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COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

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Battle of the Genders: An Uphill Fight for Equality

Gary Kasparov and Ruslan Ponomarev. What do these names have in common? For starters, they are both World Champions. They are both great players and both have also lost to women. Shortly after Ponomarev was crowned as the new FIDE World Champion, Women's World Champion Zhu Chen sent him packing in a knock-out tournament. Gary Kasparov, the #1 ranked player in the world and one of the greatest world champions ever, was defeated by my "baby sister" Judit during the recent historic match "Russia versus the Rest of the World." This was Kasparov's first loss ever to a woman.

Does that mean that women are at the same level if not better than men now in chess? No, not in general and not even close yet. But it means that the women's strength in chess has increased dramatically in the past 20 years. This is a far cry from the time when Bobby Fischer announced that he could give any woman knight odds and Kasparov stated that he could give pawn odds.

For many decades, the women's world of chess was ruled by the pair of Georgian greats Nona Gaprindashvili and Maia Chiburdanidze. However, no woman even reached Elo 2400 until the Swedish sensation Pia Cramling and I came along. We were good friends and we pushed each other to propel ourselves to higher levels, breaking the 2400 and 2500 rating barriers. It was the same as Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert or Steffi Graf and Monica Seles in tennis. They pushed each other. It was good, friendly competition that helped both of us.

As a result of the success and level of play achieved by Pia and me, Chiburdanidze's playing level also went up even though she had already been a world champion for many years. I was the first woman to earn the overall grandmaster title. Pia also became a grandmaster and we both competed in mostly men's tournaments. This cleared the path for the others including my sisters Sofi (who

had a sensational tournament in Rome with a 2900 performance rating) and Judit. Sofi broke the 2500 rating barrier before she decided to “retire” from regular competition and Judit went ahead to break the 2600 rating barrier! She is now on the verge of 2700!

I recently glanced at the latest women’s rating list and I am proud to see that there are many women who have achieved the grandmaster and international master titles. There are also a handful of women who are right around or above 2500. That is such a contrast compared to the 1970’s.

Today, young stars like Stefanova, Koneru, hopefully Kosteniuk and a handful of young Chinese women players continue to excel, representing women well. But there are still major problems in the chess world for women. In the United States, Title 9 has helped bring women’s sports to a whole new level. (For those of you who do not know what Title 9 is, it is basically a law that mandated that women’s collegiate sports be given the same funding and opportunities as men’s). This has ultimately opened the door for new, successful professional leagues such as the Professional Women’s Soccer and Professional Women’s Basketball, etc.

Historically, some of the men’s world championship matches have had prize funds exceeding \$2 and \$3 million. Kramnik had a chance to play an exhibition against Deep Fritz for \$1 million (and did not even have to take Deep Fritz out to dinner) and Kasparov will soon play an exhibition with Deep Junior for another \$1 million.

My match against Xie Jun had the highest total purse ever for a match between women and that was for \$200,000. The winner received a little more than 60% and the runner-up a little more than 35%. After deducting training fees and all other expenses, the remaining balance is pocket change for a lifetime of hard work and dedication. A total of \$200,000 is *not* even 10% of the men’s prize funds and we are in the 21st century. When will this discrimination end? Do you realize that in tennis, equal or nearly equal prize funds are offered to women in all 4 major Grand Slams events (US Open, Wimbledon, French Open and Australian Open)?

Now, the TV ratings for women’s matches are much higher than the men’s matches. In addition, for the last two years CBS has televised the women’s final of the U.S. Open in prime time! Such was not the case not so long ago. But the tennis world has awakened and realized its potential. Now, names like the Venus and Serena Williams, Jennifer Capriati, Anna Kournikova

dominate the headlines. Can you name the top 3 or 5 male tennis players? And if you think of the names like John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors, they have already retired, while Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi are no longer in the top 5 anymore.

My next question is: how can you expect women in general to have the same motivation to train and play as their male counterparts if it is a losing financial proposition unless you are financed by an individual federation? Beside having a shorter career due to giving birth and raising children, women also have to support themselves. Also, as I have previously mentioned in previous columns, unless top women receive invitations to high level tournaments with top male opposition, it is very hard for women to catch up.

I am encouraged that in my recent conversation with FIDE president Kirsan Ilyumzhinov at the U.S. Open in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, he promised to put up a substantial amount of money for a women's match. It is a good sign. In addition, Frank Niro, the Executive Director of the United States Chess Federation has been working very hard with the U.S. Women's Chess Committee to promote women's chess in America. A major chess server "WCN" (World Chess Network) recently organized a Women's Week Event on their server.

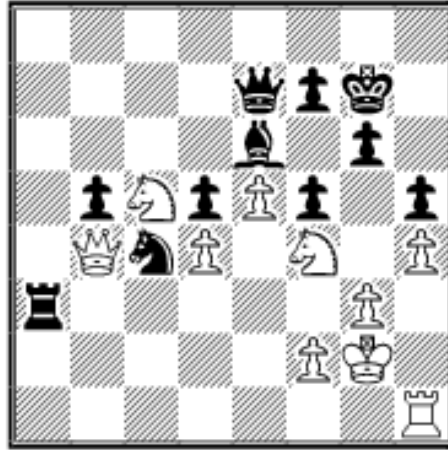
I am thankful that in America, my second home, there are many who give their all to promote women's chess. On the other hand, there are many who still believe that women players belong on another planet and some chess servers like U.S. Chess Live still goes out of its way to put top women's players like my sisters and me down. It is disappointing to see things like that still exist.

I will fight for women's equality in chess and I make it my mission to do so. There is nothing I can do to force people to accept my view. The only thing I can do is disassociate myself from any company or person that looks down on women. I hope that my voice and passion can wake some people up and together, we can make things right. After all, we are almost in 2003. Let's work together to promote women's chess in the United States and around the world!

**WGM *Li, Ruofan* (2357) – GM-elect *Koneru, Humpy* (2484)
[C02] FIDE World Cup Quarterfinal October 2002**

1. e2-e4 e7-e6 2. d2-d4 d7-d5 3. e4-e5 c7-c5 4. c2-c3 Nb8-c6 5. Ng1-f3 Qd8-b6 6. a2-a3 c5xd4 7. c3xd4 Ng8-h6 8. b2-b4 Nh6-f5 9. Bc1-b2 Bf8-e7 10. h2-h4 h7-h5 11. Bf1-d3 Bc8-d7 12. Bd3xf5

e6xf5 13. Nb1–c3 Bd7–e6 14. Qd1–d3 Ra8–c8 15. Nc3–a4 Qb6–d8 16. Ra1–c1 0–0 17. Ke1–f1 Nc6–b8 18. Qd3–d1 Nb8–d7 19. Na4–c5 b7–b6 20. Nc5–d3 g7–g6 21. g2–g3 Rc8xc1 22. Qd1xc1 Kg8–g7 23. Kf1–g2 b6–b5 24. Bb2–c3 Nd7–b6 25. Bc3–d2 Rf8–h8 26. Bd2–g5 Nb6–c4 27. Nd3–c5 Be7xg5 28. Nf3xg5 Qd8–e7 29. Ng5–h3 Rh8–a8 30. Nh3–f4 a7–a5 31. b4xa5 Ra8xa5 32. Qc1–c3 Ra5xa3 33. Qc3–b4



33...Qe7–e8 34. Rh1–b1 Ra3–a5 35. Nc5–b7 Ra5–a7 36. Qb4xb5 Qe8xb5 37. Rb1xb5 Nc4–a3 38. Rb5–b2 Na3–c2 39. Rb2xc2 Ra7xb7 40. Kg2–f3 Rb7–b3+ 41. Kf3–e2 Kg7–f8 42. Rc2–c7 Rb3–b2+ 43. Ke2–e3 Rb2–b3+ 44. Ke3–d2 Rb3–b2+ 45. Rc7–c2 Rb2–b4 46. Kd2–d3 Rb4–b3+ 47. Rc2–c3 Rb3–b2 48. Kd3–e3 Rb2–b7 49. Nf4xe6+ f7xe6 50. Ke3–f4 Rb7–b4 51. Kf4–g5 Rb4xd4 52. Kg5xg6 Kf8–e7 53. Rc3–a3 Rd4–g4+ 54. Kg6xh5 d5–d4 55. f2–f4 Ke7–f7 56. Ra3–a7+ Kf7–f8 57. Ra7–d7 Rg4xg3 58. Rd7xd4 Rg3–g4 59. Rd4–a4 Kf8–f7 60. Ra4–a7+ Kf7–f8 61. Ra7–h7 Kf8–e8 62. Kh5–h6 Rg4xh4+ 63. Kh6–g6 Rh4–g4+ 64. Kg6–f6 Rg4xf4 65. Kf6xe6 Ke8–d8 66. Rh7–h8+ Kd8–c7 67. Ke6–f7 Rf4–e4 68. e5–e6 f5–f4 69. e6–e7 Kc7–d6 70. Rh8–d8+ Kd6–c5 71. e7–e8Q Re4xe8 72. Kf7xe8 Kc5–c4 73. Ke8–e7 Black resigns

GM-elect *Koneru*, *Humpy* 2484 – WGM *Xu*, *Yuhua* 2473 [A08]
FIDE World Cup Semi-Final October 2002

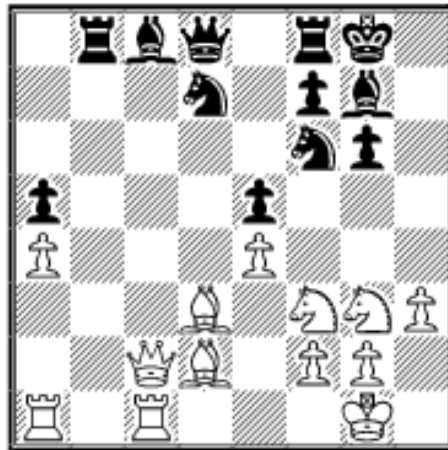
1. Ng1–f3 Ng8–f6 2. g2–g3 e7–e6 3. Bf1–g2 d7–d5 4. 0–0 Bf8–e7 5. d2–d3 0–0 6. Nb1–d2 c7–c5 7. e2–e4 Nb8–c6 8. Rf1–e1 Qd8–c7 9. c2–c3 b7–b5 10. Nd2–f1 d5–d4 11. c3xd4 c5xd4 12. e4–e5 Nf6–d5 13. Qd1–e2 Bc8–b7 14. Bc1–d2 Nd5–b6 15. Ra1–c1 Qc7–d7 16. h2–h4 Nb6–a4 17. Rc1–b1 Rf8–c8 18. h4–h5 Nc6–b4 19. a2–a3 Nb4–a6 20. h5–h6 g7–g6 21. Bd2–g5 Bb7xf3 22. Bg2xf3 Be7xg5 23. Bf3xa8 Rc8xa8 24. Nf1–h2 Na6–c7 25. Nh2–g4 Nc7–d5 26. Qe2–f3 Qd7–d8 27. Qf3–e4 Na4–c5



28. Qe4-e2 Ra8-c8 29. f2-f4 Bg5-e7 30. Re1-c1 a7-a5 31. Rc1-c2 Nc5-b3 32. Rb1-e1 a5-a4 33. Rc2xc8 Qd8xc8 34. Ng4-f6+ Nd5xf6 35. e5xf6 Be7xf6 36. g3-g4 Qc8-c5 37. Qe2-e4 Bf6-e7 38. f4-f5 Qc5-d6 39. f5xe6 f7xe6 40. Qe4-f3 Be7-g5 41. Qf3-a8+ Qd6-d8 42. Qa8xd8+ Bg5xd8 43. Re1xe6 Kg8-f7 44. Re6-e5 Nb3-c1 45. Re5xb5 Nc1xd3 46. Kg1-f1 Bd8-e7 47. b2-b3 a4xb3 48. Rb5xb3 Nd3-c5 49. Rb3-b8 g6-g5 50. Rb8-a8 d4-d3 51. a3-a4 Nc5-e4 52. a4-a5 Ne4-g3+ 53. Kf1-e1 Be7-b4+ 54. Ke1-d1 Ng3-e4 55. Kd1-c1 Ne4-f2 56. Ra8-d8 Bb4xa5 57. Rd8-d7+ Kf7-e6 White resigns

GM Stefanova, Antoaneta 2541 – WGM Matveeva, Svetlana 2465 [B06] FIDE World Cup Semi-Final October 2002

1. d2-d4 g7-g6 2. e2-e4 Bf8-g7 3. Nb1-c3 c7-c6 4. Bc1-e3 d7-d6 5. Qd1-d2 b7-b5 6. Ng1-f3 Nb8-d7 7. Bf1-d3 Qd8-c7 8. a2-a4 b5-b4 9. Nc3-e2 a7-a5 10. c2-c3 Ra8-b8 11. Ne2-g3 h7-h5 12. h2-h3 Ng8-f6 13. 0-0 e7-e5 14. d4xe5 d6xe5 15. c3xb4 Rb8xb4 16. Qd2-c2 0-0 17. Rf1-c1 Qc7-d8 18. Be3-d2 Rb4-b8 19. Qc2xc6 h5-h4 20. Nf3xh4 Rb8xb2 21. Nh4-f3 Rb2-b3 22. Qc6-c2 Rb3-b8

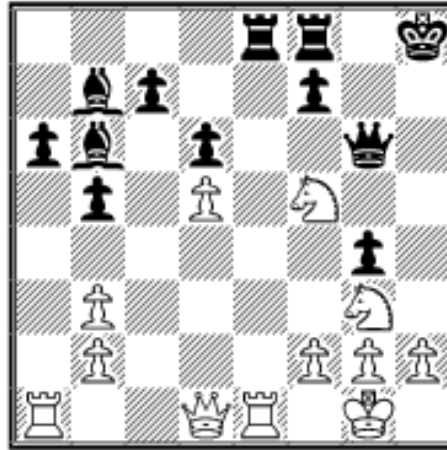


23. Qc2-c7 Rb8-a8 24. Bd3-b5 Rf8-e8 25. Qc7xd8 Re8xd8 26. Bb5-c6 Ra8-a6 27. Ra1-b1 Bg7-f8 28. Rb1-b5 Bf8-a3 29. Rc1-c2 Nd7-c5 30. Rb5xc5 Ba3xc5 31. Rc2xc5 Nf6-d7 32. Rc5-c1 f7-f6 33. Bc6-b5 Ra6-a8 34. Bb5-c4+ Kg8-g7 35. Bc4-d5 Ra8-a7 36. Bd2-e3 Ra7-a6 37. Rc1-c7 Kg7-h8 38. Nf3-h4 Nd7-f8 39. Be3-c5 f6-f5 40. Bc5-e7 Rd8-e8 41. Bd5-f7 Black resigns

WGM Xu Yuhua 2473 - GM Stefanova, A 2541 [C78] FIDE World Cup Final October 2002

1. e2-e4 e7-e5 2. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3. Bf1-b5 a7-a6 4. Bb5-a4 Ng8-

f6 5. 0-0 b7-b5 6. Ba4-b3 Bc8-b7 7. Rf1-e1 Bf8-c5 8. c2-c3 0-0
9. d2-d4 Bc5-b6 10. Bc1-e3 e5xd4 11. c3xd4 Nc6-a5 12. Be3-g5
h7-h6 13. Bg5-h4 Na5xb3 14. a2xb3 g7-g5 15. Nf3xg5 Nf6xe4
16. Ng5-f3 Ne4-g5 17. Bh4xg5 h6xg5 18. Nb1-c3 d7-d6 19. d4-
d5 g5-g4 20. Nf3-d4 Qd8-g5 21. Nc3-e4 Qg5-g6 22. Ne4-g3 Ra8-
e8 23. Nd4-f5 Kg8-h8



24. Qd1-d2 Re8-e5 25.
Re1xe5 d6xe5 26. Nf5-h4
Qg6-d6 27. Qd2-g5 Bb7-c8
28. Ng3-f5 Bc8xf5 29.
Nh4xf5 29...Qd6-g6 30.
Qg5-h4+ Qg6-h7 31. Qh4-
f6+ Black resigns

**GM Polgar, Judit (2685) – GM Mamedyarov, Shakhriyaz
(2580) 2002 Chess Olympiad – Bled, Round 4**

1. e2-e4 e7-e5 2. Ng1-f3 Nb8-c6 3. Bf1-b5 a7-a6 4. Bb5-a4
Ng8-f6 5. 0-0 Nf6xe4 6. d2-d4 b7-b5 7. Ba4-b3 d7-d5 8.
d4xe5 Bc8-e6 9. Nb1-d2 Ne4-c5 10. c2-c3 d5-d4 11. Nf3-g5
Be6-d5 **DIAGRAM**



12. Ng5xf7 Ke8xf7 13.
Qd1-f3+ Kf7-e6 14. Qf3-
g4+ Ke6-f7 15. Qg4-f5+
Kf7-e7 16. e5-e6 Bd5xe6
17. Rf1-e1 Qd8-d6 18.
Bb3xe6 Nc5xe6 19. Nd2-e4
Qd6-e5 20. Bc1-g5+ Ke7-
d7 21. Ne4-c5+ 21...Bf8xc5
22. Qf5-f7+ Kd7-d6 23.
Bg5-e7+ Kd6-d5 Black
resigns

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