



## COLUMNISTS

## *Susan Polgar on Chess*

Susan Polgar



## *Breaking Through* by Susan Polgar

## Breaking Down the Social Stigma

The social stigma that chess is boring or that chess is for geeks is about to change! In the last few weeks I was involved in two special events designed to bring chess to a new level of popularity.

### **Chess Moves Cruise to the Caribbean**

During the week of January 14 – 21, 2006, I took part in the first ever Chess Moves Cruise along with my colleagues GM Joel Benjamin, GM Larry Christiansen, Paul Truong and approximately 90 other chess players from Canada, Ireland, Mexico and all across the United States.

Chess Moves is the brainchild of Mr. Neil Bauman, Captain and CEO of [Geek Cruises](#). The idea is to give chess enthusiasts a chance to spend a week learning from well-known chess celebrities while enjoying the best of what luxury cruises have to offer.



To be honest, I did not know what to expect, but I loved the concept when I was first approached by Mr. Bauman. I was very pleasantly surprised with the outcome of the Chess Moves Cruise. First of all, I met some of the most fantastic people who all share something in common: their love for chess!

I arrived in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on Friday, January 13, 2006. There was an optional get together that night at the Renaissance Hotel in Plantation, Florida (a suburb of Fort Lauderdale). Accompanying grandmaster Benjamin was his wife (she plays for the Irish Chess Olympiad Team) and his mother. Grandmaster Christiansen brought his wife (a participant in the upcoming 2006 US Championship in San Diego), his sister and brother among others, and I brought my two children (who are chess fanatics themselves).



At noon on Saturday, January 14, 2006, everyone was bussed to the beautiful MS Zuiderdam of Holland America Line. After a short check-in, we were on the magnificent cruise ship. My children immediately discovered the giant chess set and board on the Lido Deck and were soon playing a game with their two new best friends Sophia and Sara from Mexico City.



During the next 7 days, the attendees got to enjoy many exciting destinations such as St. Thomas (US Virgin Islands), Tortola (British Virgin Islands) and Nassau (Bahamas). While on board, they had a chance to attend countless chess classes, learning everything from openings, middlegames, endgames,

tactics and chess strategies, etc. In addition, many got to spend time in private sessions with the various instructors.

Wonderful friendships were built and everyone walked away with long-lasting memories of an incredible seven days. Each person was sorry that it had ended. The next cruise will be a special Alaskan Cruise in August. I can't wait!

### **The First Annual Susan Polgar National Open Championship for Girls Under 21**

This inaugural event took place January 27 – 29, 2006. More than 210 girls from 14 states came to the Bayfront Plaza Hotel in Corpus Christi, Texas to take part in three separate Susan Polgar National Championships:

- The Susan Polgar National Open Puzzle Solving Championship
- The Susan Polgar National Open Blitz Championship
- The Susan Polgar National Open Chess Championship

In addition, approximately 50 parents, coaches and siblings took part in the Texas Chess Shootout Championship. Local network TV and newspaper reporters attended on all three days and we also received tremendous radio coverage and promotions.

Upon check in each player received a “goodie” bag, which included a *free* one year Gold Membership to the World Chess Network (\$49 value) where they can enjoy Internet chess and lessons. In addition, each player also received a special commemorative name tag courtesy of the city of Corpus Christi.

The entire organizing committee worked very hard to create this special event and to make things affordable for the parents who support their children in chess. They negotiated low room rates including a full breakfast and free wireless Internet service. The early entry fees were only \$28 and the cost for meals was also extremely reasonable.





On Friday night, the event kicked off with my lecture and Q&A session for the players, parents and coaches. About 125 people were in attendance. Immediately following this was the puzzle solving championship and a 45-board simul.

The opening ceremony took place at 9 AM on Saturday. It began with the presentation of colors and the singing of the National Anthem by a local veteran's band. I officially welcomed all the attendees and Margaret Fratello then read a proclamation from Texas Governor Rick Perry.



After the reading, the band *Dr. Z and Sus Amigos* performed a live concert. The players got to request songs and a number of them joined me up front dancing and having a great time. Toward the end of the concert, the players got another treat. A group of young dancers performed various types of Mexican dances. Some of the dancers also took part in the chess tournament as well. Well, girls do want to have fun and chess does not have to be boring.

Round 1 took place shortly after 11 AM and in between rounds, the players could get their nails and hair done for free courtesy of the Cosmetology Dept. of Del Mar College. Below are the results of the top 5 finishers in each section of the championship:



**Open Section Championship:**

- 1 Estrada, Nelly: 6.0 Dell Laptop/Printer + Susan Polgar Digital Clock
- 2 Roy, Ananya: 5.0 \$200 in prizes + invitation to the SP Invitational
- 3 Ballom, Stephanie: 4.0 \$150 in prizes and goodies
- 4 Bailey, Victoria A: 4.0 \$100 in prizes and goodies
- 5 Ortiz, Roxana A: 4.0 \$50 in prizes and goodies



**6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade:**

- 1 Jamison, Courtney: 5½ Dell Laptop/Printer + invitation to SP Invitational
- 2 Mirchandani, Rita: 5.0 \$200 in prizes and goodies
- 3 Shokler, Melinda A: 5.0 \$150 in prizes and goodies
- 4 Chu, Helen: 4½ \$100 in prizes and goodies
- 5 Hung, Charlina: 4½ \$50 in prizes and goodies



**3rd – 5th grade:**

- 1 Qiu, Katherine 6.0 Dell Laptop/Printer + Digital Clock + invitation to SP Invitational
- 2 Xiang, Ellen: 5½ \$200 in prizes and goodies
- 3 Dai, Eileen: 5½ \$150 in prizes and goodies
- 4 Winston, Hailey AI: 5.0 \$100 in prizes and goodies
- 5 Foley, Sayaka: 5.0 \$50 in prizes and goodies



**K – 2nd grade:**

- 1 Xiang, Evan: 5½ Dell Laptop and Printer + invitation to SP Invitational
- 2 Zhu, Jessica: 5½ \$200 in prizes + invitation to SP Invitational
- 3 Jeppesen, Astrid: 5.0 \$150 in prizes and goodies
- 4 Dai, Colleen: 5.0 \$100 in prizes and goodies
- 5 Srinivasa, Sandhya: 5.0 \$50 in prizes and goodies

Nelly Estrada from the University of Texas in Brownsville won the overall Puzzle Solving Championship. She completed all 20 puzzles perfectly in just 5 minutes, while Rheanna English, a team member from the Susan Polgar South



Texas Chess Center, won the overall Blitz Championship with a perfect 7-0 score. For additional standings and a list of all sponsors and volunteers, please visit [www.SusanPolgar.blogspot.com](http://www.SusanPolgar.blogspot.com) or [www.SusanPolgarFoundation.org](http://www.SusanPolgarFoundation.org).



All in all, it was quite an experience for everyone involved. This was a dream come true for me because one of my goals is to provide a special opportunity for young female chess players to compete against each other in a fun and relaxing environment. Many special friendships were made and these young ladies will leave with long-lasting wonderful memories. They will also know that they are not the only girls who play chess. For once, they were the dominant group in a chess event.

We had nearly 40 sponsors for this year's event: Polgar Chess, Polgar Foundation, USCF Sales, Texas Tech University, International Chess Marketing, Chess on DVDs, House of Staunton, Geek Cruises, Excalibur Electronics, World Chess Hall of Fame, ChessBase, Viva Media, Mon Roi, The Susser Family, Del Mar College Cosmetology Dept., Imagine Digital Document Services, Gonzalez Distributing, Optimist Coastal Bend Chess Federation, Cingular of Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi Harley Davidson, Coastal Cardiology, The Lee Sang Family, Star Orthodontist and many more. Special thanks go to all of our sponsors and our entire staff, especially chief organizer Dan DeLeon and chief TDs Bob and Lucy James and Asst. Chief TD Susan Breeding, who volunteered their time to put together this magnificent and memorable event.



I hope this event will be even bigger next year and offer even more prizes. The next major all-girls event by the Susan Polgar Foundation will be the **Susan Polgar World Open Chess Championship for Girls under 21** which will take place alongside the National Open **June 16-18, 2006 in Las Vegas, Nevada**. For more information about this event, please visit the official tournament [website](#) or the Susan Polgar Foundation [website](#).

### **Corus Chess**

The annual Corus Chess Tournament in Wijk aan Zee, Holland just concluded. In group A, the reigning FIDE World Champion Veselin Topalov tied for first with former World Champion Vishy Anand. They each scored 9/13, a full 1½ points ahead of the field. With this result, Topalov solidified his 2800+ rating and Anand became the fourth player in history to break the 2800 mark.

In group B, the young Norwegian phenomenon Magnus Carlsen defeated IM Lahno in the last round to share first place with GM Motylev from Russia. Both of them will receive invitations to the A group next year. Turkish top grandmaster Suat Atalik easily won group C with the score of 10½/13.

Below is a nice game from the event:

***Aronian, Levon (2752) - Sokolov, Ivan (2689)***

Corus A group - Wijk aan Zee NED (Round 13), 01-29-2006 [D17]

**1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 dxc4 5.a4**

The most reputable move in this position. The idea is to prevent b7-b5.

**5...Bf5 6.Ne5**

6.e3 is the other popular choice.

**6...Nbd7**

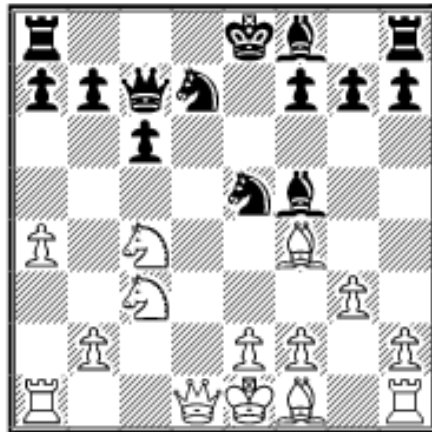


6...e6 7.f3 Bb4 8.e4 Bxe4 9.fxe4 Nxe4 10.Bd2 Qxd4 11.Nxe4 Qxe4+ 12.Qe2 Bxd2+ 13.Kxd2 Qd5+ 14.Kc2 leads to a wild but deeply analyzed position.

**7.Nxc4 Qc7 8.g3**

After three knight moves, it is time to develop the rest of the pieces.

**8...e5 9.dxe5 Nxe5 10.Bf4 Nfd7**



After 10...Rd8 11.Qc1 Bd6 12.Nxd6+ Qxd6 13.Bg2 White is slightly better because of the bishop pair. But now Black will be stuck in the pin along the h2-b8 diagonal for a while.

**11.Bg2 f6**

In several of the Alekhine - Euwe world championship match games in 1935, Black choose 11...Rd8 first and then 12.Qc1 f6.

**12.0-0 Nc5 13.Ne3 Bg6 14.b4 Ne6 15.Qb3**

A rare move order, White usually plays 15.b5 immediately.

**15...Bf7**

Now Black threatens a discovery, so White must move the queen again.

**16.Qb1 Nxf4 17.gxf4 Ng6**

Now White starts a series of sacrifices.

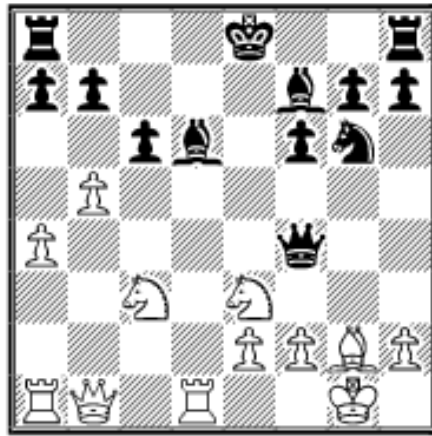
**18.b5 Qxf4**

After 18...Nxf4 Black would suffer as the king has difficulties reaching a safe haven. 19.bxc6 Nxc6 20.cxb7 Rb8 21.Ncd5 Qxb7 22.Qe4+ Kd8 (22...Be7? 23.Rab1) 23.Rad1.

**19.Rd1**

Black was planning on 19.bxc6 Bd6.

**19...Bd6**



Better was 19...Bc5 and if 20.bxc6 Bxe3 21.cxb7 Bxf2+ 22.Kh1 Rb8 23.Qb5+ Kf8.

**20.Rxd6 Qxd6 21.bxc6 0-0**

Finally Black castles, but it has a price! If 21...bxc6 22.Nf5 Qd7 23.Qb4 Bd5 24.Nd6+ and White has compensation.

**22.Nb5 Qc5 23.cxb7**

This is what White was hoping for – a far advanced passed pawn on b7.

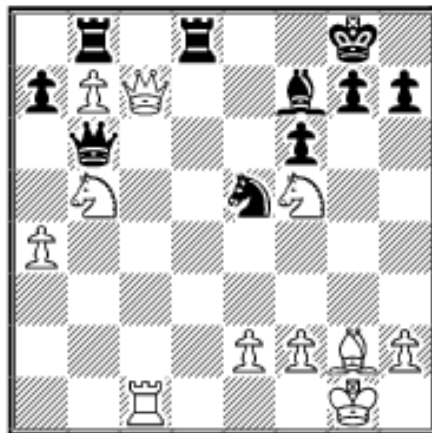
**23...Rab8 24.Qf5 Ne5 25.Qc2 Qb6 26.Qc7 Rfd8 (26...Qa6 27.Nd6) 27.Rc1**

White wants to trade queens, but only on his terms! With his last move White created a potential threat of Qxb8.

**27...Qa6 28.Nf5**

Now, finally all of the White pieces are in good positions, Black is in trouble.

**28...Qb6 (28...Qxa4 29.Ne7+ Kf8 30.Nc8)**



**29.Qxb8!**

A pretty sacrifice that wins a pawn.

**29...Rxb8 30.Rc8+ Qd8 31.Nxa7 Be8 32.Rxd8 Rxd8 33.Bd5+ Bf7 34.Ne7+ Kf8 35.Nec6 1-0** and the b-pawn will promote.

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Paul Truong assisted Susan Polgar in the preparation of this column. Susan Polgar is available for chess instruction. For more information, visit the Polgar Chess Center, 103-10 Queens Boulevard, Forest Hills, NY 11375 (Tel: 718-897-4600) or email: [PolgarChessInc@aol.com](mailto:PolgarChessInc@aol.com)

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