



## Win with Grace, Lose with Dignity

Every year I travel to countless places across the United States to promote chess, especially for young people. In each lecture, I always discuss the issue of sportsmanship. “Win with grace, lose with dignity” is my motto, as well as the motto of the Susan Polgar Foundation. Our children need to be taught proper etiquette.

One of the common complaints from many parents and coaches is that kids are being taught “dirty tricks.” The following is just one example:

One player is losing badly, so he reaches out and offers his hand. The opponent is under the impression that the player is resigning. Therefore, he also reaches out his hand. All of a sudden, the losing player yells out: “Draw.” When the other player disputes it, the losing player says that it is too late. They already shook hands.

I am even more horrified to learn that there are parents and coaches who actually teach things like this. They believe in winning at any cost. Other tricks include constant pretend coughing, offering a draw on each move, kicking opponents under the table, etc.

These are not good examples to learn from. I hope that all parents and coaches will steer their kids in the right direction by teaching good sportsmanship. Winning is great, but I believe that teaching our kids right from wrong is far more important.

### Champions

Over the years, thousands of people have asked me what it takes to be a champion. Just as in any other sport, the margin between winning and losing, between champion and runner-up, can be so miniscule. Sometimes it can come down to one indecisive move in a moment of haste.

Different people play chess for different reasons, and everyone approaches chess in their own way. Some just play for fun and the results do not matter. Some are professionals and a difference of a ½-point can result in a \$15,000 pay cut.

To be a champion one must put in the hard work and sacrifice, and have the fire, dedication, desire, determination, confidence, passion, and nerves of steel.

## COLUMNISTS

### *Susan Polgar on Chess*

Susan Polgar



### *Breaking Through* by Susan Polgar

Sometimes a little luck does not hurt either. There are also intangible factors that can come into play.

We have countless top-notch grandmasters in chess. One just has to want it more than the next player. Just look at Topalov in San Luis. In positions where many would agree to a draw, he ground out win after win. He wanted the title more than the others. He got a little lucky in the first game against Leko, and as a result his confidence and energy got an incredible boost and the rest was history. But he was also smart enough to play solid chess to hold onto his big lead during the second half. The same thing happened with Gata Kamsky at the M-Tel Masters. After drawing a difficult game against Ponomarev in the first round, his confidence got a big boost and he was on a roll.

The recent Olympiad is no different. There are so many good teams and players, and the winners are often the team that prepared the most beforehand and wanted it the most during the event. Some players play to win and some play not to lose. Often times it will come down to the last round. In this case, the U.S. men's team scored  $3\frac{1}{2}$  against Norway in the last round to vault into 3<sup>rd</sup> place.

I can share with you one of my many memorable moments from the last Olympiad. After 13 rounds, Russia and USA had  $25\frac{1}{2}$  points, Georgia had 25, France had  $24\frac{1}{2}$ , Hungary and Slovakia had 24 and India had  $23\frac{1}{2}$ . That meant that 7 teams were within striking distance for the Silver and Bronze going into the final round. I remember seeing many captains with pens and papers trying to figure out the tie-breaks and how many points their team would need, especially the Russian and Georgian captains.

I vividly remember my last round opponent offering me a draw in a somewhat better position. I informed our captain about the offer and asked him what to do. He looked at me, smiled without saying a word, and then softly asked me to please go back to my board. A few seconds later, he came and gave a firm answer. Both teams heard this loud and clear. The answer was no draw on any board. We will fight on all boards.

That personally gave me such a big boost of confidence, knowing that the captain believed in us and that there would be no chickening out. He never once bothered with the tie-breaks or even looked at the tie-breaks of any other team. He wanted our team to control our own destiny and not rely on the luck of the tie-breaks.

We ended up winning  $2\frac{1}{2}$  and the rest was history. That was one difference between winning and losing. Because of that win, I also won 3 individual medals and a team Silver. A draw would have brought me zero individual medals and the team may not have gotten any medal at all. But if we had lost, we would have come home with nothing. You have to be willing to take risks if you want the glory. Ukraine, Russia, Georgia and some other countries were just as good, if not better than us in 2004. But we wanted it more than they did.

In team competitions, there are times when draws are necessary and there are times when one has to be willing to put everything on the line. This is what you call teamwork. This is part of the strategy. But the bottom line is one must be ready, willing and able to fight when needed. It takes a lot to be a champion, not just a team with high profile individual players.

When I teach my children chess, I do not allow them to offer draws. I want them to learn to fight in any position, good, bad or in between. I am content and proud if they fight hard and lose. A champion cannot be afraid to play out positions. A champion cannot be afraid of fighting. Once a player learns how to win, he or she can decide when to play safe and when to go all out for the win. I am sure different people have different opinions. This is mine. Play to win; do not play not to lose! But do it wisely!

### **The 2006 Olympiad**

There were many interesting stories at the recently concluded Olympiad in Turin, Italy. Here are some of them:

#### **Some of the biggest positive stories were:**

- The Armenian team made history by capturing the team Gold medal (overall). They finished two full points ahead of the Silver medalist team.
- The Ukrainian women's team made history by capturing the team Gold medal. They finished one and a half points ahead of the top seed Russia.
- The Chinese men's team made history by capturing their first ever open Olympiad medal, the Silver. They came close to winning the Gold at the last World Team Championship, but after a last round loss to Russia, they finished second.
- China showed the world that they can continue to crank out talented young female players. Even without legendary players such as women's world champions Xie Jun, Xu Yuhua and Zhu Chen (who now plays for the open team of Qatar), they captured the Bronze.
- Kramnik, Carlsen, Wang Yue and Bacrot all performed over 2800!! Karjakin and Bu performed at around 2800!

#### **Some of the biggest negative stories were:**

- Even with the super team of Kramnik, Svidler, Grischuk, Morozevich, Bareev (all over 2700) and Rublevsky, the Russian men's team walked away with no medal. They ended up tying for 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, probably one of their worst finishes ever!
- India came into this Olympiad as the second ranked team and had high hopes of winning a medal. Even with Anand, India finished in a shocking tie for 30<sup>th</sup>!
- The Russian women's team was the top seed in the women's Olympiad. Their average ratings were approximately 50 points higher than the next team. The following was published right before the Olympiad:

*At the Turin Olympiad, Russia wants everything that's going, namely gold in the men's and gold in the women's events.*

*As a nation, Russia has never won a women's Olympiad: after the last success of the then Soviet Union in 1986 two wins came for Hungary followed by one for Georgia, in an edition when Russia did not even place third.*

*Russia finally took the runners-up spot in 1996 (behind Georgia) with a repeat in 1998, when the Chinese scored their first win. China went on to win the next three editions. Russia came third in 2000, second again in 2002, and third two years ago, this time beaten by the USA for second place. In Turin, Russia will be fielding the team that went to Calvià in 2004 (Kosteniuk, the Kosintseva sisters and Kovalevskaya ).*

*"But this time we are more up for it," says Alexandra Kosteniuk, among other things "godmother" of the Turin Olympiad. "We have been training together, and we've built up a fine team spirit. We want to win and we know we can do it."*

They could not live up to the promise and failed to win the Gold again. They finished a distant second, 1½ points behind Ukraine.

#### **Top U.S. stories:**

- Gata Kamsky showed the world that he is still an elite player.
- Alex Onischuk (who played board 1 in 2004) proved that his U.S. Championship win was not a fluke. His performance rating was 2743.
- After a horrible start, Hikaru Nakamura made a strong finish by winning the last 3 games against Grischuk (2719), Sutovsky (2628) and Johannessen (2559)!
- The U.S. women's team fought well, but finished a distant fourth, 3 full points behind 3<sup>rd</sup> place China.

The top performers of the Olympiad were:

No.	Name	Rating	Team	Performance	Pts.
1 GM	Kramnik, Vladimir	2729	Russia	2847	6½
2 GM	Wang, Yue	2598	China	2837	10.0
3 GM	Bacrot, Etienne	2708	France	2833	6.0
4 GM	Carlsen, Magnus	2646	Norway	2820	6.0
5 GM	Karjakin, Sergey	2661	Ukraine	2798	8½

6	GM	Bu, Xiangzhi	2640	China	2790	8.0
7	GM	Navara, David	2658	Czech Republic	2786	8½
8	GM	Akopian, Vladimir	2706	Armenia	2778	9.0
9	GM	Aronian, Levon	2756	Armenia	2768	7.0
10	GM	Lautier Joel	2682	France	2759	8.0

In the women's Olympiad, these were the top 10 performers:

No.		Name	Rating	Team	Performance	Pts.
1	WGM	Zhao, Xue	2423	China	2617	10.0
2	IM	Kosintseva, Tatiana	2489	Russia	2598	9½
3	WFM	Hou, Yifan	2298	China	2596	11.0
4	GM	Stefanova, Antoaneta	2502	Bulgaria	2563	9.0
5	IM	Hoang, Thanh Trang	2487	Hungary	2539	9½
6	WGM	Zhukova, Natalia	2425	Ukraine	2537	7½
7	IM	Yanovska-Gaponenko, Inna	2430	Ukraine	2531	7.0
8	IM	Cmilyte, Viktorija	2470	Lithuania	2530	9½
9	IM	Kosintseva, Nadezhda	2469	Russia	2521	7½
10	IM	Krush, Irina	2437	USA	2512	8.0

Below are the performances of the U.S. teams:

Women's Team:

Bo.		Name	Rating	Pts.	Opponent's Average Rating	Performance
1	IM	Zatonskih, A	2433	5.0	2402	2366
2	IM	Krush, I	2437	8.0	2337	2512
3	WGM	Goletiani, R	2371	8½	2282	2440
4	WGM	Baginskaite, C	2299	3.0	2233	2305

Men's Team:

Bo.		Name	Rating	Pts.	Opponent's Average Rating	Performance
1	GM	Kamsky, G	2671	5½	2662	2698
2	GM	Onischuk, A	2650	7.0	2594	2743
3	GM	Nakamura, H	2664	7.0	2587	2689
4	GM	Ibragimov, I	2637	4.0	2516	2566
5	GM	Kaidanov, G	2603	5.0	2491	2649

6	GM Akobian, V	2575	4½	2434	2536
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Congratulations to the U.S. men's team for capturing the Bronze medal!

### **Kirsan Ilyumzhinov reelected**

On June 2, 2006, FIDE held an election for the presidency between the incumbent Kirsan Ilyumzhinov (Chess Fidelity) and the challenger Bessel Kok (Right Move).

After the votes have been tallied, the Chess Fidelity Team won by the margin of 96-54 votes. Below is the presidential ticket of the newly reelected FIDE President Mr. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov:

- **President:** Mr. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov (Russia)
- **Deputy President:** Mr. Georgios Makropoulos (Greece)
- **Vice President:** Mr. Lewis Ncube (Zambia)
- **General Secretary:** Mr. Ignatius Leong (Singapore)
- **Treasurer:** Mr. Nigel Freeman (Bermuda)

### **2006 Susan Polgar World Open Championship for Girls**

The first annual event will be held on June 16-18, 2006 in Las Vegas, Nevada. There will be four separate sections: Under 21, 15, 13 and 10 (as of June 14, 2006). Prizes include 4 state-of-the-art Dell Laptop Computers, scholarships to Texas Tech University, trophies, medals and thousands of dollars in chess prizes, etc.

Additional events for girls on site include the Susan Polgar World Open Puzzle Solving Contest, Susan Polgar World Open Blitz Championship, lectures, simul, and chess camp. This is part of the Las Vegas International Chess Festival. Additional information can be found [here](#) or [here](#).

### **2006 New York City Mayor's Cup**

On June 25-26, the 2006 Mayor's Cup Invitational Super Chess Tournament will be held at the famed New York Athletic Club. The event is organized by the Susan Polgar Foundation, the office of the NYC Mayor Bloomberg, the office of NYC Sports Commissioner and the New York Athletic Club. The players are:

- GM Gata Kamsky (2671 FIDE, 2736 USCF)
- GM Alex Onischuk (2650 FIDE, 2704 USCF)
- GM Ildar Ibragimov (2637 FIDE, 2692 USCF)
- GM Boris Gulko (2585 FIDE, 2659 USCF)
- GM Alex Stripunsky (2569 FIDE, 2659 USCF)
- GM Susan Polgar (2577 FIDE, 2557 USCF)

This will be the highest rated round robin chess tournament in U.S. history! The purpose of this event is to raise chess awareness in New York and to promote chess and education across the country. The New York City Sports

Commissioner will be present and New York City Mayor Bloomberg is also expected.

Seating is available to the media and fans. For more information, visit my [blog](#).

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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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