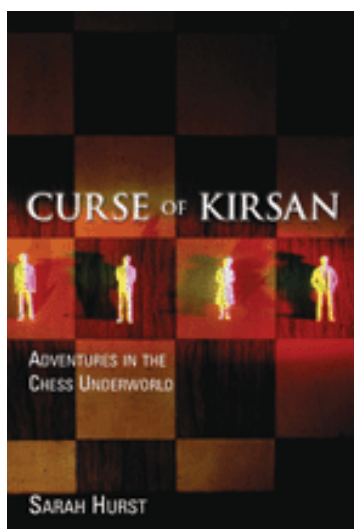




C O L U M N I S T S

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



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US Women's Chess:

The Beginning of a New Era!

Sometimes toward the end of 2002, I wrote an article on ChessCafe.com about women's Chess titled: "Women's Chess in America, A Social Dilemma". As a top-level woman player myself and a pioneer in women's chess, I feel that if given the same opportunity, women players in general will be able to compete against men at almost the same level in the future. However, there is some work to be done in order for women to reach that level.

In that article, I pointed out 8 items.

1. **Change the Image of Chess for Girls in America**
2. **More Chess Promotions for Girls by the Top Women Players**
3. **More Support from National and State Organizations**
4. **Separate Chess Training for Girls in Some Capacity**
5. **More Opportunities for Girls**
6. **Financial Support and Incentives**
7. **Patience**
8. **Stop the Politics**

Since then, instead of going in circles with endless debates on this issue, I have asked many of my friends to join my effort to help change Women's Chess in America for the better. The following is our current progress:

1. Change the Image of Chess for Girls in America. In the past year, I have attended a lot of big and small chess events to help promote chess, especially women's chess and scholastic chess. I have spoken to countless girls and their parents. I feel that it is important for girls in the next generation to have a good and assessable role model, to see that there are others just like them who made it, can compete, be accepted and earn the respect from their male counterparts.

It is important for them to know and understand that they can be beautiful, feminine, graceful, charming, but play a mean and tough game on the chessboard. They don't have to take a back seat to anyone.

According to statistics, just about as many, if not more girls play chess than boys until about the 4th grade. Then the ratio begins to change. This indicates that there are enough girls out there who can and want to play chess. They just need more support, encouragement and acceptance. They need to be accepted. For all the parents and coaches out there, thank you for doing a wonderful job supporting the young ones. If ever there is a time when the girls get discouraged or feel down, tell them to write me. Let them know that we believe in them and they can do anything well if they put their minds into it.

In addition, I don't think these efforts will harm the growth for men's chess. A little friendly competition does not hurt anyone. It will just make the game more interesting and challenging. Isn't that what chess is all about?

2. More Chess Promotions for Girls by the Top Women Players. Just as I stated above, I have asked my Olympiad teammates to join my efforts to do more in promoting women's chess. They are the obvious choice to help since they are part of the top. This is one of the reasons why I decided to play for the US in the next Olympiad. I could imagine what kind of boost chess in this country will receive if our Women's team can come home with a Gold medal, the first ever medal for our women.

3. More Support from National and State Organizations. The United States Chess Federation, with the leadership of Mr. Frank Niro and John McCrary, along with the Executive Board and the USCF staff have done such a wonderful job supporting US Women's Chess.

The support from the state and local organizations has also improved quite a bit in recent years. I hope it will be even more in the future. The US Chess Trust (Barbara DeMaro) also played a big part in supporting women's chess. These organizations are the backbone of the future of chess in America and they deserve a lot of credit.

At each tournament I attend, I see hundreds of volunteers helping out in some form or fashion. The last 2 events (National Junior High and National Elementary Championships), I was very impressed with the organizers in the states of Florida and Tennessee. The same goes for the USCF staff that came to these events. Everyone worked so hard and everyone gave their heart and soul to put on the best show and the most memorable events for the children. They did!

4. Separate Chess Training for Girls in Some Capacity. Many people have asked why do we need separate training for girls? Why can't boys and girls train together? There are a number of reasons for girls to have an option to attend a separate training program for themselves. But, in my

opinion, the most important reason is that we need to give girls the self-confidence to get to even ground against boys. Then, we can start mixing them together on a more regular basis.

According to statistics, there are about an equal amount of girls and boys who play chess at an early age. However, at around 4th grade, this number seems to take a downturn for girls. This has a lot to do with the first point I made earlier. As girls get to a certain age, the social and peer pressure sometimes can become unbearable. Not all girls are affected by this pressure that is caused by society and other boys. For those who are, they should have an option and opportunity to improve their chess in a more friendly and normal environment.

5. More Opportunities for Girls. I really like what I see with the Denker Tournament of Champions. It gives many young players a chance to be recognized and the opportunities for them to compete against their peers. Unfortunately, I was told that only 3 girls have been able to participate in this tournament in the past 12 years. Therefore, after a long discussion with Mr. Dewain Barber and my friend and business manager Paul Truong, we came up with the idea of organizing the Susan Polgar National Invitational the same time as the Denker Tournament of Champions.

The purpose of this tournament is to encourage and motivate girls to do more by giving them a chance to compete and gain experience in addition to building respect, recognition and self-confidence. With the financial support from the Susan Polgar Foundation, the Kasparov Chess Foundation and the consent from the United States Chess Federation, I hope the inaugural Susan Polgar National Invitational for girls will commence at next year's US Open in Florida.

6. Financial Support and Incentives. I am contacting various Colleges and Universities to seek scholarships for the winners of the Susan Polgar National Invitational. If our young girls know that they have a chance to obtain chess scholarships, it will be an extra incentive for them to stay with the game. The same goes with all scholastic players as well. Eventually, I hope chess players will get the same recognition and benefits as players in other sports do. There are more than two dozens colleges and universities offering some form of chess scholarships at this moment. As chess get more popular, perhaps we will see 200 schools offering scholarships instead of two dozen.

7. Patience. Now that things have gotten underway, good results will come in due time. I am very confident that we will see the difference soon.

8. Stop the Politics. One of the most unfortunate things in the chess industry is there are always too much politics involved. Sometimes everyone is too busy worrying about the politics and not on how to

popularize chess in America. The future of chess is the most important thing to me. I would like to see it grow rapidly and in the right way. I only ask myself one question each time: Is this good for the future of chess? That is why there are no politics involved in any of these projects and initiatives.

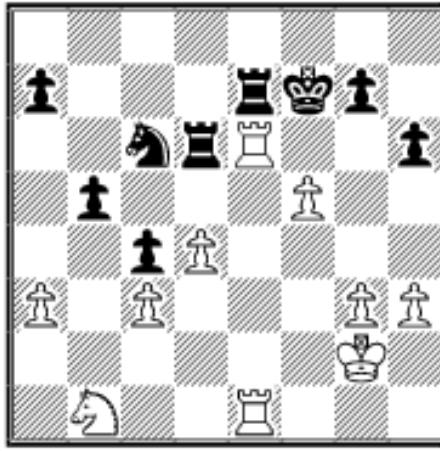
I am very proud of many parents and coaches throughout the country doing all they can to help the youngsters. They do it out of love and passion. It is so wonderful to see so many caring parents and adults in each of the scholastic tournament that I attended. Together, we can make a difference in our children's lives and we can revolutionize the chess industry for the better. The recent growth of chess is incredible. Hollywood is noticing us. TV, newspaper and the general media are noticing us. Colleges and universities around the country are noticing us. After all, there are more than 30 million people who play chess in America and a few hundred million worldwide. It is a new era in chess and I am so happy to be a part of it.

If you have any suggestion and want to let me know your initiatives in promoting chess in your area, please feel free to let me know. Maybe others can duplicate your success. Thank you!

Below are 3 of the games from Irina Krush, one of the members of the 2004 US Women's Olympiad team.

IM Krush, I. (2431) – GM Ehlvest, J. (2587) [D38]
Generation - New York (Round 4), 04-2003

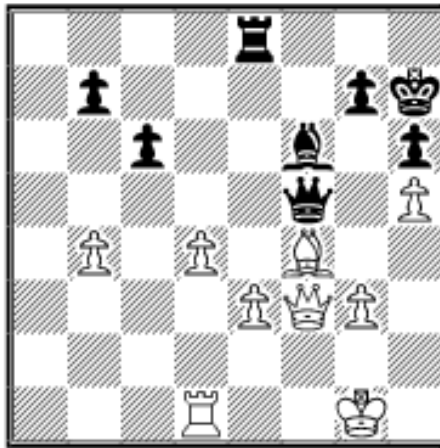
1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.Qb3 c5 6.cxd5 exd5 7.Bg5 Nc6
8.a3 c4 9.Qc2 Bxc3+ 10.bxc3 h6 11.Bxf6 Qxf6 12.g3 0–0 13.Bg2 Re8
14.0–0 b5 15.Rfe1 Bg4 16.h3 Bf5 17.Qb2 Rab8 18.Nd2 Ne7 19.e4 Be6
20.Re2 Red8 21.Rae1 Nc6 22.Qb1 Qg6 23.exd5 Bxd5 24.Qxg6 fxg6
25.Bxd5+ Rxd5 26.Re6 Rb6 27.Rxg6 Kf7 28.Rg4 Rf5 29.Rge4 Ra6
30.Nb1 Rf6 31.Kg2 Rd6 32.f4 Rb6 33.f5 Rb7 34.Re6 Re7



35.Rxd6 Rxe1 36.Rxc6 Rxb1 37.a4
Rb3 38.axb5 Rxc3 39.g4 Rc1
40.Rc7+ Kf6 41.Rxa7 Rd1 42.Rd7
c3 43.Rc7 Rxd4 44.Rxc3 Rb4
45.Rc6+ Kg5 46.b6 h5 47.Rg6+ Kf4
48.Kf2 Rb3 49.Ke2 Ke5 50.gxh5
Kxf5 51.Kd2 Ke5 52.Kc2 Rb4
53.Kc3 1-0

IM Krush, I. (2431) – IM Akobian, V. (2547)
Generation - New York (Round 1), 04-2003

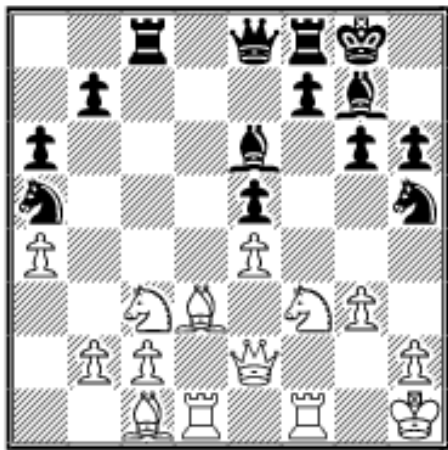
1.d4 e6 2.c4 f5 3.g3 Nf6 4.Bg2 Be7 5.Nf3 0-0 6.0-0 Ne4 7.Nc3 d5 8.Ne5
c6 9.Nxe4 fxe4 10.f3 Nd7 11.Nxd7 Bxd7 12.cxd5 exf3 13.dxe6 Bxe6
14.Bxf3 Qb6 15.Bf4 Bf6 16.e3 Rad8 17.Qe2 Qb4 18.a3 Qb3 19.Rac1 Rfe8
20.Rc3 Qb6 21.h4 Bd5 22.Bxd5+ Rxd5 23.Qc2 Kh8 24.Rb3 Rb5 25.Rxb5
Qxb5 26.Rd1 Qh5 27.Kf2 h6 28.Qe2 Qf5 29.Kg1 Re6 30.h5 Re8 31.b4 a5
32.Qf3 axb4 33.axb4 Kh7



34.d5 cxd5 35.Qxd5 Qg4 36.Rf1 Rd8
37.Qe4+ Kg8 38.Qf3 Qh3 39.Rd1
Ra8 40.Qxb7 Ra3 41.Qd5+ Kh8
42.b5 Rxe3 43.Bxe3 Qxg3+ 44.Kf1
Qxe3 45.Rd3 Qf4+ 46.Rf3 Qc1+
47.Kg2 Qb2+ 48.Rf2 Qb4 49.Qf5
Qa5 50.Re2 Qd8 51.Qe4 1-0

IM Simutowe, A (2411) – IM Krush, I (2431) [B74]
Generation - New York (Round 3), 04-2003

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 d6 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Nf6 6.Be2 g6 7.Be3 Bg7
8.0-0 0-0 9.Nb3 a6 10.a4 Be6 11.f4 Rc8 12.Kh1 Na5 13.Nd4 Bc4 14.Bd3
e5 15.fxe5 dxe5 16.Nf3 Nh5 17.g3 h6 18.Qe2 Be6 19.Rad1 Qe8 20.Bc1



20...Rxc3 21.bxc3 Qxa4 22.Bxh6
Bxh6 23.Ra1 Qc6 24.Rxa5 Qxc3
25.Qe1 Qc7 26.Qb4 Nf6 27.Qc5 Qd8
28.Qxe5 Bh3 29.Re1 Ng4 30.Qd5
Qb6 31.Bf1 xf1 32.Qc5 Qxc5
33.Rxc5 Bb5 34.h3 Ne3 35.Nd4 Bd7
36.g4 Bf4 37.Rc3 Rd8 38.Nb3 Bc6
39.Rcxe3 Bxe3 40.Rxe3 f5 41.gxf5
gxf5 42.Kg1 Bxe4 43.c3 Kf7 44.Nc5
Bc6 45.Re5 Rd5 46.Rxd5 Bxd5
47.Kf2 a5 48.c4 Bc6 49.Ke3 a4
50.Kf4 a3 51.Nb3 Ba4 52.Na1 Kf6
53.c5 a2 54.h4 Bd1 55.Ke3 Ke5 56.Kd2 Bh5 57.Kc3 f4 58.Kb2 f3
59.Nb3 f2 60.Nd2 Bf7 61.h5 Bxh5 62.Kxa2 Be2 63.Kb3 f1Q 64.Nxf1
Bxf1 0-1

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, 97-09 64th Road, Rego Park, NY 11374 (Tel: 718-897-4600) or email: PolgarChessInc@aol.com

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