

Florida CHESS

FLORIDA CHESS ASSOCIATION QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

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In this issue:

- * K-12 Nationals
- * IM Levy Rozman
- * Regional Reports
- * and more

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Contents



"Foote Notes" & President's Message	3
Oak Hall Wins 3 National Titles	4
Nationals Photo Gallery	6
Gotham Chess Book Tour	7
Eulogy for Alexander Zelner	8
NM Bryan Tillis Annotates Alexander Zelner v. GM Raset Ziatdinov	9
Games from Recent Events	10
Florida's Top Players	14
Regional Reports	15
Book Reviews by Miguel Ararat	20
USCF Roles, TDs, & more.....	22
Calendar of Events & FCA 2024 Affiliates	23

FCA Membership Dues

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Regular	— \$20 (for two years)
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“Foote Notes”

Greetings, chess fans!

I couldn't resist using the following photo sequence in my column this quarter. Coach Tim Tusing, his players, his coaches, and parents all worked together to have a historic K-12 National tournament. A stalwart on the National Chess Scene, Coach Tusing's Oak Hall Eagles soared in December.



Read all about it on page 4 and enjoy this quarter's coverage of all things Florida Chess. I send a big “Thank You” out to our FCA Board of Directors, all of our contributors, players, TD's, organizers, and You!

Until next time, may all your moves be brilliant and as well planned as Coach Tim Tusing's.

George Foote

Editor, floridaCHESS Magazine

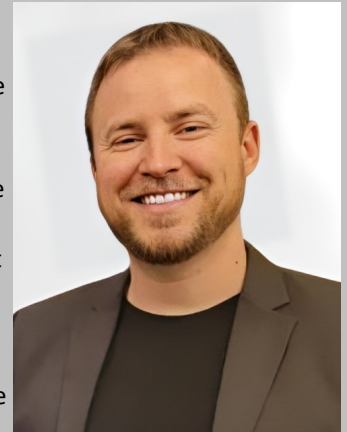
from the President's desk

Dear Members and Friends,

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year!

Tournament organizers are hard at work across the state filling the 2024 calendar. I am excited to announce that we have secured venues for all of our championships tournaments for the year. As the authorized state affiliate for US Chess, we

must identify our state representatives for the five national tournaments that require one person from each state. The first of these events is coming up very soon with the Women & Girls Championship!



2024 FCA Tournament Calendar

2/3-2/4 – Florida State Women & Girls Championships

2/24 - 2/26 – Amateur Team South –

3/8-3/10 - Florida State Scholastic Championships -

4/13/2024 - Florida State Collegiate Championships -

4/27/2024 - Florida State Senior Championships -

8/31-9/2 - Florida State Championships –

I plan to participate in/host several of these events so I hope to see you all and visit with you as we make 2024 our best year yet together.

This is the second year I have hosted the Women & Girls Championships in South Florida and I am hopeful we will be moving it to another part of the state next year. We do our best as an organization to transport events around giving players and organizers opportunities to get involved. The FCA board is actively in the planning process of our 2025 events. Interested in running/organizing/working an FCA event? Reach out to me and we will work to make it happen!

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me. I am here to help and serve.

Warm regards,

Bryan Tillis - bryan@floridachess.org

President, Florida Chess Association

Oak Hall School Wins Three National Chess Titles

Oak Hall places Top 10 in each elementary grade. Buchholz H.S. 9th gr. team & Lincoln M.S. 8th gr. team place second. Williams Elementary places Top 10 in 5th grade

Two thousand four hundred students from grades kindergarten through twelfth descended upon Orlando's Hyatt Regency Conference Center on December 15th-17th for the United States Chess Federation's K12 Grade National Chess Championships. This annual event determines the nation's individual and team chess champion for each grade. Each student plays seven games over a three day period. Each game has a 3+ hour limit, A victory is worth a point and a draw is ½ point. The top three scoring players make a team score. Oak Hall School continued its dominance in the lower grade sections and added three more prestigious national trophies to its display case! The Eagles scored victories in the kindergarten, 1st grade, and 3rd grade sections while placing top ten in 2nd grade, 4th grade, and 5th grade!

The Eagles third grade team's top scorers were the **first to ever achieve an undefeated record in the history of this event**. Celine Chen and Akash Jani both earned 5 wins and 2 draws to finish 2nd and 3rd place individually in the field of 271 third graders! James McDonald scored 4 wins and 3 draws (11th place) to give the team 17.5 total points to win over the other thirty 3rd grade teams that participated. James managed to draw with the top rated player Yi Sha from Florida who was rated 629 points above him. The remaining teams that made the top 10 were all New York City Prep and PS schools. Team members included Addison Baumstark (13th place), Asher Austin, Myka Solberg, Aayan Patel, Wyatt Justice, Stella King, and Jack Eisenmenger.

The First Grade Team had to wait until the final games were recorded to learn that they edged out four New York City schools to earn the title. Oak Hall scored 14 points to defeat New York schools Speyer, Trinity, Dalton, and PS 77 Lower Lab which all scored 13 points each. Top Oak Hall players were Mihai Holcomb (15th place) and Milan Agarwal (29th place) who each scored 5 points. There were 24 teams from around the nation in the first grade section. Team members included Gary Fernandes, Daniel Moguillansky, Grant Fieldman, Andrew Pinkoson, Issac Zhang, Aiden Kropp, Sawyer Davenport, and Carter Hoh.

Winning the National Kindergarten Championship as the only non-New York City school in the section were the Oak Hall Eagles! These young players were in control of first place all seven rounds as they easily outplayed the competition. Scoring 5 points each were top scorers Suraj Jani (5th place) and Hayden Webb (11 place). Team Members included Olivia McLellan, Harry McLellan, Levi Merkel, Amya Rodrigues, Aahan Patel, Preston Fieldman, Luna Flores and Santiago McMillen.

The OHS second grade team prevented New York City from sweeping the awards by sneaking into tenth place with 12 points. Teddy Mawdsley provided the biggest upset win for the Eagles with a victory over an opponent rated 597 points more than himself. Team members: Teddy Mawdsley, Leighann Hood, Nora Thomas, Emma Leah Flores, Catalina McMillen, Mark Wang, Andy Fu, and Ayuna Phillips.

Sophie Li (8th place) and Damian Alexander (19th place) lead the Eagles 4th grade team to a respectable third place finish with 5 points each. Team members: Sophie Li, Damian Alexander, Gabriel Moguillansky, Julian Moguillansky, Ryder Davenport, and Nicholas James Vu.

Ishir Kumar led the 5th grade team to a 6th place finish with 5 points. Meera Jani, Henry Thomas, and Curtis Hood all performed well for the team. The Oak Hall team is led by Head Coach Tim Tusing who after 26 years collected the teams 24th total national title! He is assisted by coaches Kevin Sevilla and Luis Salazar. Coaching some of the top players in the area (including Oak Hall) is NM Britt Ryerson. As a National Master he has helped establish Gainesville as a scholastic powerhouse in chess. Coach Tusing states "It takes a 'village effort' to produce this many winners. We are very fortunate to have a group of coaches that are all willing to work together to make this happen!"

Buchholz High School 9th grade team students Jerry Yao placed 7th with 5.5 points, Abhiram Pothuri scored 5 points for 15th place and Jolie Huang also scored 5 points placing 21st overall to give the Bobcat team a 2nd place finish ½ point behind NY Columbia Grammar School.

Lincoln Middle School 8th grade team also missed winning a title by ½ point placing behind New York Hunter College with a score of 14.5 points. Nate Ziegler scored an impressive 5.5 points placing 14th overall. Brian Bird and Jesse Dang each scored 4.5 and Joel Cradenas (3.5 points) completed the team.

Williams Elementary's 5th grade team earned an 8th place finish with Grace Yang (5 points), Richard Liu and Shreyan Mola with 4 points each, and Xinbo Yang (2 points)

Eastside High School was represented by Nick Liu and Kevin Liu. Queen of Peace Academy: Asa Bodlack, David Greene, Justin Grene, Julieta Salazar-Gomez, Marcelo Salazar-Gomez, and Nynisha Shankar.



Oak Hall Eagles of Gainesville, Florida



3rd Grade Team



Kindergarten Team



Hayden & Suraj



Aahan & Levi



Addison & James



Sophie, Celine, & Aakash

More National K-12 Photos



Gotham Book Tour - Gainesville Stop

By Trey Slaten, FCA Secretary

As the Gotham book tour shows, chess fever is alive and well in the state of Florida. Renowned internet streamer Gotham Chess, also known as IM Levy Rozman, kicked off his global book tour right here in Florida, making a stop in Gainesville on November 11th. This particular event stood out as one of the largest on his tour, boasting an impressive 725 registered attendees—a new record for the largest single-day event ever held at the University of Florida's Reitz Union. For a college town with not much around, it fared pretty well against the likes of London and Toronto.

The audience at the event was diverse, drawing in Gainesville locals, UF students, and numerous out-of-town visitors. The multigenerational turnout was especially unexpected for a college campus. Surprisingly, only half of the attendees were registered students, while the other half comprised



families and other chess enthusiasts. Clearly, the appetite for chess in Gainesville and throughout Florida is substantial. Gotham himself demonstrated a different kind of hunger—for the Floridian chicken delicacy PDQ, which he indulged in before the event. After devouring his chicken sandwich, Gotham hosted a four-hour session featuring a lecture, Q&A, and an all-comers blitz challenge.



A heartfelt thank you goes out to the individuals who played a pivotal role in organizing the event—the Gator Chess Club (GCC) officers like Glenn Bruda, Peyton Kromash, Nathan Thompson, Thomas Steinbach, Mason Derwitsch, and Ethan Mashburn. Additional gratitude is extended to former GCC Presidents Andrew Kennedy and CM Derek Zhang who paved the path that we walk on today. Special thanks to the volunteers and the University of Florida who made the event possible.

To check out a video by Gotham himself on the first game he played at the event against UF's own

CM Derek Zhang, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqphPzsoerk>



EULOGY FOR ALEXANDER ZELNER

By Steven Vigil



Last week the Central Florida chess community was stunned to hear the news that FM Alexander Zelner passed away. Alex had a positive impact and touched the lives of many throughout the chess world. The Central Florida Chess club is grieving this tremendous loss, and would like to extend its condolences to the Zelner family.

Originally from Moscow, Russia, Alex achieved the rank of National Master shortly before moving to Orlando from Springfield, Ohio in 1999 along with his wife Dr. Catherine Zelner and young sons Gregory, David and Joshua. All fierce competitors, the Zelner family quickly became a staple in local chess tournaments.

In November of 2002, Alex opened Orlando Chess & Games Center in Plaza Venezia on Sand Lake Road with a vision for a tournament

venue, teaching academy, and chess retail store. It became a thriving club that offered not only tournaments, but lessons, summer camps, and GM simuls. "OCG" closed its store front in 2008, but Alex continued to train students and run at least one OCG tournament a month at various venues throughout central Florida.

Alex was a tenacious competitor over the board, who in his prime had wins against GMs and reached a peak rating of 2481. But perhaps Alex was better known as a superb chess coach who trained countless players and aspiring young talents. He was not only passionate about the royal game, but of its merits and benefits, especially for scholastic players. His favorite students were his two daughters Roza and Zoe, whom he loved to travel to tournaments with.

Alex was also well known as a chess vendor for larger weekend tournaments, including those organized by CFCC. Always approachable and personable, he had a larger than life personality and a witty sense of humor. A gifted chess lecturer, he could regale audiences with countless anecdotes and jokes. Alex was best known by his peers as a generous and kind spirit, who was constantly helping people in and out of the chess world.

I had the pleasure of meeting Alex in March of 2003 and had the privilege of being his friend for over 20 years. Through Alex, I played in my first USCF tournament, became a tournament director, and discovered a fulfilling niche career that I feel blessed to have. I am a full time chess coach and tournament director, and I owe much of my professional life to Alex. He was my mentor and I hope he knew how grateful I am to him and how much I appreciated our relationship over the years. He will be with me every time I hang up a demo board.

RIP Alex.

Your Friend,

Steven

**(Zelner,Alexander - Ziatdinov,Raset
(2466)
Tampa op Tampa (3), 12.04.2003
[NM Bryan Tillis]**

[We all dream of defeating a Grandmaster in tournament play and very few players ever accomplish this feat. Here FM Zelner shows what it takes to make the dream a reality.]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 d6 [The Modern Steinitz Defense, a secondary variation played often by many of the top players.]

5.c3 [As a general theme in the Spanish, if Black does place pressure on your position prepare to build a big center with c3!]

5...Bd7 6.d4 g6 7.dxe5 [This is the first deviation from the mainline.]

[7.0-0 Bg7 8.Re1 Nge7 9.dxe5 dxe5 Follows 1-0 (42) Sjugirov,S (2674)-Artemiev,V (2728) Chess. com INT 2020.]

7...dxe5 [7...Nxe5 A better path to a balanced game. 8.Nxe5 dxe5 9.0-0 Bxa4 10.Qxa4+ Qd7 So far the results have been balanced in the database from this position with a high level game leading the way in ½-½ (41) Nisipeanu,L (2667)-Krzyzanowski,M (2510) Teplice 2019.]

8.0-0 Bg7 9.Bg5 [Practical development coming with tempo.]

9...Nge7 10.Qe2 [Another practical move in the style of the Molar Attack.]

10...0-0 11.Bb3 [11.Rd1 This natural move can be met by the tactical 11...Nd4 Where Black equalizes. 12.cxd4 Bxa4 13.Rd2 exd4 ½-½ (38) Zielinski,S-Schmitz,P DESC email 2005.]

11...Na5 12.Nbd2? [A committal move creating a permanent imbalance. The bishop pair for Black is better in the long-term.]

[12.Rd1 We need to part with the bishop here but what is the best way to do it? 12...Nxb3 13.axb3 f6 14.Be3 White has a more flexible version of the main game.]

12...Nxb3 13.Nxb3 b6 [A good move to take away all of the forward squares of the knight.]

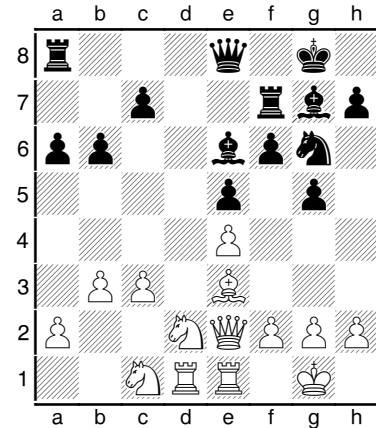
14.Rad1 Qe8 [Black needs to get the queen off of the pin to complete development.]

15.Rfe1 Be6 16.Nc1 f6 17.Be3 g5 18.Nd2 [It is difficult to come up with a constructive plan, we need to hunker down and wait for an opportunity to strike back.]

18...Ng6 19.b3 [19.g3 It is easy to make a

knee-jerk move that will only make the situation worse. 19...g4 Black has a strong clamp on the light-squares.]

19...Rf7 [Best, there is no reason to rush. When your opponent is in a bind with no clear plan, slowly improve.]



20.Nd3 a5 [Taking away a potential square from the d3-knight.]

21.c4 Bf8 [This clamps down on the c5-square to assure there is no break in the structure.]

22.Nb1 [White now has the plan to angle the knight to d5.]

22...Nf4 [Black shifts the nature of the game to playing for the win with a king-side attack.]

[22...Bb4 This Karpovian move is best, taking away natural development from White.]

23.Qc2 Rg7 24.Nc3? [24.f3 With the idea of d4 will lock down the queenside with equality.]

24...Qh5 [Black misses the opportunity of the game.]

[24...Bh3 A nasty tactic which is difficult to refute. 25.gxh3 Qh5 26.Bxf4 gxf4+ 27.Kf1 Kh8 Black has a brutal plan of moving the bishop and doubling rooks to bring home the full point.]

25.f3 [White has reached equality, this is the turning point.]

25...Rg6 26.Rf1 Bd6 27.Kh1 [White is fully confident in king safety.]

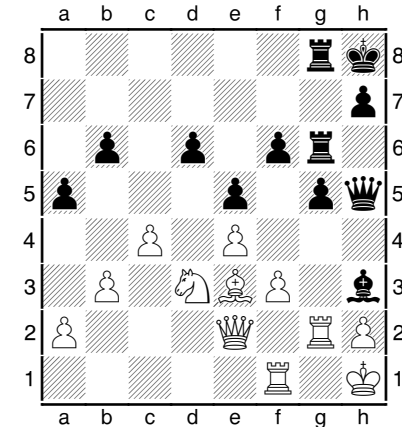
27...Kh8 28.Nb5 Rag8 [28...g4 A must to play for tactics now. 29.Nxf4 The only move. 29...exf4 30.Rxd6 g3 31.Bg1 cxd6 32.Nc7 Qe5 33.Nxe6 Qxe6 The position is an absolute mess but the machine calmly gives the evaluation of 0.00.]

29.Nxd6 [One less attacker for the attack, white is better.]

29...cxd6 30.Rd2 [Flexible defense, and making ready to coordinate the rooks on the d-file.]

30...Nxcg2 [A sense of urgency, if nothing is done Black's pawns will begin to fall.]

31.Rxcg2 Bh3 32.Qe2 [Good defense, hold on to everything. When the dust settles the two minor pieces will be better than the rook.]



32...g4 33.fxcg4 [33.f4 Stronger than the game continuation shutting down the potential on the g-file. 33...Bxcg2+ 34.Qxcg2 g3 35.fxe5 White is winning here as the natural move 35...gxh2 36.Nf4 is refuted due to this idea.]

33...Bxcg2+? [The final mistake in the game which sets White on the path to victory.]

[33...Rxcg4 Necessary to keep the tension. 34.Ne1 Bxcg2+ 35.Nxcg2 Qg6 White has major issues coordinating here and the e-pawn is falling. This likely would have won the game.]

34.Qxcg2 Rxcg4 35.Qf3 [There is no more attack as all of the access squares to the king are covered.]

35...R8g6 36.Ne1 Qh4 37.Qf2 Qh3 38.Bxb6 Rxe4 [38...Rf4 A better attempt to muddy the waters. 39.Nf3 f5 With a dynamically balanced position.]

39.Qf3 Qxf3+ 40.Nxf3 Re2 41.Nh4 [It is important to not allow the rooks to coordinate.]

[41.Rf2 This is also a strong idea.]

41...Rh6 42.Bd8 Rxa2 43.Bxf6+ Kg8 44.Be7 Rb2?? [44...Re6 Necessary defense to keep the game going.]

45.Rf8+ Kg7 46.Nf5+ Kg6 47.Rf6+ [A resilient game, FM Alex Zelner did much for Florida chess, he will be missed.] **1-0**

Games From Recent Events by Miguel Ararat



Chasin,Nico Werner (2514) - Alvarez,Alexander (1465) [B32]
2023 National K–12 Grade Championships
Orlando, Florida, United Stat (1.5),
15.12.2023
[Ararat,Miguel]

1.e4 [10] c5 [This game highlights why in the the Sicilian the cost of a mistake is so high for both players specially Black. 18]

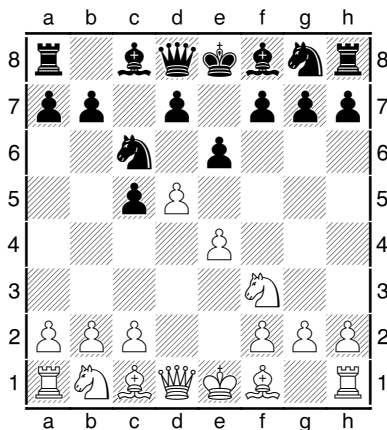
2.Nf3 [7] Nc6 [14]

3.d4 [8]

e6 [Black bypass chess theory and avoids the capture on d4 which is at the core of the Open Sicilian. In my database this variation appears almost in seven hundred games 12]

[3...cxd4 is the standard move here. 4.Nxd4]

4.d5 [#] The knight has no good squares to retreat and the game is practically over after 4 moves! 6]



[4.dxc5 I guess Black was hoping for this continuation. 4...Bxc5=]

4...exd5 [27]

5.exd5 [6] Nce7 [36]

6.d6 [12] Ng6 [1:28]

7.Qe2+ [The most direct approach to exploit Black's inaccurate opening play. 5]

[7.h4 h5 8.Nc3 Qb6 9.Nb5]

7...N8e7 [12]

8.Nc3 [White no need to capture on e7 and plays a string of intermediate moves that bring new pieces into the fight. Intermediate moves are a hallmark of strong players. 6]

8...b6 [1:32]

9.Nd5 [2:21] f6 [1:27]

10.Nc7+ [6] Kf7 [34]

11.Qc4+ [White checkmates Black without capturing the "free piece" on e7. 2]

1–0

Casares,Jose (2051) - Hua,Charles (2197) [B42]

2023 National K–12 Grade Championships
Orlando, Florida, United Stat (6.3),
17.12.2023
[Ararat,Miguel]

1.e4 c5 [The 12th grade section of Grade Nationals 2023 saw Florida player Jose Gabriel Casares play a stunning game in round 6. Casares relied on a solid theoretical basis to build his game. White's tactical alertness when in a quiet position allows him to react accordingly when his opponent changes the pawn structure abruptly. White was able to score a nice miniature against a 2197–rated opponent.]

2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6 [The flexible Sicilian Kan does not put any pressure on White, but put him at crossroads. White needs to chose between castling quickly with Bd3 and then set up the Maroczy bind with c4 or to go directly for the bind with 5.c4 The main problem with Bd3 is that the knight on d4 lacks protection and Black can exploit it with 5...g6 or Bc5 as in the game.]

5.Bd3 Bc5 [5...Nf6 6.0–0 Qc7 Here White can choose to go straight for the Maroczy bind with c4 or delay it. 7.c4 Nc6 8.Nf3 Ng4 9.Nc3 Be7 10.Be2 b6 11.h3 h5 12.g3 Nge5 13.h4 g6 14.Bf4 d6 Black set up the hedgehog and a complicated middle game

awaits. : 1–0 (67) Ivanchuk,V (2720)-Portisch,L (2575) Debrecen 1992]

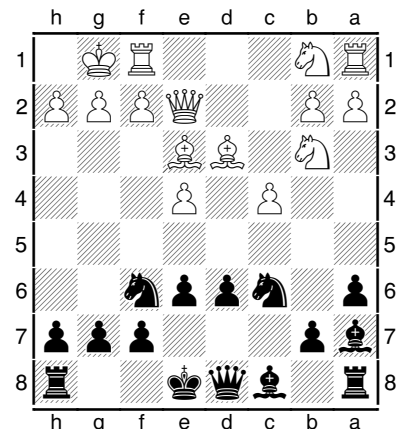
6.Nb3 [White remains also flexible and put the question on the black bishop. If Be7 then Qg4 hits g7, followed by 0–0 and f4–f5. Be7 justify White's 5.Bd3 (see Caruana - Svidler game below). In case of Ba7 white does not need to play c4 and may go for c3 controlling d4 (Caruana - Glendura)]

6...Ba7 [6...Be7 7.Qg4 g6 8.Qe2 d6 9.Be3 Nd7 10.N1d2 Ngf6 11.Bh6 Ne5 12.0–0 Neg4 13.Bg7 Rg8 14.Bxf6 Nxf6 15.f4 1–0 (43) Caruana,F (2820)-Svidler,P (2714) Paris 2021]

7.0–0 Nc6 [7...Ne7 8.Qe2 0–0 9.Be3 Nbc6 10.N1d2 e5 11.Rad1 d6 12.c3 1–0 (72) Caruana,F (2786)-Gledura,B (2633) Chess.com INT 2023]

8.Qe2 d6 9.Be3 Nf6

10.c4 [#] White plays c4 as the best option for white. Avoiding c4 creates a balanced position with not pressure on Black's position as in the Aagaard game below.]



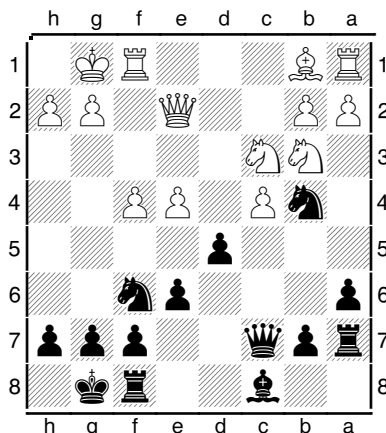
[10.Bxa7 Rxa7 11.f4 0–0 12.Nc3 e5 13.f5 b5 14.Rad1 Bb7 15.Kh1 Ra8 16.Nd5 Nd4 17.Nxd4 exd4 18.Qf2 Bxd5 0–1 (27) Aagaard,J (2420)-Kreiman,B (2455) Hampstead 1998]

10...0–0 11.Nc3 Qc7 [11...h6 12.Rfd1 e5 13.Rac1 Bg4 14.f3 Be6 15.Nd5 a5 16.Bxa7 Rxa7 17.Qe3 a4 18.Na1 Ra8 19.Nc2 Re8 20.Bf1 Nd7 21.Nc3 Qb6 22.Nb5 A Maroczy bind without b2–b3 gives Black no point of attack after a5–a4.1–0 (53) Caruana,F (2766)-Bezold,M (2478) Chess.com INT 2023; 11...Bxe3 12.Qxe3 e5 13.Rfd1 Be6 14.Be2 Qb8 15.Rd2 b5 16.Nd5 The position is equal according to the chess engine, but in reality White can exert pressure against d6 deep in the endgame

as in the Polgar game below. A fantastic finishing game by Judit Polgar. 16...bxc4 17.Bxc4 Bxd5 18.Bxd5 Nxd5 19.Rxd5 Nb4 20.Rd2 Rd8 21.a3 Nc6 22.Rad1 a5 23.Nc1 Nd4 24.Ne2 Nxe2+ 25.Qxe2 h6 26.h3 Ra7 27.Rd5 a4 28.R1d2 Rb7 29.Kh2 Rb6 30.Ra5 Qc7 31.Rxa4 Qb7 32.b4 d5 33.exd5 Rxd5 34.Rxd5 Qxd5 35.Ra5 Qb3 36.Qxe5 Rf6 37.Qe4 g6 38.Ra8+ Kg7 39.Qe8 1-0 (39) Polgar,J (2680)-Nisipeanu,L (2677) Khanty-Mansiysk 2009]

12.Bxa7 Rxa7 13.f4 Nb4 14.Bb1 [In a calm setting, Black stumbles. To understand this mistake, it is necessary to recall that in this structure, the main pawn breaks for Black are d5 and b5. Most of the time White focuses his play on preventing Black's pawn levers, and Black has to use tactical wizardry to break free. Black is constantly seeking to play d5 or b5. In this game, Hua lacked sense of danger and forgot how dangerous a bishop on the b1-h7 diagonal can be.]

14...d5 [#]



15.e5 [15.cxd5 exd5 16.e5 Nd7 17.a3 Nc6 18.Qd3+- The queen double attacks d5 and h7.]

15...dxc4 [15...Ne8 16.cxd5 Nxd5 17.Nxd5 exd5 18.f5+-]

16.exf6 cxb3 17.Bxh7+ Kxh7 18.Qh5+ [Black resigns in view of 18...Kg8 19.Qg5 and Black has to sacrifice his queen with Qc5+ to avoid mate.]

1-0



(Ngo,Bach (2446) – Gao,Marvin (2306) [A57]

2023 National K-12 Grade Championships Orlando, Florida, United Stat (7.9), 17.12.2023 [Ararat,Miguel]

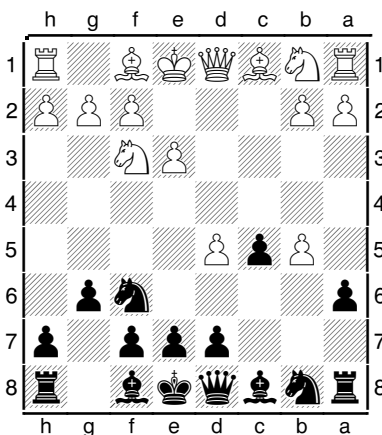
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.Nf3 [A flexible move that give Black the choice on the type of positions he wants to play. Black has 4 alternatives here, named, 4...Bb7, 4...bxc4, 4...b4 and 4...g6 (played in the game)]

4...g6 [The main move in this position]

[4...Bb7 5.b3 e6 6.dxe6 fxe6 7.cxb5 Be7 1-0 (31) Karpov,A (2693)-Topalov,V (2739) Dubai 2002; 4...bxc4 5.Nc3 d6 6.e4 Nbd7 7.Bxc4 g6 8.h3 Bg7 9.0-0 10.Re1 Rb8 11.Qc2 Nh5 12.Be3 f5= 0-1 (44) Schnider,G (2353)-Perunovic,M (2620) Bad Gleichenberg 2013; 4...b4 5.a3 g6 6.axb4 cxb4 7.e4 Nxe4 8.Qd4 Nf6= 1/2-1/2 (46) Sokolov,I (2706)-Van Wely,L (2617) Wijk aan Zee 2004]

5.cxb5 [The Benko Gambit is a very combative option for Black.]

5...a6 6.e3 [#] This move is considered one of the most dangerous lines for Black because White solves two problems. First his pawn on b5 is defended and there is not Black pressure against a white pawn on e4.]

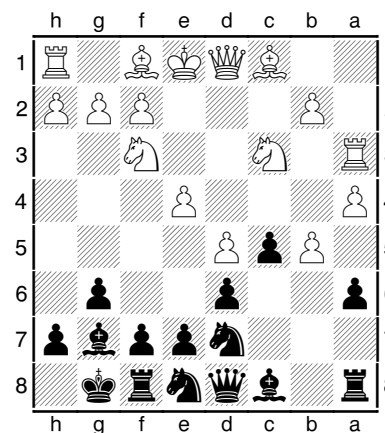


[6.e4 Nxe4 7.Qc2 Nf6 8.Qxc5=; 6.bxa6 gives Black the option of recapturing on a6 with the bishop or use that tempo doing something else. 6...Bxa6 7.Nc3 d6 8.Nd2 Bg7 9.e4 Bxf1 10.Nxf1 Qa5 11.Bd2 0-0 12.Ne3 Nbd7 13.0-0 Qa6 14.Qc2 Ne5 15.b3 Nfd7 16.f4 Nd3 17.a3 Bd4 18.Kh1 Rfc8 19.Rab1 c4 0-1 (31) Bareev,E (2685)-Kasparov,G (2805) Linares 1994]

6...Bg7 7.Nc3 0-0 8.a4 [Black is a crossroads and need to chose between 8..Bb7 or 8...d6]

8...d6 [8...Bb7 9.Rb1 d6 10.Be2 axb5 11.axb5 Nbd7 12.0-0 Nb6 13.e4 e6 14.dxe6 Nxe4 15.exf7+ Rxf7 16.Nxe4 Bxe4 17.Bg5 Qc7 18.Bd3 Bxf3= 1/2-1/2 (42) Estremera Panos,S (2384)-Tregubov,P (2629) Caleta 2005]

9.Ra3 Nbd7 10.e4 Ne8 [#]



[10...axb5 11.Bxb5 Ba6 12.Qe2 Bxb5 13.Nxb5 Ne8 14.0-0 Nc7 15.b3 Nxb5 16.Qxb5 Ra7 17.Bd2 Qa8 18.Re1 Rb7 19.Qc4 Nb6 20.Qc2+- 1-0 (52) Browne,W (2540)-Alburt,L (2560) Greenville 1983]

11.Nd2 [Ne8-c7 seeks to increase piece exchanges on the b5 square as Black has trouble coordinating his pieces. In order to anticipate Black's thematic c5-c4-Nc5-Nd3, White desires to transfer the knight to c4 via d2. The primary move in this position is 11.Be2. However White may want to save a tempo and recapture on b5 with his bishop in one move. In the Benko, White usually defends his queenside pawns from the Black pieces with a knight or a bishop on a4 or b5.]

[11.Be2 Nc7 12.0-0 axb5 13.Nxb5 Nxb5 14.Bxb5]

11...Nc7 12.Nc4 [12.bxa6 Bxa6 13.Bxa6 Rxa6 14.0-0 [#] The chess engine evaluates this position as slightly better for White. However, Black has his ideal Benko set up with a compact pawn structure, a strong dark square bishop, the e5 square for the knights and the possibility to exploit the d3 square with c5-c4Nc5-d3, plus pressure with the heavy pieces along the a and b files.]

12...axb5 13.axb5 Rxa3 14.Nxa3 Bb7 [Black develops the light square bishop

ans add a blocker on the path of the b pawn. The next phase of the game will center around White use of his extra pawn at the same time that Black will aim to win White's b pawns and advance his c pawn. In other words, both players can play to win.]

15.Be2 Nb6 16.0-0 e6 17.Nc4 Nxc4 18.Bxc4 Bxc3 19.bxc3 [White come on top and consolidate his extra pawn at the same time than the black pawn on c5 is under control.]

19...exd5 20.exd5 Re8 [White needs to make a decision about the conversion of his advantage, to push the b pawn or not.]

21.Qf3 [21.b6 Qh4 hits the bishop on c4. 22.Qb3 Na8 23.Bd2 and Black's minor pieces are paralyzed.]

21...Qh4 22.Bf4 [I am not sure if this move was a blunder or White thought this variation was the best way to promote his pass pawn.]

[22.Qd3 Bc8 23.b6 Bf5 24.Qf3 Na8 25.Bb5 Rb8 and now Bf4 is the only move to retain the advantage.]

22...Nxd5 23.Bxd5 Bxd5 24.Qxd5 Qxf4 25.g3 [White overestimates the control he has on the position and plays this prophylactic move with tempo on the queen.]

[25.b6 A more direct approach to convert the advantage was required. In other words, White's advantage is dynamic despite the impression of being static. This an important position for the reader to study. Usually, a pass pawn in considered a static advantage and you can apply the worn out statement "do not hurry". As Gao demonstrates, time was important and the prophylactic g3 wasted a valuable move. 25...Rb8 26.Qc6 Qf6 27.b7 Kg7 28.Rb1]

25...Qa4 26.c4 Re2= [Black activates his rook and has compensation for the pawn (a rook on the seventh/ second rank is worth a pawn)]

27.b6 Qb4 28.b7 Re7 29.Qxd6 Rxb7 30.Qd8+

1/2-1/2



(5) Brejesh,Chakrabarti (2325) - Theodore,Slade (2173) [A07]
21st Turkey Bowl 2023 lichess.org (4),
12.11.2023
[Ararat,Miguel]

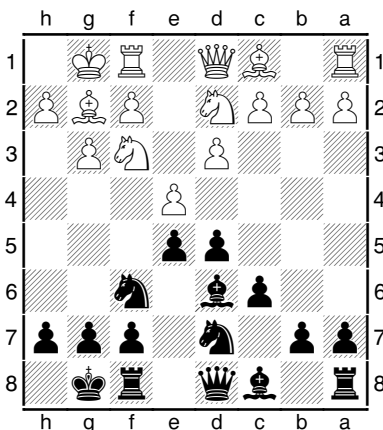
1.Nf3 d5 2.g3 Nd7 [a reliable method to neutralize the Nf3/g3 set up.]

3.Bg2 [White can play with 3.d4 or 3.c4 as in the games below.]

[3.d4 Magnus is unable to break Hao's solid formation with Nb6 setting up a strong control of the light squares. 3...Nb6 4.b3 Bf5 5.Nh4 e6 6.Nxf5 exf5 7.Qd3 g6 8.Bg2 Nf6 9.0-0 Be7 1/2-1/2 (47) Carlsen,M (2864)-Wang,H (2744) Stavanger 2022; 3.c4 dxc4 Caruana will use the capture of the pawn on c4 to play b5 with tempo and play Bb7 equalizing the game. 4.Qa4 a6 5.Qxc4 b5 6.Qc2 Bb7 In the upcoming 30 moves, the game will be even until Caruana took an advantage near move 40 and converted it into a victory at move 65. 7.Bg2 Ngf6 8.0-0 e6 9.d3 Be7 10.a4 c5 11.Nc3 Qb6 12.axb5 axb5 13.Rxa8+ Bxa8 14.Bg5 0-0 0-1 (66) Artemiev,V (2731)-Caruana,F (2822) Wijk aan Zee 2020]

3...e5 4.d3 [4.0-0 Bd6 5.d3 c6 6.e4 Ngf6 7.Nc3 0-0 8.Nh4 1/2- (26) 1/2 (26) Salem,A (2672)-Xiong,J (2691) Biel 2019]

4...Ngf6 5.0-0 Bd6 6.Nbd2 0-0 7.e4 dxe4

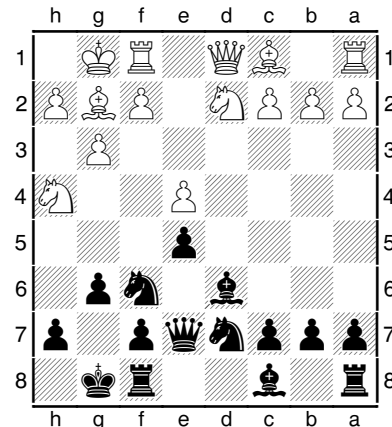


[7...c6 [#] is also a solid option taking the game to the Caro Kan defense (see Seirawan's game), but black can also use c6 early in the opening as in Korobov's game. Korobov is a well know theoretician and second of many top players so his choice can not be underestimated. 8.Qe2 (8.exd5 cxd5 9.b3 h6 10.Bb2 Re8 11.Re1 Rb8 12.d4 e4 13.Ne5 Nxe5 14.dxe5 Bg4 1/2-1/2 (57)

Rechlis,G (2506)-Korobov,A (2687) Netanya 2019) 8...Re8 9.Rd1 a5 10.Nf1 Nf8 11.c3 Ng6 12.h4 h6 13.N3h2 Be6 14.Qf3 Bc5 0-1 (61) Morozevich,A (2630)-Seirawan,Y (2625) Amsterdam 1995]

8.dxe4 Qe7 [8...Nc5 is a way to put pressure on the e4 pawn as to balance out the White knight on f5. 9.Nh4 a5 10.Nf5=]

9.Nh4 g6 [#] The game take own his own path and the players start expanding opening theory.]



10.Nc4 Bc5 11.Bg5 Rd8 12.Qf3 Kg7 13.Qe2 h6 14.Bd2 Nb6 15.Ne3 Be6 [15...a5 16.Rfd1 Be6]

16.Rfd1 Rd7 [16...a5 17.c3 a4]

17.c3?! [As in Caruana's game above White makes a mistake in an equal position. Black can capture on e3 and White has limited options because the pawn on a2 is under attack by the Black bishop on e6.]

17...Rad8 [17...Bxe3 The Black pieces have a lot of dynamic potential and this exchange release it. 18.Bxe3 (18.Qxe3 g5 A common move in current chess praxis where the concrete approach to the game prevails. 19.Nf5+ Bxf5 20.exf5 Nc4 21.Qe2 Nxb2 An illustrative continuation in which White goes pawn hunting. 22.Rab1 Nd3 23.Rxb7 Rad8 24.Rxa7 Nb2 wins material.) 18...Rxd1+ 19.Qxd1 Nc4]

18.b4 Bxe3 19.Bxe3 Bc4 [wrong piece.]

[19...Nc4 It seems that the knight is the best piece to use the c4 outpost at the same time than the bishop on e6 guards the h3-c8 diagonal. 20.Bc5 Qe8 21.Rxd7 Qxd7]

20.Qc2 Rxd1+ 21.Rxd1 Rxd1+ 22.Qxd1 Qd6= 23.Qc1 [23.Qxd6?! Gives Black a good endgame to press for the win thanks to the d6 pawn and piece activity. 23...cxd6 24.a3 Bd3 25.f3 d5]

23...h5 24.Bc5 Qd3 25.Nf5+ Kg8 26.h3 Nbd7 27.Be7

1/2-1/2

Julio Becerra – Mikhail Zlotnikov

[B07]

Round 5: Julio Becerra – Mikhail Zlotnikov

lichess.org, 12.11.2023

[Ararat,Miguel]

1.e4 d6 2.d4 Nf6 3.Nc3 c6 4.f4 Qa5 [Black pins the knight on c3 and threatens to capture the e4 pawn.]

5.Bd3 e5 6.Nf3 Bg4 [#] White pins the knight on f3 and can develop the knight on b8 without blocking his light square bishop. Black's play is logical, yet needs to choose between taking on f3 or keep the bishop.]

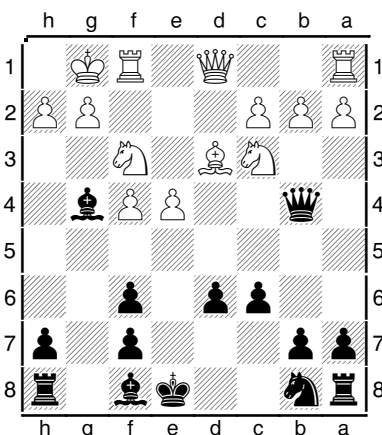
7.Be3 exd4 [This move can be considered premature because Black can wait to "surrender the center" after his pieces are out and no more constructive moves are possible. For example, the game Leko – Adams quoted below show the English player resolving the central tension later in the game with a positive outcome.]

[7...Nbd7 8.0-0 Be7 9.Qd2 Bd8 10.Kh1 Bxf3 11.Rxf3 0-0 12.a3 exd4 13.Bxd4+- Bb6 14.Bf2? Bxf2= 0-1 (38) Leko,P (2630)-Adams,M (2685) Cap d'Agde 1996]

8.Bxd4 Qb4 [An idea to simplify the game used by the creator of this defense, Pribyl.]

9.Bxf6 [9.a3 Qxd4 10.Nxd4 Bxd1= 11.Rxd1 1/2-1/2 (32) Gurevich,V (2435)-Pribyl,M (2315) Belgorod 1991; 9.Be2+- White scores heavily. I quote Dorfmann's game because he gets the draw after White blunders in a complex Queen endgame. So if the reader is curious about this game let's fire up your database! 9...Nxe4 10.0-0 d5 11.Nxe4 dxe4 12.c3 Qe7 13.Ne5 1/2-1/2 (78) Kindermann,S (2560)-Dorfman,J (2595) Debrecen 1990]

9...gxf6 10.0-0= [#] A key point to select this game is Zlotnikov's opening strategy. It is difficult to play against Becerra. Yet the IM played a borderline sound opening against GM level opposition and got a dynamic equality in ten moves.]



[10.Rb1 Bh6 11.g3 Nd7 12.0-0±]

10...Nd7 11.Qe1 Bxf3 [11...0-0-0 12.Kh1 Nc5 13.a3 Qxb2 14.Rb1 Qxa3 15.Ra1 Qb4 16.Rxa7 and now the trade of the bishop on f3. 16...Bxf3 17.Rxf3 f5 with chances for both sides in this thematic opposite side castle middlegame.]

12.Rxf3 0-0-0 [Black sharpens the game after 0-0-0.]

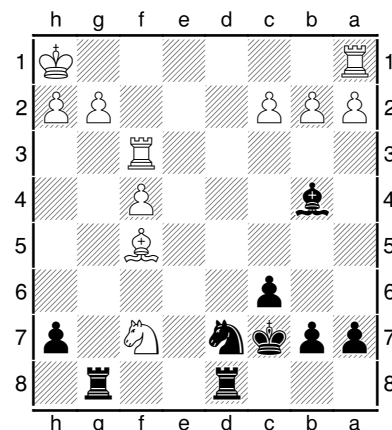
13.Kh1 f5?! [A natural move that opens up the h8-a1 diagonal and attacks the center. Yet a mistake as Becerra uses f5 to play e5 activating his light square bishop.]

14.e5 dxe5 15.Bxf5 e4 [15...exf4 16.Rd3 Bd6 17.Ne4+-]

16.Nxe4 Kc7 17.Qxb4 [One of my reasons for choosing this game to annotate is because of this queen exchange. In sharp opposite-side castling, it is possible to win the game without keeping queens on the board. The approach taken by amateur players is to keep attacking with queens on the board and give their opponents a chance to come back with a tactical shot. When trying to convert a decisive advantage in a game, professionals are more practical than amateurs.]


17...Bxb4 18.Ng5 Rhg8 [18...Rdf8 19.Nxh7]

19.Nxf7 [#] [The game is over as Black has not counter play to outweigh his material deficit. Nonetheless, the remaining moves are an illustration of how to efficiently convert a material advantage.]



19...Rdf8 20.Bxd7 Kxd7 21.Ne5+ Kc7 22.Nd3 Bd6 23.Re1 Rg7 24.g3 h5 25.h4 Rf5 26.Re4 Re7 27.Rxe7+ Bxe7 28.Re3 Bd6 29.Kg2 a5 30.Kf3 Rf8 31.Re6 Kc8

1-0



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FLORIDA'S TOP PLAYERS
("Top 100" Current Player Lists)

Name	Age	Rating
Ngo, Bach	15	2446
Gao, Marvin	15	2318
Chakrabarti, Brejesh	13	2314
De La Colina, Nicolas	18	2310
Hernandez, Ronald	16	2220
Ligotti, John Joseph	17	2219
Shukla, Aniket	15	2201
Stone, Vincent William	18	2189
Wu, William	15	2174
Bynum, Jacorey	16	2135
Overlingas, Akeras	11	2131
Gospodinov, Antony	17	2120
Marian, Aaron	13	2110
Sattaru, Sritej Sai	14	2098
Nair, Advait	15	2097
Yang, Maxwell Z	11	2086
Shen, Jason(Haohan)	17	2084
Guan, Michael Xukun	15	2084
Pothuri, Abhiram Sai	14	2078
Fetlyayev, Aleks	16	2069
Jiang, Rui	16	2057
Patel, Arav	15	2057
Yao, Jerry	15	2032
Amaya, Brayan Angel	18	2025
Farragut, Cannon	13	2015
Sahai, Neel	16	2009
Suresh, Akshat	15	2004
Ziegler, Nate	14	2001
Lang, Jayden	15	1996
Mishra, Om	13	1996
Kurbanov, Abror	18	1987
Mulay, Vivan Prakash	9	1955
Jani, Aakash	9	1887
Roy, Ayush	12	1876
Sha, Yi	8	1869
Jagan, Aashish	11	1848
Ratliff, Ryan	10	1804
Li, Sophie	10	1788
Datta, Riyaan	11	1765
Sha, Rui	10	1744
Wu, Winston	9	1655
Chen, Celine	8	1645
Kumar, Ishir	10	1607
Brovman, Daniel	10	1603
Alexander, Damian	9	1585
Yang, Grace Siqi	10	1560
Thomas, Henry	10	1547
Saha, Tanisha	9	1459
McDonald, James	9	1420
Tal, Daniel	8	1392
Tadros, Nicholas	7	1080
Holcomb, Mihai	7	971
Lewis, Josephine	7	959



GIRLS

Wu, Alice	15	1921
Huang, Jolie	14	1909
Yerrajennu, Sisira S	16	1831
Li, Sophie	10	1788
Warekar, Aarna Nitin	13	1683
Chile Paz, Sabrina	15	1645
Chen, Celine	8	1645
Ungureanu, Elena Anastasia	13	1605
Min, Chloe	17	1570
Yang, Grace Siqi	10	1560
Behura, Maya	16	1523
Yisrael, Shalam	18	1498
Saha, Tanisha	9	1459
Ciupu, Hannah	18	1442
Semenov, Tiana	15	1425
Venkat, Varshini	15	1368
Neralla, Srikruthi	15	1358
Solik, Alison Frances	18	1336
Donepudi, Veronica	13	1299

SENIORS (65+)

DOUG R MCCLINTOCK	69	2288
PAUL H FIELDS	66	2264
RASHID ZIATDINOV	70	2233
CONSTANTINE XANTHOS	76	2200
A.J. GOLDSBY	65	2200

WOMEN (CURRENT MEMBERS ACTIVE)

WGM CARISSA SHIWEN YIP	2498
WGM YANIRA VIGOA	
APECHECHE	2297
WFM BAHAR HALLAYEVA	2295
TIANHAO XUE	2209
LIKA KOBESHAVIDZE	2166
SHAMA YISRAEL	2157
WFM AMELIA HERNANDEZ	2073
WFM JESSICA REGAM	2055
MARIJA MOZLIN	2022

TOP BLITZ

GM Fabiano Caruana	2674
GM Julio Becerra	2533
Daniel Fernandez	2500

TOP QC

GM Fabiano Caruana	2674
GM Julio Becerra	2544
Renier Gonzalez	2513

CORRESPONDENCE

KEITH RODRIQUEZ	2365
BORIS RATNER	2282
PAUL B OTT	2205
HUGH WHELAN	2095
LINDA DECHAIINE	1564

OVERALL ACTIVE (1/2024)

GM FABIANO CARUANA	2879
IM ARNALDO JESUS FERNAN- DEZ DE LA VARA MULET	2531
GM DANIEL FERNANDEZ	2500
WGM CARISSA SHIWEN YIP	2498
GM JULIO J BECERRA	2497
GM NIKOLA MITKOV	2463
IM NIKHIL KUMAR	2442
IM SAUDIN ROBOVIC	2403
RAGHAV VENKAT	2389
IM YUNIER LEYVA RIVERA	2378
FM FERNANDO LARRUA	2367
IM AUGUSTO CESAR CAMPOS	2366
FM BREJESH CHAKRABARTI	2318
FM COREY BRYAN ACOR	2317
CM MARVIN GAO	2317
NICOLAS ALEJANDRO DE LA COLINA	2315
FM DALTON PERRINE	2308
GILNER SANTIESTEBAN	2299
WGM YANIRA VIGOA	2297
APECHECHE	2297
WFM BAHAR HALLAYEVA	2295
FM MR. NOEL HERNANDEZ MARQUIS	2291
NICKOLAS ARTHUR MOORE	2287
SCOTT RAMER	2280
FM ARNALDO FERRAGUT	2273
FM JEAN MARCO CRUZ	2273
NM THEO SLADE	2262
YAN MIELIER	2261
NM BRYAN TILLIS	2250
PEDRO HERNANDEZ-PEREZ	2250
ROBERT YORISAN RAMIREZ	2243
FM JONATHAN DAVID SARFATI	2237
JOHN JOSEPH LIGOTTI	2235
RYAN EDWARD HAMLEY	2234
GM RASHID ZIATDINOV	2233
FM ROBERTO SALGADO	2233
MEL GOSS	2231
TODD BRYANT	2228
CM ANTONIO ARENCIBIA	2220
RONALD HERNANDEZ	2220
CARLOS GASTON ANDRETTA	2217
FM NELSON GONZALEZ RABA- GO	2210

North West Regional Report

Coach Britt and Logic Lab: Another Gainesville Success Story.
by Kevin Pryor



Ryerson with his three Women's Candidate Master Students.

As of the last census, Gainesville, Florida, is bigger than what most would call a small town at 133,000 residents. However, its impact on American youth chess has been remarkable. There is a rich history of scholastic chess culture here, and Britt Ryerson is not only a product of it but a leader who keeps it going.

Britt grew up in Gainesville when Coach George Pyne was the driving force for youth chess in the city. Britt was one of his best students and earned the National Master title in 2016 with a peak rating of 2248. He started coaching kids in high school and college through the Parks Summer Programs and began private coaching in 2008. Within just two years, the team and national championships started to roll in, and he has had one or the other almost every year of the last 16 years.

I joined him at his afterschool math tutoring business, Logic Lab, where dozens of kids learn and work



Two National Championship trophies among many.

for hours after school. His students come from schools all around Gainesville, and some are currently the best in the nation.

Chess time is secondary to school being the main thing. Still, his method strongly focuses on calculation and visualization of over-the-board tactics, endgames, and positional analysis. His students are fully engaged and doing fantastic work. They show him calculations on paper and he can run the variations in his own head to tell them if they are correct, or my favorite, "go deeper."

The result? Since he started in 2010, Coach Britt has an incredible list of thirty-eight awards or placements. Among those accomplishments are national champion winners, national team championships, FIDE Youth Cadet placements, Pan-American section winners, National Tournament of State Champions representatives and dozens of Florida State championships for both team and individuals. When we say there must be something in the water in little Gainesville, now you know why.



National placing Williams Elementary team.



National placing Buchholz High School team.

North East Regional Report

2023 US CHESS GRADE NATIONALS NORTHEAST FLORIDA EDITION

By Ray Ratliff NE RVP



NE Florida was well represented at the 2023 US Chess Grade Nationals in Orlando, FL. Familiar faces were there to compete, support one another and to have a great time. We even got a group photo with GM Daniel Naroditsky!

Here are the Northeast FL players that were able to climb to the tops of their sections. Congratulations to everyone!



Ryan Ratliff
4th Grade
2nd Place overall



Vincent Hubacheck
8th Grade
1st Place (800-1099)



Advait Nair 9th Grade 4th
Place overall / 7th Place K-12
Blitz/ 3rd Place Bughouse



Gokul Selvakumar
11th Grade
2nd Place (U1000)



Team
Players L to R—Arjun Singh, Aanya Kumar, and Bavi Whale,
Julia Landon College Prep
10th Place in the Nation (Editor's note— JLCP was only 1 point
out of 7th place.)

(Also, Coach & Team Sponsor, Mr. Keith Smith on the left and
JLCP Principal Ryan, Casey on the right.. Not pictured— Coach
George Foote and team member **Aadit Kumar**)

Central Region Report

By NM Andrew Rea, Central RVP

As noted in our Alex Zelner article, we had a wonderful tournament the first weekend of January, the Winter Open, in Orlando- 200+ players! Thanks to Steve Vigil for his article about this event! This was not the biggest event in the past few months though- that would be the National K-12 Grade Championships, also in Orlando, 2400+ players! Nearly half from Florida, bodes well for Florida chess! As can be observed from the crosstables, our Florida players were not just looking for participation medals. Of course not all succeeded, most assuredly not due to lack of effort! Just missing in Grade 12 was Juan Pablo Lyon Jr, tied for 2nd with a hefty score of 6.0 (all sections, 7 rounds)!

Perhaps he was in the wrong section?! A tie for 1st in Grade 10, Bach Ngo and Marvin Gao, also at 6.0! Well played!! Grade 9, not quite as lofty, though clearly most of us would be glad to score 5.5/7 as attained by Sritej Sai Satteru and Advait Nair, tying for 4th! A near miss in Grade 8, as Brejesh Chakrabarti scored 6.0, a tie for 2nd- and another run for the title can be noted in Grade 4, as young Ryan Ratliff also hit hard with 6.0... and also tied for 2nd! Winning tournaments is never easy, its hard to keep all the crabs from escaping the bucket!

Also scoring well are two players in Grade 3, as Aakash Jani and Celine Chen tie for second at 6.0! Lets also note that we do have a winner in the Friends And Family section! Jackie Chu scored some 4.0 out of 5, quite nice to win that group, particularly as she was not the highest rated of those 35 players! While this was the largest tournament in Central Florida, it is hardly alone- many thanks to our players, TDs, and organizers in Volusia County, Brevard County, Orange County, among others!

To be certain, our players and organizers are not resting on their laurels- US Amateur Team South late February at the Villages! Daytona Beach continues to host events- as does West Melbourne. Many thanks to Kevin Pryor as he helps to coordinate scholastic chess in Orange County! Why yes, back to Orlando, the Florida Scholastic Championship, March 10-11. Details of many of these tournaments can be found on chessregister.com! Not posted there, but also heading to Orlando, will be the Southern Class Championship, March 17-18- info on that can be found on the Continental Chess Association website, Chess continues to thrive in Florida, to include Central Florida!



South Region Report

With permission from the FB post of NM Theo Slade (12/13/23)

I'm saddened to hear of the passing of Connor Hannah.

No one really comes up to me at chess tournaments, but two months ago, he did and started talking to me. I had seen him around and he was very nice and complimentary so we had lunch together. We talked about a lot of things. He told me to play the Catalan like Carlsen did in his World Championship Match against Nepomniachtchi in 2021 because, "I bet everyone would have forgotten that by now!" He told me about when he was born and his health issues. He went through a lot in his short life, but you could see very quickly his big spirit and it was really impressive how he didn't let his health affect him.

He seemed to imply he would be OK and that's what I thought. He told me he was a personal trainer and a life coach and he gave me lots of tips to improve my body and my life. He messaged me a lot, but I didn't message him back much. I noticed he came to watch my games quite a bit and we last saw each other after the Turkey Bowl last month. He had just won his section with four wins out of five, but I had lost my last round so I was in no mood to chat. I was looking forward to seeing him again at my next tournament, which is in the same hotel as where we first met, but now I won't see him again. I wish I had the chance to say goodbye and I wish I had spoken to him more when I had the chance.

Probably what says the most is that I feel compelled to write something even though we knew each other for such a short time.



Connor Hannah—2023 Turkey Bowl

West Regional Report

By Jen Ring via Timotey Gospodinov, West RVP



Here in West Florida, chess has never been more popular than it is now. We have **eight official chess clubs** as well as a few other clubs that meet at various locations. Most of the tournaments are held in three main cities: Tampa, Sarasota, and Saint Petersburg. The chess tournaments in Tampa are organized by Corey Acor and Krista Alton. Check Corey's website, <https://www.chasingcheckmate.com/>, for more information about his tournament. Usually, he has a tournament every third Sunday of the month. Krista Alton's website is <https://www.alton4chess.com/>.

Nicholas Lewis is the owner of the Manasota Chess Club in Sarasota. He organizes Swiss, Quad, and Blitz tournaments. His website is <https://www.manasotachess.org/>.

The majority of chess events and tournaments are held in Saint Petersburg, as is customary. The Saint Petersburg Chess Club continues to be open four days

per week and also organizes at least three tournaments per month. Every year, December is the most exciting month for the Saint Petersburg Chess Club players because two different championships are held: Adult Club Championship and Scholastic Club Championship. This year, the **Florida State Senior Championship** will be held for the first time at the Saint Petersburg Chess Club from 4/27 to 4/28.

I want to congratulate Corey Acor, who is the new 2023 Saint Petersburg Club Champion, and Alexis Donnersmarck, who is the 2023 Scholastic Club Champion. Their names will stay on the club wall forever. Grandmaster Vladimir Georgiev, who also lives in West Florida, is very connected to the club. In January, he was a special guest at one of our tournaments, and he also played for the first time at our club. In February, we will have a Simul with him, and he will play against 30 players at the same time. You can visit our website for more information about chess in Saint Petersburg: <https://saintpetersburgchessclub.com/>.



Books Reviews— Endgame Resources

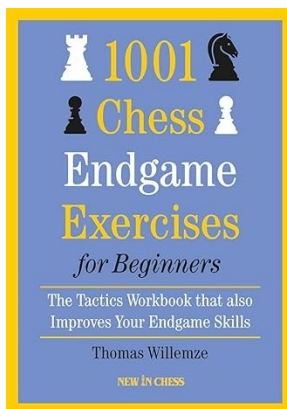
by Miguel Ararat



The main purpose of this review is to give the reader a range of chess resources to improve their endgame play. The books are recommended based on the skill level. Why does the amateur player need to work on endgames? The second world chess champion, Capablanca, stated that studying endgames gives amateurs a seed to understand chess better and develop from a solid foundation. Capablanca's advice is timeless and has proved its value to several generations of chess players. Today, there has been an increase in interest in the endgame as the 'hunting ground' in chess. Before we dive into the reviews let's see how this rekindled interest in studying endgames happened.

In the 90's, Garry Kasparov, the thirteenth World Chess Champion, started a movement among elite players to win chess games by superior opening preparation. Amateur players copied the professional chess players in their effort to beat their peers in the opening. Consequently, amateur players expend a lot of energy, time, and resources to stay current with the latest opening theory. This concentrated effort on openings leads to neglect of other areas of chess development, such as endgames.

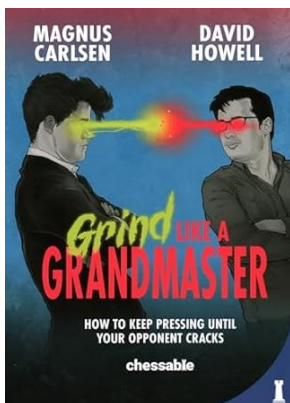
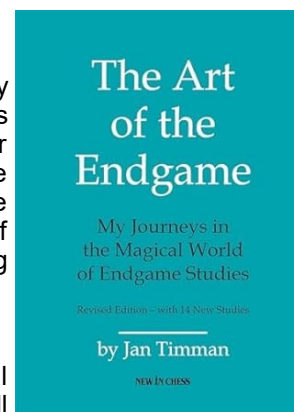
Thankfully, Magnus Carlsen, former World Chess Champion, raised chess endgames to new heights by defeating super GMs from equal or slightly better positions. Carlsen has unmatched endgame mastery in technical positions. Carlsen's wins from equal positions or the 'Grind' are his trademark. Carlsen prefers openings such as the London System (among other options) that place all the weight of the fight in the middle or endgame. Carlsen's openings are now copied by many amateur players. Playing the opening a la Carlsen has a positive impact on amateur players, as it encourages and motivates them to work on their endgame skills.



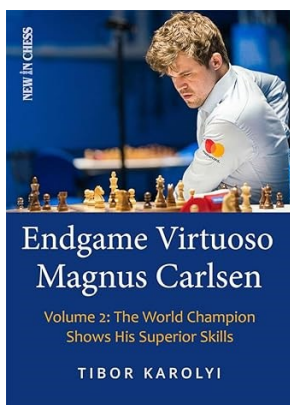
1001 Chess Endgames Exercises by IM Thomas Willemze is a tactical workbook built around a progressive three-step plan. The first step is composed of basic checkmate tactics in one move followed by winning material in two moves. Step two is more challenging than the prior one and involves checkmates in two moves and winning material in three moves. The final portion of the book concentrates on puzzles that involve protecting your king and pieces. **1001 Chess Endgames Exercises** is a good resource for chess improvement for players in the 100 to 1100 USCF rating range.

The revised edition of the 2011 book, **The Art of The Endgame** by GM Jan Timman, has been released. An already rich collection was enhanced by the author's addition of fourteen new studies. The author explains his fascination with endgame studies and the technique behind his creative process. Timman's work resulted in an exquisite collection of endgame studies that can be enjoyed by chess players of

all levels. My students over 1700 USCF benefit from **The Art of The Endgame** by improving their calculations, creativity, and breaking up the monotony of technical chess study.

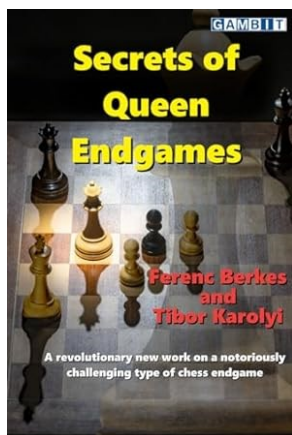
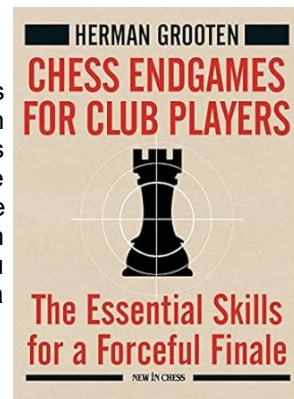


Grind Like a Grandmaster by Magnus Carlsen and GM David Howell is a much-awaited book for the chess community. Carlsen and Howell aid the reader in comprehending the art of grinding their opponents, just like the former World Chess Champion does. In this book, the former World Champion explains the technique behind his trade mark in the world of chess, winning from equal or slightly better positions. The authors employ a question and answer format in the book to make the material accessible to beginners. Although it has a lot of how-to information, the main value of this book lies in its format and how it inspires amateur players. If a player wants to imitate Carlsen, mastering the endgame is the first step. **Grind Like a Grandmaster** is a resource that aims to encourage players of all levels to examine endgames and collect and capitalize on small advantages to achieve success in chess.



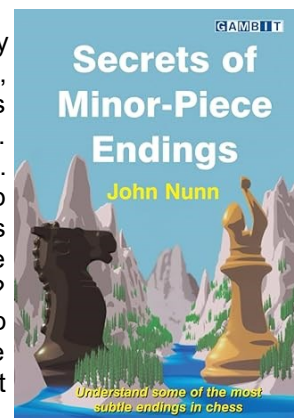
Endgame Virtuoso Magnus Carlsen Vol 2 by Tibor Karolyi is the sequel to his previous book of the same title. I reviewed volume 1 of this series in the Autumn issue of FloridaChess, (FloridaChess [2018-10 Fall.pdf](#)). This book takes a look at Carlsen's best endgames after 2018. The book is filled with both technical and creative content by Carlsen. An important feature of this book is that Karolyi breaks with the myth that blitz games are not worth analyzing deeply because of time constraints. The author shows how even in five-minute online games or in person, Carlsen excels in endgame play. This book is a great complement to Grind Like a Grandmaster because it gives us access to more endgames played by Carlsen with excellent annotations. The annotations are suitable for both amateur players and master level players. The first group can profit from the author explanations of different endgames positions the pros and cons and the ways to exploit or defend a particular endgame. More advance players will benefit from working on the diagrams and compare their analysis with the author's annotations.

IM Herman Grooten has written **Chess Endgames for Club Players** that is targeted towards amateur players. The book is well-structured and the examples are well chosen. The main values of Chess Endgames for Club Players are the sections on how to analyze your games (page 293) and the sections on schematic thinking and practical endgame analysis. The presentation of material in **Chess Endgames for Club Players** is similar to that of more advanced endgame books in terms of rigor. In my opinion, the sections on rook and queen endgames will be beneficial to players in the expert category. In summary, Grooten teaches you endgames and how to think and analyze them. If the author published a workbook sequel as a companion to this book, it would be fantastic.



Secrets of Queen Endgames by GM Ferenc Berkes and IM Tibor Karolyi fills a need in chess literature. Queen endgames have been discussed in various books until now, but they have never been published as stand-alone book. The authors explain in detail the tools to play queen endgames and all the relevant elements surrounding them. The authors created a unique book that gives an in-depth explanation of queen endgames, in contrast to the informatory style annotations. The reader will be able to maximize their time on the clock with the help of **Secrets of Queen Endgames**. From my own experience, players in the 1400s and up can benefit from working on this book. Lower-rated players can benefit from working on the first three chapters of the book (approximately 100 pages), which is still worth paying for the whole book.

Secrets of Minor-Piece Endings, is the newly released edition of John Nunn's 1995 highly acclaimed book. The author is able to combine his talents as a strong over-the-board player, chess composer, and mathematician in a unique way. The scholarship, precision of his examples, and completeness of his analysis are the distinctive features of Nunn's books. Nunn's work is important because it ties in with practical application to over-the-board chess. For example, in his book Nunn provides reciprocal zugzwang table (page 159) for the bishop vs bishop and pawn endgame, corrects Averbakh's (page 78) drawing zone for the Bishop vs Knight and rook pawn and discover a flaw in a 1990 bishop vs bishop and pawn study (page 147). Nunn's position 370 is the icing on the cake, is this the most challenging chess puzzle? With John Nunn's expert guidance, **Secrets of Minor Piece Endings** is a chance to dive deep into the realm of minor piece endings. The ideal audience for this book will be players who are in the 1600s and up, although lower-rated players who enjoy endgames may also find it enjoyable.



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Date	Event	Location	Contact
Mar. 8-10	Florida State Scholastic Championship	Orlando FL	FCA
April 27-28	Florida State Senior Championship	Saint Petersburg, FL	SPCC
May 3-5	29th Space Coast Open	Cape Canaveral, FL	SCCF
May 31- June 2	11th Summer Solstice Open	Boca Raton Chess Club	BRCC

*Additional Tournament info at FloridaChess.org and ChessRegister.com

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2024 Florida State Scholastic Championship!!!

March 8, 9, 10 at the Wyndham Orlando Resort International Drive

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Full Details at FloridaChess.org

