ENTRY FEE: $5.
- **Swift Quads**
  - Four-player, double round-robin format.
  - 1st-place prize merchandise credit of $30.
  - ENTRY FEE: $10.
- **Walter Muir E-Quads (Webserver Chess)**
  - Four-player, double round-robin webserver format tournament with class-level pairings. 1st-place receives a certificate.
  - ENTRY FEE: $7.

Please check event(s) selected.

**Note:** Except for Lightning Matches, Swift Quads, Walter Muir E-Quads & Electronic Knights, players will use past office mail, unless opponents agree to use e-mail.
USCF National Events

SEE TLA IN THIS ISSUE FOR DETAILS

2013 K-12 Grade Championship  December 13-15 • Lake Buena Vista, Florida
2013 Pan American Intercollegiate Championship  December 27-30 • Lubbock, Texas
2014 World Amateur Team & U.S. Team East - 44th Annual  February 15-17 • Parsippany, New Jersey
2014 (31st Annual) U.S. Amateur Team Championship West  February 15-17 or 16-17 • Santa Clara, California
2014 U.S. Amateur Team Championship North  February 21-23 or 22-23 • Schaumburg, Illinois
2014 U.S. Junior Chess Congress  February 28-March 2 • Irvine, California
2014 National High School (K-12) Championship  April 4-6 • San Diego, California
2014 National Junior High (K-9) Championship  April 25-27 • Atlanta, Georgia
2014 National Elementary (K-6) Championship  May 9-11 • Dallas, Texas
2014 U.S. Game/10 Championship (QC)  June 12 • Las Vegas, Nevada
2014 U.S. Women’s Open  June 12-13 • Las Vegas, Nevada
2014 National Open  June 13-15 or 14-15 • Las Vegas, Nevada

FUTURE EVENTS (Watch for details)

2014 All-Girls Championship  April 11-13 • Northbrook, Illinois
2014 U.S. Amateur Championship South  June 7-8 • Memphis, Tennessee
115th annual (2014) U.S. Open  July 26-August 3 • St. Louis, Missouri
2014 U.S. Class Championship  October 31-November 2 • Irvine, California
2014 K-12 Grade Championship  December 12-14 • Orlando, Florida
2015 National High School (K-12) Championship  April 10-12 • Columbus, Ohio
2015 National Junior High (K-9) Championship  April 24-26 • Louisville, Kentucky
2015 National Elementary (K-6) Championship  May 8-10 • Nashville, Tennessee
2015 National Open—TBA
2015 U.S. Game/10 Championship—TBA
116th annual (2015) U.S. Open  August 1-9 • Phoenix, Arizona
2015 K-12 Grade Championship  December 4-6 • Lake Buena Vista, Florida
2016 National High School (K-12) Championship  April 1-3 • Atlanta, Georgia
2016 National Junior High (K-9) Championship  April 15-17 • Indianapolis, Indiana
2016 National Elementary (K-6) Championship  May 6-8 • Nashville, Tennessee
117th annual (2016) U.S. Open  July 30-August 7 • Indianapolis, Indiana
2016 K-12 Grade Championship  December 16-18 • Nashville, Tennessee
2017 SuperNationals VI  May 12-14 • Nashville, Tennessee
2017 K-12 Grade Championship  December 8-10 • Lake Buena Vista, Florida
2018 National Elementary (K-6) Championship  May 11-13 • Nashville, Tennessee
2018 K-12 Grade Championship  December 14-16 • Orlando, Florida

Rating supplements will be updated EACH MONTH on the USCF website, and each monthly rating supplement will be used for all tournaments beginning in that month, unless otherwise announced in Chess Life. The USCF website at www.uschess.org also frequently lists unofficial ratings. The purpose of unofficial ratings is to inform you of your progress; however, most tournaments do not use them for pairing or prize purposes. If you would otherwise be unrated, organizers may use your unofficial rating at their discretion, even without advance publicity of such a policy.

Bids

Note: Organizers previously awarded options for USCF National Events must still submit proposals (including sample budgets) for their events.

OVERDUE BIDS

Please contact the National Office if you are interested in bidding for a National Event. The USCF recommends that bids be submitted according to the following schedule. However, bids may be considered prior to these dates. USCF reserves the right to decline all bids and organize the event itself.

PAST DEADLINE JULY 1, 2012:
2013 U.S. Game/15 Championship

DEADLINE JULY 1, 2013:
2014 U.S. Amateur Team (South)
2014 U.S. Amateur (East, North, West)
2014 U.S. Cadet
2014 U.S. Game/15 Championship
2014 U.S. Game/30 Championship
2014 U.S. Game/60 Championship
2014 U.S. Junior Closed
2014 U.S. Masters Championship

DEADLINE NOVEMBER 1, 2013:
2014 U.S. Junior Open
2014 U.S. Senior Open

For the expanded list of national events available for bid, see:
www.uschess.org/content/view/12116/705/.

ATTENTION AFFILIATES

The United States Chess Federation has partnered with R.V. Nuccio & Associates Insurance Brokers, Inc. to provide USCF affiliates with affordable annual liability and short term event insurance. The liability coverage is available for approximately $265 per year for a $1,000,000 limit of insurance. Also available is contents property and bonding insurance. For more information, please go to www.rvnuccio.com/chess-federation.html. For event insurance, please go to www.rvnuccio.com.
The Tournament Announcements on the following pages are provided for the convenience of USCF members and for informational purposes only. Unless expressly indicated otherwise, neither the U.S. Chess Federation nor the U.S. Chess Congress is responsible for the accuracy of anything contained in these tournament announcements. Those interested in additional information about or having questions concerning any of these tournaments are directed to contact the organiser listed. Care is exercised in due diligence in providing accurate typesetting of non-camera-ready copy but assumes no responsibility for errors made in such work.

Effective with TLAs submitted after November 10, 2010, the following additional rules apply to Grand Prix tournaments:
1. The guaranteed first prize must be at least $150.
2. No more than one prize under $100 may count towards the Grand Prix point total.
3. Prizes below the maximum entry fee do not count towards the Grand Prix point total. Also include full time control rating or entry time delay if even is designated $0.

Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix: A Junior Grand Prix event can have four or more rounds with a time control greater than 60 minutes. More information is available online at the TLA website or at the USCF website.

SUBMISSIONS: E-mail your tta to: tla@uschess.org (Joan DuBois). For tta deadline scheduling, contact and help with Grand Prix information see January 2013 Cl. pg. 50 or 51 and check with tla@uschess.org. Payment can be done online through the T/Affiliate area or sent to: U.S. Chess, TLA Dept., PO Box 3967, Crossville, TN 38557.

Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!

DECE. 3-15, FLORIDA

2013 National K-12 Championships
751, 600/12/5. (See official website for additional information about the event, advance entries, awards, meetings, updates, corrections, and registration forms.)

Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!

FEB. 29-3, MAR. 2, CALIFORNIA

2014 U.S. Junior Chess Congress
5-9; $300; 6 & under, $350 by 2/20, $400 by 2/21, $450 after. 6 & under - 2 games each of a round for a total of 10 games: not USJF! Orange County Great Game, 6990 Marine Way, Irvine, CA, 92612 and Irvine Spectrum DoubleTree Hotel, 90 Pacifica, Irvine, CA 92618, 949-471-8888, $95/night. (When booking, please mention “Chess Congress.”) 7 SECTIONS (by age): 6 & under, 8 & under, 10 & under, 12 & under, 14 & under, 16 & under, 20 & under.

TOP TRIP: Top two teams to the U.S. Chess Congress in Fort Worth, Texas - $300 to the top two teams.

ENT: $55 by 2/10, $65 by 2/20, $75 after.

Trophies: Top two teams and top four individuals in each section. Prizes: To top two teams and top four individuals in each section who earn a minimum of 15 points. Prizes include awards for best team and top individual in each section. A tiebreaker is used to determine winners in case of ties. For help forming teams and more information contact: joan@uscchess.org. Chess Life.

Heritage Event: Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!

FEB. 15-17, NEW JERSEY

World Amateur Team & U.S. Team-East - 44th Annual

CELEBRATE CHICAGO MUSIC & USCF 750TH

600/12/5. (See official website for additional information about the event, advance entries, awards, meetings, updates, corrections, and registration forms.)

Heritage Event: Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!

FEB. 15-17, NEW JERSEY

World Amateur Team & U.S. Team-East - 44th Annual

CELEBRATE CHICAGO MUSIC & USCF 750TH

600/12/5. (See official website for additional information about the event, advance entries, awards, meetings, updates, corrections, and registration forms.)

Awards: Trophies to top two teams, top twelve individuals in each section.

ENT: $55 by 2/10, $65 by 2/20, $75 after.

Trophies: Top two teams and top four individuals in each section. Prizes: To top two teams and top four individuals in each section who earn a minimum of 15 points. Prizes include awards for best team and top individual in each section. A tiebreaker is used to determine winners in case of ties. For help forming teams and more information contact: joan@uscchess.org. Chess Life.

Heritage Event: Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!
2014
WORLD AMATEUR TEAM
&
U.S. AMATEUR TEAM
CHAMPIONSHIP EAST

FEBRUARY 15-17, 2014

PARSIPPANY HILTON, 1 HILTON COURT, PARSIPPANY, NJ 07054

“We’re getting ready for the Teams!”

Come celebrate Country Music and USCF’s 75th anniversary
Enjoy the picking and grinning and do a little moving and checking!
For complete details see our TLA under National Events.
Sponsored by USCF and New Jersey State Chess Federation.
You don’t have to wear your Sunday-go-to-meeting-best,
but please bring your set and clock!

A HERITAGE EVENT  USCF  A NATIONAL EVENT

Come meet Garry Kasparov on Sunday, February 16
for a Q & A and book signing for USATE participants!
Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!

APR. 4-6, 2014 National High School (K-12) Championship

Apt (3) – Buena Park & B; 755, G1-1200; 800, Hotel Circle

awarding prizes. Default late forfeiture time is one hour. TD may extend
fee. Reserve section: Open to players rated below 1800 USCF. This sec-
GM/IM's who apply. GM/IM must play all rounds to get appearance
son, TX 75080.
5SS, G/90 inc/30. Dallas Chess Club, 200 S. Cottonwood Dr. #C, Richard-
2013 DCC Fide Open XI
TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 20 (ENHANCED)

11/6/2013  9:50 AM  Page 52

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son, TX 75080.
5SS, G/90 inc/30. Dallas Chess Club, 200 S. Cottonwood Dr. #C, Richard-
2013 DCC Fide Open XI
TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 20 (ENHANCED)

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awarding prizes. Default late forfeiture time is one hour. TD may extend
fee. Reserve section: Open to players rated below 1800 USCF. This sec-
GM/IM's who apply. GM/IM must play all rounds to get appearance
son, TX 75080.
A Heritage Event!
Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!
DEC. 27-29 OR 28-29, NEW YORK

32nd annual EMPIRE CITY OPEN

Dec 27-29 or 28-29 at New Yorker Hotel
6 rounds, $12,000 GUARANTEED PRIZE FUND!

8th Ave & 34th St, across from Penn Station, NYC. Choice of 3-day or 2-day schedule.

Open Section: Prizes $1200-600-300-200, clear/tiebreak win $50 bonus, top U2300/Unr $500-250-125-62. FIDE rated, 60 GPP (enhanced).


1900 Section: Top 2000-1500-1000-500, top U1900 $200-100-50. FIDE rated.

Under 1600: Top 1700-1000-500-250, top U1600 $150-75-45. FIDE rated.

Under 1500: Top 1800-1200-600-300, top U1500 $100-50-25. FIDE rated.


Under 1000: Top 2300-1900-1300-75, top U1000 $10-5-2. FIDE rated.


Under 800: Top 2500-2200-1800-90, top U800 $3-1.5. FIDE rated.

Under 600: Top 2600-2300-2000-100, top U600 $2-1. FIDE rated.

Under 400: Top 2700-2400-2100-110, top U400 $1-0.5. FIDE rated.

Under 200: Top 2800-2500-2200-120, top U200 $0.5-0.25. FIDE rated.

Under 100: Top 2900-2600-2300-130. FIDE rated.


Under 15: Top 3100-2800-2500-17. FIDE rated.


Under 1: Top 3400-3100-2800-20. FIDE rated.


32nd Annual Chess Magazine Junior Grand Prix!
DEC. 27-29, LOUISIANA

TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIZE POINTS: 3 (ENHANCED)

New Orleans Open:

3rd Place: (Unrated) $150, 1/2; 2nd Place (Section): $100, 1/2; 1st Place: $50, 1/2.

TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIZE POINTS: 3 (ENHANCED)

New Orleans Open Scholastic Chess Championships, 1/2-60, in 5 sections:

Under 1400: $600, 1/2; Under 1300: $500, 1/2; Under 1200: $400, 1/2; Under 1100: $300, 1/2. 3rd Place: $25, 1/2; 2nd Place: $15, 1/2; 1st Place: $5, 1/2.

New Orleans Open Chess & Scholastic Chess Schoolings, 1/2-60, in 5 sections:

Under 1400: $600, 1/2; Under 1300: $500, 1/2; Under 1200: $400, 1/2; Under 1100: $300, 1/2. 3rd Place: $25, 1/2; 2nd Place: $15, 1/2; 1st Place: $5, 1/2.

New Orleans Open Chess Schoolings, 1/2-60, in 5 sections:

Under 1400: $600, 1/2; Under 1300: $500, 1/2; Under 1200: $400, 1/2; Under 1100: $300, 1/2. 3rd Place: $25, 1/2; 2nd Place: $15, 1/2; 1st Place: $5, 1/2.

New Orleans Open Chess Schoolings, 1/2-60, in 5 sections:

Under 1400: $600, 1/2; Under 1300: $500, 1/2; Under 1200: $400, 1/2; Under 1100: $300, 1/2. 3rd Place: $25, 1/2; 2nd Place: $15, 1/2; 1st Place: $5, 1/2.

New Orleans Open Chess Schoolings, 1/2-60, in 5 sections:

Under 1400: $600, 1/2; Under 1300: $500, 1/2; Under 1200: $400, 1/2; Under 1100: $300, 1/2. 3rd Place: $25, 1/2; 2nd Place: $15, 1/2; 1st Place: $5, 1/2.

New Orleans Open Chess Schoolings, 1/2-60, in 5 sections:

Under 1400: $600, 1/2; Under 1300: $500, 1/2; Under 1200: $400, 1/2; Under 1100: $300, 1/2. 3rd Place: $25, 1/2; 2nd Place: $15, 1/2; 1st Place: $5, 1/2.

New Orleans Open Chess Schoolings, 1/2-60, in 5 sections:

Under 1400: $600, 1/2; Under 1300: $500, 1/2; Under 1200: $400, 1/2; Under 1100: $300, 1/2. 3rd Place: $25, 1/2; 2nd Place: $15, 1/2; 1st Place: $5, 1/2.

New Orleans Open Chess Schoolings, 1/2-60, in 5 sections:

Under 1400: $600, 1/2; Under 1300: $500, 1/2; Under 1200: $400, 1/2; Under 1100: $300, 1/2. 3rd Place: $25, 1/2; 2nd Place: $15, 1/2; 1st Place: $5, 1/2.
46th annual LIBERTY BELL OPEN
7 rounds, Jan 17-20, 18-20 or 19-20, Philadelphia
$20,000 projected prize fund, $14,000 minimum
This traditional Martin Luther King weekend event has paid MORE than its $20,000 projected prize fund every year since 2006! In 7 sections:
Open section (no 2-day): $1700-1000-500-400-300, clear/tiebreak win $100 bonus, Top 2300/Unr $800-$400. FIDE rated, 50 CP (enhanced).
Under 2100 section: $1000-400-300-200-100. FIDE rated, 50 CP (enhanced).
Under 1700 section: $500-200-100. FIDE rated, 50 CP (enhanced).
Under 1500 section: $250-150-100. FIDE rated, 50 CP (enhanced).
Under 1200 section: $125-75-40. FIDE rated, 50 CP (enhanced).
Under 1000 section: $60-35-15. FIDE rated, 50 CP (enhanced).
FULL DETAILS: see “Grand Prize” in this issue or chessour.com.
Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!

JAN. 17-18 OR 19-20, FLORIDA

TOURNOIS PLUS GRAND POINTS: 10 (ENHANCED)

54th annual Liberty Bell Open
7SS, 40/110, 50/110 12:15 pm, Sat 12 & 6, Sun 12 & 6, Mon 10 & 3:30.
Rds. Thu 7 pm, Fri 12 & 6:15, Sat 6 & 12:15, Sun 6 & 12:15.

5-day late reg. ends 1/22 6:15 pm, 4-day late reg. ends 1/23 6:15 pm,
Car rental: Avis, 800-331-1600, use AWD #655563 or reserve through chessaction.com. Ent. chesstour.com or Continental Chess, Box 249, Salisbury Mills, NY 12577. Questions: DirectorAtChess.US, 347-201-2269. 15% service charge for refunds. Advance entries will be posted at chessaction.com (entry posted entries instantly).

Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!

JAN. 18-19, VIRGINIA

TOURNOIS PLUS GRAND POINTS: 20 (ENHANCED)

Saco Open

FOXFOWDS OPEN returns after 5 years!

Jan 22-26, 23-26 or 24-26 at fabulous Foxwoods Resort Casino

$80,000 promised prizes, $40,000 minimum, GM & IM norms possible.

See previous issue for TUs appearing December 1-14

www.uschess.org 55

TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 10 (ENHANCED)
Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix! MAR. 14-16 OR 15-16, MASSACHUSETTS
TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIZE POINTS: 100 (ENHANCED)

23rd annual Eastern Class Championships 555, 404, 200, 100 (2-day option, rds. 1-2 & 6-12, 60/15, 30/10, Host Hotel at Cedar Lake, 366 Main St., Sturbridge, MA 01566, L8.43, 2013, 11-9, Free parking. $20,000 based on 240 paid entries (re-entries & Class 1 cost spaced $16,000 $800 each prize). Guaranteed in 7 sections: Master (2000/up): $2000-1000-500-300-200. Winner or 1st on tiebreaks $1000 bonus, top U2000 $800-600-400. FIDE rules used. Exempt entries: (advance $1900-1400-700-400-200, Class A ($500-200-100), Class B ($100-75-50),$60-60, 2-day schedule: Sat 7:30-9:30-11:30, Sun 10 & 3. Free parking.

Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix! MAR. 7-9 OR 8-9, CALIFORNIA, SOUTHERN
TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 100 (ENHANCED)

21st annual Western Classic Championships $555, 404, 200, 100 (2-day option, rds. 1-2 & 6-12, 60/15, 30/10, 2000-2000-1000-500-300. Best section Game Prices: $75-50-25-15, one reserved for non-open sections. Reg. 3-day: $9-9:30 AM, advance rating list is used. It’s just a few miles from the airport has lots of fast food within walking distance, plus many fine dining restaurants. Also one separate day Scholastic event on 2/15/14, 135 EF, 3 rounds 6:30-10, starts at 10 AM, and entry fees at chessaction.com posted instantly).

3rd Annual Recession Buster Open 3-day schedule: Reg. ends Sat to 10:15 am, rds. Sat 11:15, 2 & 5, Sun 11:15 & 4:15. Online at chessaction.com, Adult $30, Young Adult $20, Scholastic $15. Re-entry (except Master) $60. For more info call Bruce Baker at (619) 239-7166, or email Chuck Ensey chessaction.com by 3/5, $120 phoned to 406-896-2038 by 3/5, 3-day $118, 2-day $115. Parking!

Class D EF: $90 if received by 1/15/14 (Early Bird Option), or is the recognized State Affiliate, is eligible to become a Silver Affiliate. Gold Affiliates are honored in a special list in larger type in Tournament Life each month, giving the affiliate name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and website. Gold Affiliation costs $850 per year, and existing affiliates may subtract $3 for each month remaining on their Silver affiliation, or $50 for each month remaining on their Silver Affiliation. As of August 6, 2007, by paying an annual payment of $500 (instead of $350), Gold Affiliate status must be obtained for minimum requirement for memberships submitted.

Silver Affiliates
Any affiliate that has submitted at least 25 USCF memberships during the current or previous calendar year, or the recognized State Affiliate, is eligible to become a Silver Affiliate. These affiliates are recognized in a special list in Tournament Life each month, giving the affiliate name, address, phone number, e-mail address, and choice of either phone number, e-mail address, or website. Silver Affiliation costs $150 per year, and existing affiliates may subtract $3 for each month remaining on their regular affiliation, or $15 for each month remaining on their Silver Affiliation. As of August 6, 2007, by paying an annual payment of $250.00 (instead of $150), Silver Affiliate status may be obtained with no minimum requirement for memberships submitted.
Tournament Life / December

18th annual Mid-America Open
55S, 40/110, SD/30 (10 round option, rds. 1/2 6/45 400), Crown Plaza Hotel St. Louis Clayton, 7550 Carondelet Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105 (1-6/4/US 40/65 Ex 32B, 1-2 miles north on Hanley Rd.). $20,000 based on 2500 entries minimum prize $16,000 (80% of each prize) guaranteed. In 7 sections: Open, $2000-1000-500-300, clear winner or 1st on tiebreak $100 bonus, top U1200/Unrated given $50 bonus. In 10 sections: Official list deadline April 16. Top U1000 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Top U2000 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Top U3000 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Top U4000 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Under 1800 limit 2, others before rd. 3. HR: $75-$75, 631-758-2900, reserve for rate or tie may increase. Car rental: Avis, 800-888-2883 or AAA. Hotel rates: Country Inn & Suites, Hotel Airport South, 7750 Carondelet Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105. $109 online at chesstour.com or reserve car online through chesstour.com. GMs free; $90 deducted from prize. Open Section EF: $300 online at chessaction.com by 5/13. US players not rated over U1200 by USCF or FIDE: $100 more. Top Unrated/Free GMs: $70 deducted from prize. Online at chessaction.com. Entries posted at chessaction.com (online entries posted instantly).

Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix! May 28-29 OR 30-31, NEW YORK TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 100 (ENHANCED) 12th annual Southern Class Championships $80, 40/110, SD/30 (10 round option, rds. 1/2 6/45 400), 1-6/4/US 40/65 Ex 32B, 1-2 miles north on Hanley Rd.). $5000 based on 2500 entries minimum prize $4000 (80% of each prize guaranteed). In 10 sections: Official list deadline April 16. Top U1000 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Top U2000 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Top U3000 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Top U4000 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Under 1800 limit 2, others before rd. 3. HR: $75-$75, 631-758-2900, reserve for rate or tie may increase. Car rental: Avis, 800-888-2883 or AAA. Hotel rates: Country Inn & Suites, Hotel Airport South, 7750 Carondelet Ave., St. Louis, MO 63105. $109 online at chesstour.com or reserve car online through chesstour.com. GMs free; $90 deducted from prize. Open Section EF: $300 online at chessaction.com by 5/13. US players not rated over U1200 by USCF or FIDE: $100 more. Top Unrated/Free GMs: $70 deducted from prize. Online at chessaction.com. Entries posted at chessaction.com (online entries posted instantly).

Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix! May 28-29 OR 30-31, NEW YORK TROPHIES PLUS GRAND PRIX POINTS: 100 (ENHANCED) 8th annual Philadelphia Open $50, 40/110, SD/30 (10 round option, rds. 1/2 6/45 400), 1-6/4/US 40/65 Ex 32B, 1-2 miles north on Hanley Rd.). $2000 based on 2500 entries minimum prize $1600 (80% of each prize guaranteed). In 7 sections: Official list deadline April 16. Top U900 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Top U1800 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Top U2700 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Top U3600 9SS, 40/110, SD/30. Under 1800 limit 2, others before rd. 3. HR: $75-$75, 631-758-2900, reserve for rate or tie may increase. Car rental: Avis, 800-888-2883 or AAA. Hotel rates: Wyndham Orlando Resort, 8001 International Dr., Orlando 32819. Free parking. $60 online at chessaction.com by 4/14, $65 online at chessaction.com by 4/7, $70 online at site. For- eign FIDE rated players: $150 online at chessaction.com by 4/7, $161 mailed at site. For- eign Unrated/Free: $70 online at chessaction.com by 4/7, $76 mailed at site. Players with under 10 lifetime games as of 4/14 official list cannot win over $500 in Open Section. Open Section points count 60% to compensate for having more rounds than other sections. Team average must be under 2200; teammates may play in different sections; teams must register (or extra fee) before both players begin round 2; teammate pairings avoided but possible. Unofficial uschess.org ratings usually used if otherwise unrated. Special 1½-2½ USCF dusv with magazine if paid with entry: Online at chessaction.com, Adult $30, Young Adult $20, Scholastic $15. Mail, phone or paid at site, Adult $45, Young Adult $30, Scholastic $20. Re-entry: $60; not available in Open Section. 3-day schedule: Reg. ends Fri 6 pm, rds. 7 pm, Sun 11 am & 3:30 pm. 2½ round: U1000 $25, U2000 $40, U3000 $60, U4000 $80. GMs free; $50 deducted from prize. Under 1800 $50 less than above. Under 900 entry fee $5 less; Local Qualified players $25. Top 4 entries posted at chessaction.com (online entries posted instantly).


Tournament Life / December
Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!  

**Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prize!**

**Daytime Schedule**

- **Dec. 7 - 11 a.m.-2 p.m.**
- **Dec. 8 - 9 a.m.-2 p.m.**
- **Dec. 9 - 9 a.m.-2 p.m.**
- **Dec. 10 - 9 a.m.-2 p.m.**
- **Dec. 11 - 9 a.m.-2 p.m.**

**Evening Schedule**

- **Dec. 7 - 7 p.m.-10 p.m.**
- **Dec. 8 - 7 p.m.-10 p.m.**
- **Dec. 9 - 7 p.m.-10 p.m.**
- **Dec. 10 - 7 p.m.-10 p.m.**
- **Dec. 11 - 7 p.m.-10 p.m.**

**Format**

- Round Robin (3 games per day)
- Blitz rounds (4 rounds each)
- 1 game each round
- 1-5/-5 time control

**Prizes**

- Top 10 w/plus score in ea sec & Top 10 teams combined.

**Entry Fee**

- $45 per player (ECO & USCF members)
- $60 per player (non-members)

**Contact Information**

- **Tel:** 718-684-5200
- **Email:** info@chessmagnet.com
- **Website:** www.chessmagnet.com
**5th annual GOLDEN STATE OPEN**

Jan 17-20, 18-20 or 19-20, Martin Luther King weekend, Concord, CA

$25,000 guaranteed prizes, mixed doubles, early finish times!

7 rounds, 40/110, SD/30, d10 (3-day option, rds 1-2 G/70, d10; 2-day option except Open Section, rds 1-4 G/30, d10). Blitz tournament 1/20 8:30 pm.

At Crowne Plaza Hotel, 45 John Glenn Dr, Concord CA 94520. Free parking, free BART shuttle.

In 6 sections.

**Open:** $3000-1500 1000-600-400, clear/tiebreak win $100, top U2350/Unr $1000-500. FIDE rated, 150 GPP.

**Under 2200:** $1600-800-500-400-300, top U2500/Unr $600-300. Under 1900: $1200-600-400-300-200, top U1750 $500-250.

**Under 1600:** $1200-600-400-300-200, top U1450 $400-200.

**Under 1300:** $1000-600-400-300-200, top U1150 $300-150.

**Under 1000:** $800-200-120-80, trophy to first 3, top U800, U600. Unrated.

Unrated prize limits: U1000 $150, U1300 $400, U1600 $600, U1900 $800.

Mixed doubles: $600-300. See TLA or chessour.com for details.

**Entry fee:** $133 online at chessaction.com by 1/15, $140 phoned to 406-896-2038 by 1/15 (entry only, no questions), 4-day $139, 3-day $138, 2-day $127 mailed by 1/17, all $150 at site, or online until 2 hours before round 1.

Under 1000 Section entry fee: $35 online at chessaction.com by 1/15 or mailed by 1/17, $70 at site or online until 2 hours before round 1.

January official USCF ratings used; unofficial uschess.org ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.

**Byes:** OK all limit 2, Open must commit before rd 2, other before rd 4.

**January official USCF ratings used; unofficial uschess.org ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.**

**Byes:** OK all limit 2, Open must commit before rd 2, other before rd 4.

January official USCF ratings used; unofficial uschess.org ratings usually used if otherwise unrated.

Byes: OK all limit 2, Open must commit before rd 2, other before rd 4.
Florida
Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix!
Boca Raton Chess Club
Friday nights, G/85 d5 tournament, one game a week for 4 weeks. www.bocaratonchess.com
Phone: 954-797-0331.
Bradwell Chess Club
909 N. Federal Hwy, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304, USCF & FIDE Tournaments, Blitz, Bughouse, Lessons, Chess Camps, Summer Camp and After School Chess Programs. Contact: NM Oscar Waldon, 860-372-5965.
Epicure Grand Prix Series at Miami City Day School
Scholastic and Non-Scholastic Sections. More info at: www.bocaratonchess.com or call 561-797-0331.
Pine Crest School Grand Prix Series in Boca Raton
Scholastic and Non-Scholastic Sections. More info at: www.bocaratonchess.com or call 561-797-0331.

DEC. 15-13, 2013 National K-12 Championships
See Nationals.

DEC. 27-29 OR 28-29, 43rd Annual Atlanta Open (GA)
See Grand Prix.

JAN 10-12, South Florida Regional Scholastic Championships
Organized by the FSL and sanctioned by the FCA. Top 5 Teams and Top 10 Individuals in Open divisions qualify for the Florida Scholastic State Championships. Mar. 14-16 in Orlando.

JAN 11-13, Northwest Chess Grand Prix
See Grand Prix.

DEC. 27-29 OR 28-29, 32nd annual Empire City Open (NY)
See Grand Prix.

JAN 10-12, Scholastic Chess Invitational presents the 34th Annual Greater NY Primary Championship! (NY)
See New York.

JAN 13, Scholastic Chess Invitational presents the 48th Annual Greater NY Junior High School Championship - USCF's Longest-Running Scholastic! (NY)
See New York.

JAN 13, Scholastic Chess Invitational presents the 48th Annual Greater NY High School Championship - USCF's Longest-Running Scholastic! (NY)
See New York.

JAN 17-20, 18-20 OR 19-20, 46th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)
See Grand Prix.

JAN 22-26, 23-26 OR 24-26, 12th annual Foxwoods Open (CT)
See Grand Prix.

JAN 26, Foxwoods Open Blitz (CT)
See Grand Prix.

MAR. 2-4, 47th annual New York State Scholastic Championships (NY)
See New York.

MAR. 14-16 OR 15-16, 33rd annual Eastern College Scholastics (MA)
See New York.

MAR. 28-30 OR 29-30, 8th annual Long Island Open (NY)
See Grand Prix.

APR. 16-20, 17-20 OR 19-20, 11th annual Philadelphia Open (PA)
See Grand Prix.

APR. 16-20, 17-20 OR 19-20, 8th annual Philadelphia Open (PA)
See Grand Prix.

Delaware
APR. 16-20, 17-20 OR 19-20, 8th annual Philadelphia Open (PA)
See Grand Prix.

Connecticut
DEC. 27-29 OR 28-29, 32nd annual Empire City Open (NY)
See Grand Prix.

JAN 10-12 OR 11-12, 2nd annual Boston Chess Congress (MA)
See Grand Prix.

JAN 11, Kasparov Chess Classic presents the 34th Annual Greater NY Primary Championship! (NY)
See New York.

JAN 13, Kasparov Chess Classic presents the 48th Annual Greater NY Junior High School Championship - USCF's Longest-Running Scholastic! (NY)
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MAR. 28-30 OR 29-30, 8th annual Long Island Open (NY)
See Grand Prix.

APR. 16-20, 17-20 OR 19-20, 11th annual Philadelphia Open (PA)
See Grand Prix.

JULY 2-6, 3-6 OR JUNE 30-JULY 6, 42nd Annual World Open (VA)
See Grand Prix.

DEC. 27-29 OR 28-29, 43rd Annual Atlanta Open (GA)
See Grand Prix.

Georgia
DEC. 27-29 OR 28-29, 39th Annual Atlanta Open
See Grand Prix.

Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix
Boca Raton Chess Club
Friday nights, G/85 d5 tournament, one game a week for 4 weeks. www.bocaratonchess.com Phone: 954-797-0331.
Bradwell Chess Club
909 N. Federal Hwy, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304, USCF & FIDE Tournaments, Blitz, Bughouse, Lessons, Chess Camps, Summer Camp and After School Chess Programs. Contact: NM Oscar Waldon, 860-372-5965.
Epicure Grand Prix Series at Miami City Day School
Scholastic and Non-Scholastic Sections. More info at: www.bocaratonchess.com or call 561-797-0331.
Pine Crest School Grand Prix Series in Boca Raton
Scholastic and Non-Scholastic Sections. More info at: www.bocaratonchess.com or call 561-797-0331.

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Delaware
APR. 16-20, 17-20 OR 19-20, 8th annual Philadelphia Open (PA)
See Grand Prix.


2nd annual BOSTON CHESS CONGRESS
Jan 10-12 or 11-12 at luxurious Hyatt Harborside
$12,000 projected prize fund, $8000 minimum

Special $79 room rates, free parking, free airport shuttle!
Beautiful view of Boston harbor and downtown! In 6 sections:


MIXED DOUBLES BONUS PRIZES: best male/female 2-player “team” combined score among all sections: $800-400-200. Team average must be under 2200; teammates may play in different sections.

BLITZ TOURNAMENT Sunday 8:30 pm.

FULL DETAILS: see “Grand Prix” in this issue or chesstour.com.
DEC. 22, Chess Mates Sunday Morning Quads
3:45-6:15, 27th Annual Scholastic Section
Fees: $75 to first in each section. EF: $50, 325 members. Reg.: 10-20-10 a.m. m.d.: 10:30, 11:30 a.m., 12-20 p.m. Info: chessmates@chessmatesnj.com, 732-499-0118.

DEC. 29, National Open American Blitz (BLZ)
See Grand Prize.

JAN. 17-20 OR 18-20, 19-20, 23rd annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)
See Grand Prize.

JAN. 5, Chess Mates Winter Scholastic
3-R, 4-R, 6-R Westfield Y, 220 Clark St., Westfield, NJ 07090. Note prize & price increase. EF: $50 to first in each section. EF: $25, 125 members. Reg.: 1:30-2:00 p.m., 2:15-4:05-5:55 p.m. Info: westfieldchessclub.com, John Moldovan: westfieldchessclub@gmail.com, Bill Cullen: 732-548-8432 or 848-219-1358.

JAN. 19, Westfield Quick Swiss (QC)
6-9:30, 220 Clark St., Westfield, NJ 07005. Prizes: $25, $15 members. Reg.: 12:30-2:00 p.m. Info: westfieldchessclub.com, John Moldovan: westfieldchessclub@gmail.com, Bill Cullen: 732-548-8432 or 848-219-1358.

JAN. 20, Liberty Bell Open Blitz (BLZ) (PA)
See Pennsylvania.

JAN. 31, 24-25 OR 24-26, 2012 National Open (CA)
See Grand Prize.

FEB. 2, New Jersey Junior High School Championships

FEB. 9, Westfield Quads
3-R, 4-R, 6-R Westfield Y, 220 Clark St., Westfield, NJ 07005. Note prize & price increase. EF: $50 to first in each section. EF: $25, 125 members. Reg.: 1:30-2:00 p.m. Info: westfieldchessclub.com, John Moldovan: westfieldchessclub@gmail.com, Bill Cullen: 732-548-8432 or 848-219-1358.

FEB. 15-17, World Amateur Team & U.S. Team East - 44th Annual Scholastic!
See New Jersey.

See previous issue for TLAs appearing December 1-14
New Mexico


New York

DEC. 10, Robert Byrne Memorial Blitz Tournament (BLZ) See Grand Prix.

DEC. 13, Marshall Masters! See Grand Prix.


DEC. 30, 60th Nassau Action See Grand Prix.

JAN. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 OR 12, 2nd annual Western Class Championships (CA-5) See Grand Prix.


JAN. 10-12 OR 11-12, 2nd annual Boston Chess Congress (MA) See Grand Prix.

JAN. 10-12 OR 11-12, Chesapeake Open (MD) See Grand Prix.


JAN. 11, 3rd annual Blizzcon Challenge “Scholastic Team Tournament” Sponsored by Sanwil Distribution $450 G/45, Global Concepts Sch. 200, Ridge Rd., Lackawanna, NY 14128. 4 Rated Sections: K-6, K-12, U1000, K-12, U1200 EF: Free. Rds: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Trophies: Top 3 Individuals in each section, Top team in each section. Medalist: 1st and 3rd place teams in each section. All players must have a valid USCF Membership. Jan. 2014 USCF rating supplement used. Reg: send Name, Team Name, Section, U500 EF to tournament@blizzcon.com. More info at www.queensknightchess.blogspot.com.


JAN. 12, Kasparov Chess Foundation presents the 34th Annual Greater NY Primary Championship! 5-5, G/25/15 or G/30/5. Entry open to all born after 1/1/04 or in grades 3/below. More players lets us increase the # of byes. Trophies will be awarded. Top 10% to be dual entered into the $500 qualifying event. www.uschess.org.

JAN. 13-OR-4-5, Marshall GM Norm Invitational Qualifier! 5-5, G/40/15 or G/60/5. Entry open to all born after 1/1/04 or in grades 3/below. More players lets us increase the # of byes. Trophies will be awarded. Top 10% to be dual entered into the $500 qualifying event. www.uschess.org.
The membership category once called “Youth” has been renamed “Young Adult,” and eligibility has changed from under 21 to under 25. Annual dues for this category are only $33 with paper Chess Life or $26 with the online version!

One-year membership with Chess Life:

Only $46 for Premium Membership, which includes a copy of Chess Life every month. Regular Memberships are available for $40 and give online-only access to Chess Life and a mailed Tournament Life Newsletter (bi-monthly). (Note to affiliates: If you collect a $46 membership, you may submit it online to USCF for $43.)
JAN. 13, 2013: Muhammad Ali, 54, MUHAMMAD ALI’S FINAL RING TEXPORT (Jan 12 only: Trophies to top quarter, medals to others. Trophies to all in K-1. Trophies to all.

Chess Magnet School Junior Grand Prix

JAN. 14, 2013: 13th Annual Queen City Classic Chess Tournament
FEB. 4, 2013: Marshall Tuesday FIDE Action!


JAN. 16, 2013: Marshall Monday U1800 Action!

FEB. 5, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 30 Grand Prix

JAN. 17, 2013: Marshall Wednesday Monday U1200!

JAN. 18, 2013: Marshall Saturday U1500!

FEB. 6, 2013: Marshall Sunday U1200!

JAN. 19, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U1300!

JAN. 20, 2013: Marshall Masters!

JAN. 21, 2013: Marshall Expander:

JAN. 22-26, 2013: 12th annual Foxwoods Open (CT)

FEB. 7, 2013: Marshall Monday U1000!

JAN. 23, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U1400!

JAN. 24, 2013: Marshall Wednesday Monday U1800!

FEB. 8, 2013: Marshall Friday U2000 Action!

JAN. 25, 2013: Marshall Saturday U1600!

JAN. 26, 2013: Marshall Wednesday U2400!

JAN. 27, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 1 Grand Prix

JAN. 28, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!

JAN. 29, 2013: Marshall Saturday U1800!

FEB. 9, 2013: Marshall Monday U1900!

FEB. 10, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U1600!


FEB. 12, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 2 Grand Prix

FEB. 13, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!

JAN. 31, 2013: Marshall Wednesday U2400!

FEB. 14, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U2300!

FEB. 15, 2013: Marshall Wednesday U2600!

JAN. 31, 2013: Marshall Wednesday U2400!

FEB. 16, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 1 Grand Prix

FEB. 17, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!

FEB. 18, 2013: Marshall Saturday U1800!

FEB. 19, 2013: Marshall Sunday U1200!

FEB. 20, 2013: Marshall Monday U1000!

FEB. 21, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U1400!

FEB. 22, 2013: Marshall Wednesday Monday U1800!

FEB. 23, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 2 Grand Prix

FEB. 24, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!

FEB. 25, 2013: Marshall Saturday U1600!

FEB. 26, 2013: Marshall Sunday U1200!

FEB. 27, 2013: Marshall Monday U1900!

FEB. 28, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U1600!


FEB. 30, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 1 Grand Prix

MARCH 1-3, 2013: Land of the Sky XXVI

MARCH 4-5, 2013: 4th annual Philadelphia Open (PA)

MARCH 8-10, 2013: First Baptist Church, 11195 Winton Rd., Cinti, OH 45218 (on corner of Sharon Rd. and Winton Rd.). $75 if paid online or $85 at site. Visa-MA/AMEX accepted at site. Based on entries. Open $200-$100. 1st in Class A/B/C/D/E/F/G, 2nd U1900 $85, 3rd U1700 $75. On-site $100.

MARCH 11-16, 2013: 14th Annual Foxwoods Open (CT)

MARCH 17-18, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 3 Grand Prix

MARCH 19-20, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!

MARCH 21-23, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 1 Grand Prix

MARCH 24-25, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!

MARCH 26-30, 2013: 8th annual Philadelphia Open (PA)


APRIL 1-3, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 1 Grand Prix

APRIL 4-6, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!

APRIL 7-10, 2013: Marshall Saturday U1800!

APRIL 11-13, 2013: Marshall Sunday U1200!

APRIL 14-15, 2013: Marshall Monday U1900!

APRIL 17, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U1400!

APRIL 18-19, 2013: Marshall Wednesday Monday U1800!

APRIL 20-26, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U1400!

APRIL 27-30, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 2 Grand Prix

APRIL 31-5, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!

MAY 6-10, 2013: Marshall Saturday U1600!

MAY 11-13, 2013: Marshall Sunday U1200!

MAY 14-16, 2013: Marshall Monday U1900!

MAY 17-19, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U1400!

MAY 20-23, 2013: Marshall Wednesday Monday U1800!

MAY 24-26, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 2 Grand Prix

MAY 27-30, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!

MAY 31-6, 2013: Marshall Saturday U1800!

JUNE 7-9, 2013: Marshall Sunday U1200!

JUNE 10-12, 2013: Marshall Monday U1900!

JUNE 13-15, 2013: Marshall Tuesday U1400!

JUNE 16-18, 2013: Marshall Wednesday Monday U1800!

JUNE 19-21, 2013: Marshall Thursday Game 1 Grand Prix

JUNE 22-24, 2013: Marshall Friday U2200 Action!
Bye: Indicates which rounds players who find it inconvenient to play may take ½-point byes instead. For example, Bye 1-3 means ½-point byes are available in Rounds 1 through 3.

**TOURNAMENT LIFE ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS**

BLZ: Blitz rated.
QC: Quick Chess events.

$SGd: Guaranteed prizes.
$SGd/ac: Based-on-prizes, x = number of entries needed to pay full prize fund. At least 50% of the advertised prize fund of $500 or more must be awarded.

CC: Chess club.
dx: Time delay, x = number of seconds. Entry fee.
Ent: To where to mail entries.
FIDE: Results submitted to FIDE for possible rating.
G/: Game in, For instance, G/75 means each side has 75 minutes for the entire game.
GPP: Grand Prix Points available.
HR: Hotel rates, for example, 60-65-75-75 means $60 single, $65 twin, $70 3/room, $75/4/room.
JGP: Junior Grand Prix.

**RATED TOURNAMENTS**

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**RANKING TOURNAMENTS**

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**CONCURRENT TOURNAMENTS**

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**TOURNAMENT RULES**

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**FURTHER INFORMATION**

Contact the tournament organizers for further information and details.

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Michigan
Virginia
Chess Life Club's Friday Action
JSS, G/30 ds. Held 1/30. For dates go to: www.arlingtonchessclub.com. If $100 expired as prizes (by entrant). Reg.: 7-6. Rd. 1: 8:30pm. EF: $15 ($10 for members), cash only. Arlington Forest United Methodist Church, 4701 Arlington Blvd., VA. Info: only: chrisney@gmail.com.

Arlington Chess Club Ladder (Held Every Friday)
30/50, SD/45. Monthly Prize: $50. Must join club to play. Yearly dues: $50 adults, $40 for age 65 or older. Cash or check, Reg.: 7-9pm; no advance entries. Arlington Forest United Methodist Church, 4701 Arlington Blvd., VA. 22203. Info: only: chrisney@gmail.com. W. NS. (If full rounds played in that one month they qualify for Chess Mag-Net School) JSP

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Weekly Scholastic & Open Tournaments, Weekends Events (Monday Night Quick & Friday Night Blitz Tournaments), Small Group Lessons for Children & Adults, Lectures & Simuls and more. Visit our website at www.capitalareachess.com for event schedules or contact by email at info@capitalareachess.com. Location: Capital Area, Inc. 4541 Brookfield Corporate Dr., Suite #201, Chantilly, VA 20151.

VA Chess Federations Tournaments
Scholastic and Adult Tournaments every month from Sept to May. See www.vachess.org and www.vschess.org.

Maryland Chess Association (MD)
See Maryland.

DEC.
7. Winter Welcome Scholastic Tournament

14. Kingstowne Quad #97/Action-Plus #76
Kingstowne Thompson Center, 6090 Kingstowne Pkwy., Alexandria, VA 22315. 2 events. Quad #97: 300, G/100. EF: $50 if received by 12/15, $25 at site. Prizes: 1st and 2nd in each quad: gold to 1st, silver to 2nd; bronze to 3rd. Rds.: 1-3-7-11. Action-Plus #76: 555, G/45. EF: $15 if received by 12/15, $20 at site. Prizes: $250/200; $100-60, USCF-1400-Unc. each $30. Rds.: 1-3-5-7-9-11. Both: Reg check payable to: Don W. Millican, PO. Box 151, Newport News, VA 23602. e-mail info (only): dmillican92@hotmail.com. W (please give 48-hour notice).

14. Arlington Chess Club’s Saturday Action-Plus
See Grand Prix.

JAN.
10-12 OR 11-12, Chesapeake Open (MD)
See Grand Prix.

17-20, 18-20 OR 19-20, 46th annual Liberty Bell Open (PA)
See Grand Prix.

18-19, 4th annual Sterling Chess January! (NC)
See Grand Prix.

FEB.
1, Kasparov Chess Foundation Presents 6th Annual Greater Mid-American Scholastic Championships (MD)
See Maryland.

APR.
16-20, 17-20, 18 OR 19-20, 18th annual Philadelphia Open (PA)
See Grand Prix.

JULY
2-6, 3-6 OR JUNE JULY 6, 42nd annual World Open
See Grand Prix.

Washington
DEC.
26-30, 26-29 OR 27-29, 23rd annual North American Open (NV)
See Grand Prix.

FEB.
27-28, Top 100 USCF List Scholastic Invitational (CA-S)
See California, Southern.

FEB.
28-MAR. 2, 2014 U.S. Junior Chess Congress (CA-S)
See National.

Ohio
MAY
9-11, 2014 National Elementary (K-6) Championship
See National.

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Chess Life Classifieds
See Classifieds section.
Championship was 11-0. White resigned on move 210. The only longer
at moves 40, 56, 72, 88, 104 and 120.

3. False: Wei Yi, born June 2, 1999, got the title in March. He is
the youngest current grandmaster. 16. c. At controls that ended
at moves 40, 56, 72, 88, 104 and 120.

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2014 Spring Nationals

NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
APRIL 4–6, 2014
Town and Country Resort 500 Hotel Circle North
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APRIL 25–27, 2014
Hyatt Regency Atlanta
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Atlanta, GA 30303
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$125
Single/Double/Quad/Triple/Quad

NATIONAL ELEMENTARY
MAY 9–11, 2014
Hilton Anatole Dallas
2201 Stemmons Freeway
Dallas, TX 75207
214-748-1200
$120
Single/Double/Double/Triple/Quad


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www.uschess.org
A few years ago, I was reviewing the best games from my career, and I noticed something odd: Most of my favorite games were from the period before I became a grandmaster. I tried to understand why that was and I soon came to realize that when I was young and brash, I played in a much more aggressive, go-for-the-kill style. This also led me, during the same time period, to have some of the worst games of my career. As a more mature, seasoned grandmaster, I know that the same risks I took when I was young and dumb didn’t work against better players. The average quality of my games rose, but the wild and spectacular finishes quickly transformed into technical and difficult endgames. I write all of this with a twinge of regret, but it is a reality that must be embraced if one is to ever become a true professional in the world of chess.

As can be well-imagined, choosing a best move from one’s entire career is next to impossible. However, one of my most memorable moves came from a game in my early period. It was played on the beautiful island of Saint Martin, and it was against one of America’s future legends, GM Alex Shabalov. Shaba, as he’s affectionately known, is one of the country’s greatest attacking players, having been bred in the Latvian school of chess, which produced such luminaries as the late world champion Mikhail Tal and Alex Shirov. Alex is not one to back down from a fight and I managed to defeat him in a couple of our early games before he realized that, coming from Brooklyn, I was just as crazy as he was and he had to be careful not to overreach.

In the following diagram, coming from a hedgehog set-up, Alex committed the cardinal sin of opening up the game too quickly.

A cardinal sin
GM Alex Shabalov
IM Maurice Ashley
It (open), Saint Martin (France & Netherlands) (5), 1993

(see diagram next column)

White has more space, but he can’t make use of it because Black has all the entry points covered. White’s last move is meant to somehow sneak a knight into e4, but, unfortunately for him, his king is left alone to be ripped to shreds.

20. ... Nxe3!!

It’s funny to imagine the black pieces huddled on the first two ranks are well-prepared to carry out the vicious assault initiated by this sacrifice. Such is the nature of the hedgehog.

21. Qf2

No better is 21. Kxg3 Nxe5 22. Bxb7 (The other tries are great for Black also: 22. Qxe5 Bd6; 22. Bxe8 Ng4+ 23. Kxg4 h5+...)


21. ... Nxe5! 22. Rxe5

Black has more material and fabulous pieces after 22. Qxg3 Bd6! 23. Kg1 (23. Ne4 Ng4+ 24. hxg4 Bxg3+ 25. Nxe3 Qf4) 23. ... Nxc6.

22. ... Qxe5 23. Qxg3

Also miserable is 23. Kg1 Be5.

23. ... Qxd4 24. Rd1


24. ... Bxd6 25. Qxd6


25. ... Qf2+ 26. Kh1 Qxb2

The final point. The bishop on c6 suffers the final indignity of being pinned on c6.

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