



Sam and Eve at Grade Nationals

Sam Schmakel captured first place in the Tenth Grade section of the 2011 National K-12 Championships, while Eve Zhurbinskiy trailed by a point, to finish tied for Second-Third place. We hear from both this month, and each contributed an interesting annotated game.

Everyman Quiz of the Month

Each month Everyman Chess sponsors our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book to three respondents with correct answers. This month, winners of our quiz will receive the book *Simple Chess*, by John Emms.

We will accept all contest answers for *two weeks* following the appearance of this column, then randomly select our three winners from this group. In order to meet the two-week deadline, please e-mail your responses to me by January 25, 2012. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck!



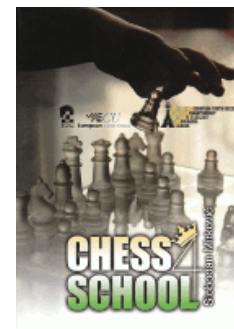
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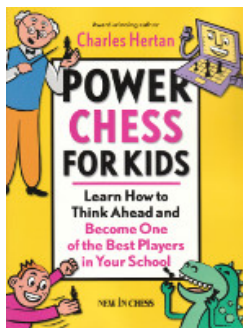
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Problem #1



[FEN "b3q1r1/3k1Np1/2nBp1Qp/1pP5/2p5/2P5/5PPP/R5K1 w - - 0 1"]

White to move.

Problem #2



[FEN "6k1/4brpp/r1p1pp1B/p3q3p/2P1N3/PP4Q1/2n3PP/3R1R1K w - - 0 1"]

White to move.



The 2011 National K-12 Championships ("Grade Nationals") took place in Dallas, about the same time that the World Youth Chess Championships were taking place in Brazil. As a result, some of the top players who might have attended the Grade Nationals were unable to participate. Nevertheless, nearly 1,200 youngsters played in Dallas, including a number of masters.

All the players are to be congratulated for participating, but here are the section winners:

- Twelfth Grade: Matthew Dahl
- Eleventh Grade: Christopher Heung
- Tenth Grade: Sam Schmakel
- Ninth Grade: Bryan Hu
- Eighth Grade: Mika Brattain
- Seventh Grade: Christopher Wu
- Sixth Grade: William Graif and Vignesh Panchanatham
- Fifth Grade: Christopher Chen
- Fourth Grade: Rayan Taghizadeh
- Third Grade: Marcus Miyasaka
- Second Grade: six-way tie among Christopher Shen, Daniel Levkov, Rohan Suryawanshi, Constantine Oskiper, Corwin Cheung and Luke Robitaille
- First Grade: Aryaman Bansal
- Kindergarten: Chinguun Bayaraa and Maurya Palusa
- Blitz K-12: Jason Altschuler
- Blitz K-6: Kiana Arab

In the Tenth Grade section, fifteen-year old Sam Schmakel, from Whitney Young High School in Chicago, yielded only a third-round draw to finish at 6½/7. The national master first touched a rating of 2200 in July 2011; following the Grade Nationals, he currently stands at 2246.



Sam Schmakel (second from left) with teammates Cristian Pena, C.J. Swan, and Mark Waechter

Sam was born and still lives in Chicago and began playing chess at age six. "We did not play chess in my family; in fact, we did not even have a chess set," Sam said. "My mom was running a bake sale to raise money for the pre-school program at our local YMCA. I was taken downstairs to play with some older kids and they were playing chess. I really liked the chess pieces and I memorized how they moved. When my mom was finished with the bake sale, I asked her for a chess set and we bought one on the way home. I have played chess every single day of my life since then.

"My very first chess coaches were Leonid Bondar and Tamara Golovey. Leonid and Tamara run the Kings and Queens chess club and they were teaching a Sunday chess camp near my grade school. Leonid and Tamara were chess trainers in Belarus and I still go to their camps in the summer. I met Dmitry Gurevich when I was six years old and he has been my main coach since then. Dmitry will help me analyze my games either in person or over the Internet. My high school, Whitney Young Magnet School, is close to

where Dmitry Gurevich lives. He walks over sometimes to train me and the rest of the team. NM William Aramil is the official trainer of our high school team, he has helped me for the past three years."

Sam appreciates the plethora of chess activity in his hometown. "I am very lucky to live in a major city like Chicago and have a lot of chess opportunities nearby. There are several organizations like the North Shore Chess Center, Kings and Queens, and school and library programs. Illinois has several national tournament directors like Glenn Panner, Tim Just and Wayne Clark who organize and direct tournaments."

It is clear that Sam didn't achieve master status without a remarkable work ethic. "I stay after school almost every day," he noted, "and go to chess club for two hours. I get home around 7:00 pm. eat, do homework and then study chess until about midnight. I probably spend five hours a day on chess, either playing, reading books or on the computer. If there is an interesting tournament, I will do that on the weekend."

Sam's work has paid off well. He has won multiple national championships now, and was invited to play this past season for the Chicago Blaze, the local entry in the U.S. Chess League.

"I got involved with the Chicago Blaze through my chess coach and friend, Grandmaster Dmitry Gurevich," he explained. "Dmitry brought up my name to the team owner, Sevan Muradian and the team manager, Daniel Parmet. Sevan Muradian owns the North Shore Chess Center in Skokie and it is only one mile from my house.

"The teams which participate in the United States Chess League must have a team average of 2400 or below. I gained 300 rating points in one year but the rules allowed the team to use my last year's rating of 1920, as long as they used the rest of the team player ratings from the same time period. The Chicago Blaze was able to field a team of three Grandmasters (among Yury Shulman, Josh Friedel, Mesgen Amanov or Dmitry Gurevich) if they used me on Board Four. The Chicago Blaze play all of their games at the North Shore Chess Center and the games are played on ICC over the Internet. I won all of my games in the regular season, lost one in the playoffs and was named to the second All-Star Team, for Board Four.

"My immediate goal in chess is to improve my game and get my rating over 2300 so that I will qualify to play in the World Youth next year in Slovenia. I would love to play and see that country."

The next major tournament for Sam is the High School Nationals in April. He also tries to play in the larger tournaments in the Chicago area, as well as major national events such as the U.S. Open and World Open.

In addition to his status as a chess master, Sam is also an accomplished musician. "I love music, and I will be traveling to Carnegie Hall in February to perform with the Wind Ensemble of Whitney Young," he said. "I have played the tuba for the last three years and am thinking of playing the bassoon."

Sam annotated the following game for our readers, from his final round victory at the Grade Nationals:

NM Schmakel, Sam (2218) – Zhang, Vincent (2148)
2011 National K–12 Championships, Dallas (7), 20.11.2011
Sicilian Defense [B42]

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 a6

The increasingly popular Kan variation, I think this is popular because of the low amount of theory.

5.Bd3 Nf6 6.0–0 Qc7 7.Qe2

The key to beating this opening is to be patient, and not overextend yourself,

you can see this strategy in this move and later moves.

7...d6 8.c4 Be7 9.Be3 0-0 10.Nc3 Nbd7 11.f4 b6 12.Rac1 Bb7 13.Bb1

I didn't want Nc5 to come with tempo, so I retreated my bishop immediately.

13...Rac8



[FEN "2r2rk1/1bqnbppp/pp1ppn2/8/2PNPP2/2N1B3/PP2Q1PP/1BR2RK1 w - - 0 14"]

14.g4!?

I felt Black was playing too slowly here, so I launched an immediate attack. Objectively, Black is fine here, but practically his position is difficult to play.

14...Nc5 15.Bf2 a5?!

I didn't feel this move was necessary, and I thought during the game that he should prefer a break in the center.

16.Bg3 Rfe8 17.g5 Nfd7 18.Qg4



[FEN "2r1r1k1/1bqnbppp/1p1pp3/p1n3P1/2PNPPQ1/2N3B1/PP5P/1BR2RK1 b - - 0 18"]

I liked my position here, and fortunately the player who was a half point behind me on board two was also not looking good. This meant that all I would need was a draw to win the tournament.

18...e5 19.Nf5 exf4 20.Nh6+ Kf8 21.Qxf4 f6 22.Qf5!?

Given the situation, this was the right choice. Objectively, this may not be best, but I saw I could either force a draw or enter a totally won position.

22...g6 23.Qh3 Kg7 24.Nb5



[FEN "2r1r3/1bqnb1kp/1p1p1ppN/pNn3P1/2P1P3/6BQ/PP5P/1BR2RK1 b - - 0 24"]

24...Qd8?

The losing move, maybe Black had a chance to survive after 24...Qb8.

25.Nf7!

Such a move is always fun to play over the board!

25...Kxf7 26.Qxh7+ Kf8 27.Nxd6

The rest is just a matter of time now.

27...Bxd6 28.Bxd6+ Re7 29.gxf6 Nxf6 30.Qh8+ 1-0



Eve Zhurbinskiy

"I've been to more nationals than I can count," said Eve Zhurbinskiy, another participant in the tenth Grade section of the 2011 National K-12 Championships. "In first grade I tied for third place and got fifth on tiebreak at the Elementary Nationals in the K-1 section, and in third grade I tied for second place and got tenth on tiebreak in the K-3 section at the Supernationals. Last year in Orlando I got seventh place in the ninth grade section. There was a six-way tie for first and had I won my last round, I would have gotten clear first, and had I drawn I would have tied for first, but I lost. I'm also proud of my result in the Greater New York Junior High Championship 2011, where I finished third, beating two masters in a row."

The fifteen-year old also has international experience, having competed in the World Youth Chess Championships in both 2005 and 2006. In addition, she qualified for the World Youth in 2004 and in 2011, but did not play in the event those years.

Eve also was honored with an appearance on the cover of the May 2008 issue of *Chess Life* magazine.

Born in New York City, she now lives across the river in Scotch Plains, New Jersey. Taught how to play chess at age five, she participated in her first tournament at age six. Her first and only coach is her father, Ilya, a former coach in the Soviet Union. "He taught me pretty much everything I know

about chess," Eve explained.

She is only a few minutes away from the local Westfield Chess Club, and about forty-five minutes from the famous Marshall Chess Club in Manhattan. Despite her young age, she teaches other students several times per week, but laments her lack of sufficient study time for chess.

"For the last year or so I haven't been practicing that much," she said, "just some tactics before tournaments. I was massively unprepared for Nationals. I came there thinking it would be a miracle if I got in the top ten, so I was pleasantly surprised and insanely lucky to tie for second. I need to start practicing more often and get my rating up as well as improve as a player. My ultimate goal would be to go to college on a chess scholarship."

What does Eve do when not involved with chess or schoolwork? "I don't participate in any other 'organized' activity," she acknowledged, "but I do have a huge love of film and film history, so I spend a rather large chunk of my time watching movies and learning about how they are made."

After four rounds of the Grade Nationals, Eve had a score of 2½/4, but improved her position by winning her next game. For Round Six, however, she was paired with top seed Kevin Bu, rated nearly 300 points higher than herself. And she had the black pieces. Nevertheless, she pulled out the victory, and continued her streak by winning her final game as well. Here is that crucial sixth round game, annotated by Eve:

Bu, Kevin (2233) – Zhurbinskiy, Eve (1961)

2011 National K–12 Championships, Dallas (6), 20.11.2011
Queen's Gambit Declined [D52]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bg5 Nbd7 5.e3 c6 6.Nf3 Qa5 7.Nd2 Bb4 8.Qc2 0–0 9.Be2 Ne4



[FEN "r1b2rk1/pp1n1ppp/2p1p3/q2p2B1/1bPPn3/2N1P3/PPQNBPPP/R3K2R w KQ - 0 10"]

Here it was better to go 9...e5, followed by exd4 and Qb6.

10.Ndxe4

White should have gone 10.c5 to trap the black bishop and prevent Black from potentially going e5.

10...dxe4 11.Bh4 e5 12.0–0 exd4 13.exd4 Bxc3

Black should have gone g5 here followed by f5 to put pressure on the white bishop and kingside.

14.bxc3 g5

14...Re8 was better.

15.Bg3 f5 16.Bd6 Re8 17.f4

White should have gone 17.Rab1 to seize control of the semi-open b file and to prevent Black from going Qb6.

17...g4 18.h3 h5

18...gxh3 19.gxh3 Re6 20.c5 Rg6+ 21. Nf6 22.Qb3+ was better.

19.hxg4 hxg4 20.g3 c5

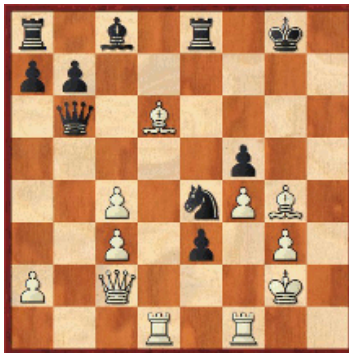


[FEN "r1b1r1k1/pp1n4/3B4/q1p2p2/2PPpPp1/2P3P1/P1Q1B3/R4RK1 w - - 0 21"]

21.Kg2

A big mistake. Before this move, White was better, but now the position is equal because Black can go Qb6 and potentially take White's bishop or go Qh6.

21...Qb6 22.dxc5 Nxc5 23.Rad1 e3 24.Bxg4 Ne4



[FEN "r1b1r1k1/pp6/1q1B4/5p2/2P1nPb1/2P1p1P1/P1Q3K1/3R1R2 w - - 0 25"]

25.Be5

The decisive blunder. White is now lost after Qg6, with the g4-bishop as well as the g3 pawn and a nasty attack hanging. White should have gone 25.Bh5 and after 25...Nxd6 26.Rxd6 Qxd6 27.Bxe8, the position is equal.

25...Qg6 26.Rh1

26.Rfe1 would have been better to avoid a potential Nf2 fork.

26...Rxe5 27.fxe5 Qxg4 28.Rh3 f4 29.Rd8+ Kg7 30.Rh7+ Kxh7 31.Qxe4+ Kg7 32.e6 Qxg3+ 33.Kh1 Qh4+ 34.Kg1 Qxd8 35.e7 Qd1+ 36.Kh2 Qe2+ 37.Kh1 Qf1+ 38.Kh2 Qh3+ 39.Kg1 Be6 40.Qd4+ Kg6 41.Qd8 Qg3+ 42.Kh1 Qh4+ 43.Kg1 Rxd8 0-1

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

Problem #1



[FEN "r5k1/3r1ppp/p2Nb1q1/B7/
P1P1nQ1b/1P5P/5PP1/R4RK1 b - - 0 1"]

Black to move.

Answer: 1...Bxf2+ 2.Rxf2 Nxf2 3.Kxf2 Rxd6 4.Qxd6 Qf6+ 5.Kg3 Qxa1 0-1.
From Steiner-Capablanca, Budapest 1929.

Problem #2



[FEN "r5rk/pppq4/4nNQB/4P3/
1b6/8/PP4PP/R5K1 w - - 0 1"]

White to move.

Answer: 1.Qh5, with a devastating discovered check to follow. From Steiner-Tartakower, Budapest 1929.

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