



COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



Breaking Through by Susan Polgar

Two Historic Events

After many months of planning, the 2006 New York City Mayor's Cup Chess Invitational tournament finally took place June 25-26, at the prestigious New York Athletic Club. The event was organized and sponsored by the Susan Polgar Foundation, in collaboration with the N.Y. Athletic Club, the N.Y. City Sports Commission, the Office of Mayor Bloomberg and International Chess Marketing.

I wanted to do something big for chess in America and especially in New York. So after discussing a number of ideas with friends, supporters, and colleagues, as well as receiving suggestions from the fans that follow my chess [blog](#), the idea of the N.Y. City Mayor's Cup was born. I began to contact the potential sponsors, who were all receptive to the idea, and the next step was to create a list of invitees.

The criterion for the invitations was based on ratings, current titles, location of residence, past invitations, ability to handle the media and fans, etc. The six players who took part were:

- GM Alexander "The Rock" Onischuk (Reigning U.S. Champion, 2006 Olympiad Bronze Medalist)
- GM Gata "The Grinder" Kamsky (#1 USCF and FIDE rated player in the U.S., 2006 Olympiad Bronze Medalist)
- GM Susan "The Ambassador" Polgar (#1 USCF and FIDE rated woman player in the U.S.)
- GM Ildar "The Silencer" Ibragimov (Olympiad Bronze Medalist)
- GM Boris "The Gentleman" Gulko (Former U.S.SR and U.S. Champion)
- GM Alexander "The Terminator" Stripunsky (Former U.S. Open Co-Champion)

This was the highest rated double round robin chess tournament in U.S. history. The average USCF rating was 2665+, with four players who are currently or have been over 2700 (Kamsky, Onischuk, Ibragimov and Gulko). The time control of the tournament was 25 minutes per game with 5 seconds delay each move. Most of the games were very hard fought right until the last few seconds.

Mr. Bill Hall, the Executive Director of the USCF was on hand to welcome all the participants at the opening ceremony. In addition, he also gave a special

recognition to the three members of the 2006 U.S. Olympiad Bronze Medalist team. There were many other chess VIPs attending such as Mr. Hanon Russell ([USCF Sales.com](http://USCF.Sales.com)); Dr. Frank Brady (St. John's University and former USCF board member); Joel Berez (President & CEO, Internet Chess Club); reigning World Open Champion GM Kamil Miton; 3-time U.S. Champion GM Lev Alburt; 2-time U.S. Women's Champion Jennifer Shahade; and Russell Mollott (President of CRX), etc.

Round 1

Gulko – Polgar $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Onischuk – Ibragimov $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Stripunsky – Kamsky $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$



Onischuk – Ibragimov

All the games were very hard fought, but no one was able to score a full point. Gulko uncorked an incredible sacrifice that almost gave him the win. I defended as hard as I could, and even missed a winning combination toward the end of the game.

Round 2

Kamsky – Gulko 0-1

Polgar – Ibragimov 1-0

Onischuk – Stripunsky $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$



Kamsky – Gulko

In round 2, Gulko and I took the early lead. Kamsky over-pushed and Boris used his impeccable endgame technique to score the full point. Ibragimov and I played one of the most exciting games in the tournament. I played well early on and was ahead a pawn, but Ildar fought valiantly, and a few inaccuracies in mutual time pressure gave him some life. The game went on for nearly 90 moves, with almost no time left at the end. After the smoke had cleared, I managed to win the game. Onischuk and Stripunsky settled for a draw after a hard fought battle.

Round 3

Gulko – Onischuk $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Kamsky – Polgar 1-0

Ibragimov – Stripunsky 1-0

In round 3, Gulko maintained his lead with a draw against Onischuk I lost to Kamsky, which was probably my worst game of the tournament. In a complicated position in severe time pressure, Stripunsky blundered his queen to give Ibragimov a full point. It was a mistake that may have played a major role in Stripunsky's final outcome.

Round 4

Stripunsky – Gulko $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Polgar – Onischuk $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$

Ibragimov – Kamsky 0-1

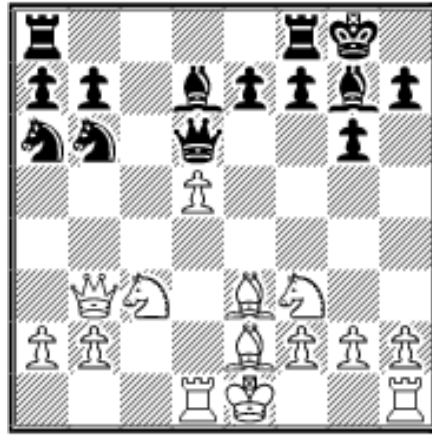
In round 4, Onischuk and I drew after a hard fight. The battle between Gulko and Stripunsky ended in a draw, but not without some excitement as well. Kamsky caught up with Boris for a share of the lead, as he won his second game in a row.

Ibragimov-Kamsky

Mayor's Cup Invitational (4) 2006

Caro-Kann [B14]

1.c4 c6 2.e4 d5 3.exd5 cxd5 4.d4 Nf6 5.Nc3 g6 6.cxd5 Nxd5 7.Qb3 Nb6 8.d5 Bg7 9.Be3 O-O 10.Rd1 Na6 11.Be2 Qd6 12.Nf3 Bd7



13.O-O Nc5 14.Qa3 Nca4 15.Qxd6 exd6 16.Nxa4 Nxa4 17.Nd4 a6 18.Rd2 Rac8 19.Bd1 Rfe8 20.Bxa4 Bxa4 21.b3 Bd7 22.Rfd1 h6 23.h3 Re4 24.Ne2 h5 25.Ng3 Ree8 26.Bf4 Bf8 27.f3 f5 28.h4 Kf7 29.Ne2 Rc5 30.Kf2 Rec8 31.Be3 Rc2 32.Nd4 Rxd2+ 33.Rxd2 Bg7 34.Bf4 Be5 35.Bxe5 dxe5 36.Nc2 Ke7 37.f4 e4 38.Ne3 Bb5 39.Rc2 Rxc2+ 40.Nxc2 Kd6 41.Ke3 Kxd5 42.Kd2 Bd3 43.Nb4+ Kd4 0-1

Round 5

Gulko – Ibragimov 1-0

Polgar – Stripunsky ½-½

Onischuk – Kamsky ½-½



Polgar – Stripunsky

In round 5, the last game of day one, Gulko regained the sole lead by defeating Ibragimov, while Kamsky drew Onischuk. Stripunsky, who happens to live a few blocks from me in Forest Hills, NY, pushed for the win by sacrificing a rook for a bishop and pawn in a somewhat even endgame. It did not work and I obtained a winning position, but misplayed it and almost lost. It was a very wild draw that ended with a K+Q vs. K+Q.

Round 6

Polgar – Gulko 1-0

Ibragimov – Onischuk ½-½
Kamsky – Stripunsky 1-0



Polgar – Gulko

In round 6, the first game of day two, Kamsky took the lead with 4/6 by defeating Stripunsky, while Onischuk drew his sixth game in a row, this time against Ibragimov. Gulko lost his first game of the tournament. With this win, I became tied with Boris for 2nd place, half a point behind Gata.

Polgar-Gulko

Mayor's Cup Invitational (6) 2006



**24.d5! exd5 25.g3 Be5 26.Bxe5! Nxe5
27.Nd4 Rcc8 28.Nxb5 Re7**

28...Red8 is another option. I would then play 29.Nxa7 with a decisive advantage anyway.

29.Rxd5 g6 30.Kg2

Moving out of any potential check; it is better be safe than sorry, especially in rapid chess.

30...Nc6 31.a3

Again, I did not want to take any chances. I wanted to prevent any counter attack or cheap shots. 31.Nd6 Rcc7 32.a3+-.

31...Kg7 32.Nd6 Rb8 33.Nc4 Rb5 34.Ne3 Re6 35.Rd6

This may not have been the strongest move, but it follows one of the basic

principles of chess: when you are ahead material, simplify!

35...Rxc5 36.Rxe6 Rxc2 37.Rxg6+ hxg6 38.Nxc2

This is a safe and comfortable winning endgame.

38...Kf6 39.Kf3 Ke5 40.Ke3 a5 41.Kd3 Kd5 42.f4 Kc5 43.g4 Ne7 44.Ne3 a4 45.h4 Ng8 46.h5 gxh5 47.gxh5 Nh6 48.Ke4 f6 49.Nd5

This is much simpler than 49.Nf5, especially with very little time. For example, 49...Nf7 50.h6 Kc4 51.h7 Kb3 52.Kd5 Kxa3 53.Ke6 Nh8 54.Kxf6 Kb2 55.Kg7 a3 56.Kxh8 a2 57.Kg8 a1Q 58.h8Q+ is way too complicated to calculate in the circumstances.

49...Kc4 50.Nxf6 Kb3 51.Nd5 Kxa3 52.Nb6 Kb3 53.Nxa4 Kxa4 54.Ke5 Kb5 55.Kf6 Kc6 56.Kg6 Ng8 57.h6 1-0

This was Gulko's first loss of the tournament. He is not an easy opponent to defeat.

Round 7

Ibragimov – Polgar 0-1

Gulko – Kamsky ½-½

Stripunsky – Onischuk 0-1

In round 7, I defeated Ibragimov to tie for first with Kamsky, who drew with Gulko. Onischuk scored his first win in a very nice game against Stripunsky.

Round 8

Onischuk – Gulko ½-½

Polgar – Kamsky 0-1

Stripunsky – Ibragimov ½-½

In round 8, Kamsky and I squared off. Rather than playing it safe, I went for an all-out attack on the kingside. However, Gata took full advantage of my inaccuracies to take a full point lead with just two rounds to go. With this loss, I fell into a tie for 2nd with Gulko and Onischuk, who drew against each other.

Round 9

Kamsky – Ibragimov ½-½

Onischuk – Polgar ½-½

Gulko – Stripunsky ½-½

In round 9, Kamsky drew Ibragimov to safely maintain his full point lead. With the black pieces, I surprised Onischuk right out of the opening and got the upper hand. Unfortunately, I was unable to capitalize on it and soon faced a lost position. A blunder by Onischuk, with very little time left on the clock,

turned the tide and the game ended in a draw. Heading into round 10, Onischuk, Gulko and I were all tied for 2nd, and we all had black in the last round.

Round 10

Stripunsky – Polgar 0-1

Kamsky – Onischuk ½-½

Ibragimov – Gulko 1-0

Kamsky secured first place with a quick draw against Onischuk, who looked likely to get at least a share of 2nd. Gulko ended up losing to Ibragimov, while I had a bad game against Stripunsky. I fought hard to enter a somewhat even endgame. Stripunsky, true to his fighting spirit, pushed very hard to win, but after an overly ambitious knight sacrifice, he lost and I finished in clear 2nd.

Final Standings

- Gata Kamsky – First Place
- Susan Polgar – Second Place
- Alex Onischuk – Third Place
- Boris Gulko – Fourth Place
- Ildar Ibragimov – Fifth Place
- Alex Stripunsky – Sixth Place

The tournament was incredibly exciting. Even though the players got along well with each other, their fighting spirit was extremely high. There was no anti-draw rule. I believe that as professionals, we will do the proper thing for the fans and media. We all fought hard to try to win the prominent Mayor's Cup.

Kamsky played very well and deserved to win the tournament. He lived up to "the Grinder" moniker, as he mowed down his helpless opponents. Alex Onischuk was truly the "Rock," he was the only player not to lose a game! He even joked that he was the "Rock" and the "Invincible" at this event. Boris Gulko started out very well, but he was tired at the end. Ildar Ibragimov fought valiantly and was unlucky to lose some of the games in which he outplayed his opponents. Alex Stripunsky fought hard until the last game, both against his opponents and the clock, but he never gave up. I had my ups and downs, and I am still clearly rusty.



Mr. Ken Podziba, N.Y. City Sports Commissioner was on hand at the Closing Ceremony to congratulate all the participants and award the Mayor's Cup.

I would like to thank all the sponsors and supporters for making this event happen, especially **USCF Sales.com**, Jacqueline LeFrak, the Samuel J. & Ethel LeFrak Charitable Trust, Frank Berry, House of Staunton, Viva Media, A&L Sheet Metal, the Gordon / Frenchman family, the Cohen family, GottaHaveIt.com, Justin Jenkins, Mike Magnan, the USCF, Alec Diacou, the NYAC and International Chess Marketing, etc.

Susan Polgar World Open Championship for Girls under 21

The first annual Susan Polgar World Open Championship for Girls took place from June 16-18, 2006 at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada as part of the Las Vegas Chess Festival. This was the strongest ever all-girls open event in the United States.



Texas Tech University scholarship winners

More than 70 young female players from the United States, Mongolia, Mexico, Peru, Poland and France competed for the top honors. The winner of each section received a state of the art Dell laptop; 2nd place winners received \$200 in chess prizes; 3rd place winners received \$150 in chess prizes; 4th place winners received \$100 in chess prizes; and 5th place winners received \$50 in chess prizes. Serena Zadoo and Victoria Zhang also received a special Susan Polgar autographed digital clock for scoring a perfect 6-0 in their respective sections.

Texas Tech University awarded 3 scholarships to WIM Luciana Morales (2210 FIDE), Laura Morales (1950 – winner of the All-Girls event in Mexico City) and Magdalena Matyszewska (2050 – originally from Poland, now living in Michigan).

Here are the final results:



Under 21 champions

SP World Open for Girls Under 21

- Champion: WIM Batchimeg Tuvshintugs 5½/6 (defeated 3 GMs in the 2006 U.S. Championship!)
- Runner up: Abby Marshall 5/6 (2005 SP National Invitational for Girls Co-Champion)
- 3rd place: WIM Luciana Morlaes 4½/6 (2006 Peruvian Women's Olympiad Team member)



Under 15 champions

SP World Open for Girls Under 15

- Champion: Janice S. Chen 5½/6
- Runner up: Erica D. Barkell 4½/6
- 3rd – 5th: Rheanna English, Sandra Hernandez, Sarah Selby 4/6



Under 13 champions

SP World Open for Girls Under 13

- Champion: Serena Zadoo 6/6
- Runner up: Alexandra Simon 4½/6
- 3rd – 5th: Sayaka B. Foley, Rianne Sanchez, Maral Bat-Amgalan 4/6



Under 10 champions

SP World Open for Girls Under 10

- Champion: Victoria Zhang 6/6
- Runner up: Christina Lee 5/6
- 3rd – 8th: Nisha Kishore, Tamara P. Prabhakar, Ellie Simon, Simone Liao, Shelley Anthopoulos, Vanessa Wonyee Wong 4/6



SP World Open Puzzle Solving Championship:

Open Section	# Solved	Time
1. Laura Morales	12/12	19:28
2. Jessica Wamala	12/12	27:00
3. Abby Marshall	11/12	8:28

Section 2		
1. Sayaka Foley	11/12	17:29
2. Sukhada Kullarni	11/12	21:35
3. Amanda Hansen	10/12	30:45
Section 3		
1. Kelsey Hilbrich	10/12	16:35
2. Anarae Schunk	10/12	20:15
3. Alexandra Butler	9/12	31:55
Section 4		
1. Jane Higa	7/12	16:38
2. Melisa Cedenno	6/12	26:30
3. Vanessa Wong	6/12	28:50

SP World Open Blitz Championship

- Open Champion: WIM Luciana Morales
- Under 15 Champion: Rheanna English
- Under 13 Champion: Sayaka Foley
- Under 10 Champion: Georgia Olvera

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


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