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On the Road Again

In the 21st century, the Internet and high-tech computer technology are part of our everyday lives. We can readily find any information just by searching on Google. And if we need to check some tactical chess analysis, all we have to do is enter the position in Fritz and let the computer do its job. Furthermore, millions of chess games are played against computers or over the Internet daily. While, in some ways, technology enhances our lives as well as our chess, it does remove some of the human camaraderie.

When I was a young girl I learned chess the old fashion way. I studied from chess books and played in local chess clubs. Watching the other players competing motivated me to improve and to want to compete as well. This made such a great impression on me that it was my childhood dream to share this wonderful experience with other chess players at the earliest opportunity.

For the last 7 years, I have been running a chess center in Rego Park, New York. This is a community chess club that mainly serves the local neighborhoods although we have members and players from all over the tri-state area (NY, NJ, and CT). Player's ages 4 to over 74 come to the club everyday to play, learn, compete, and socialize. These players come from all different types of backgrounds, religions, and races.

The most special aspect of this is to see the older, more experienced players helping, guiding, and encouraging the younger players. They share their knowledge and their chess battle stories; some talk about Fischer, Spassky, Reshevsky, and Byrne, etc. Others talk about Kramnik, Ponomarev, Shirov, Radjabov, and Kasparov, etc. This is what chess is all about. This is chess in its purest form.

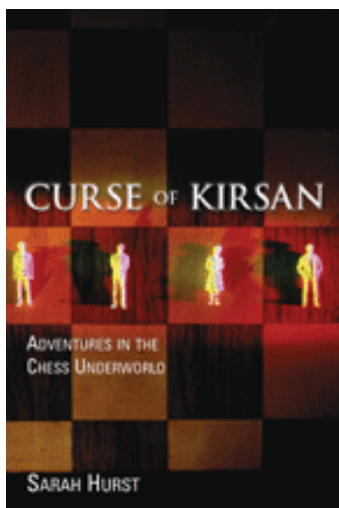
Unfortunately, across the country, it is very hard for chess clubs to survive. It costs money to rent and furnish a decent space and it also takes manpower to operate a chess club on a daily basis. The main nemesis of a chess club is the Internet. Many players do not have the time to attend a club and therefore, they play when they can online. While I am a proponent of the benefits of online play, I also feel that nothing can replace the particular experience of attending a chess club.

I have been very lucky to have many wonderful friends volunteer their time and effort to help the Polgar Chess Center stay open and thrive. Thousands of people have come through our door and enjoyed the chess club experience. Due to all of

COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



Order

Curse of Kirsan
by Sarah Hurst

the wonderful support, I have decided to expand my Chess Center and move it to a bigger location. This way, we can run weekly tournaments geared towards specific players: some for players under 2200, some for players under 1800, some for scholastic players, some for everyone, and even some FIDE rated events. We will even have prize money blitz and rapid tournaments weekly. I want to offer the chess community everything they could possibly desire.

About a month ago, I found a great space on Queens Boulevard, one of the busiest streets in Queens, New York. Unfortunately, the space was not ready to handle a top-notch chess club. So for the past month, many of my chess friends and I have rolled up our sleeves to renovate the club. We changed the lighting fixtures, installed carpeting, painted the walls, assembled book cases, etc.

On Wednesday, February 25 Tom, Ken, Alex, Paul, George, Pete, and I, as well as others moved from one location to another, box by box, table by table, and chair by chair. We worked through the day and into the night, with only a short break to have some pizza. After the sign went up, dozens of people stopped and looked in with curiosity. I can still hear the people murmuring: "A chess center on Queens Boulevard? What an interesting idea!" Many of them even ventured inside to find out what this club was all about.



A number of the neighborhood kids were so excited to see a chess club that they could be heard to exclaim: "Mommy, Mommy! You have to sign me up! I want to play chess!" That one sentence alone makes all the hard work worthwhile.

In the mean time, the volunteers continued working right up until the opening hour and on Thursday, February 26 at 4:30 PM, the new Polgar Chess Center officially opened its door for the first time. One by one member's walked in, some for the first time at the new location, and just about everyone said the same thing: "Wow! This chess club looks incredible!"

At 6:00 PM, my first official lecture at the new Polgar Chess Center took place before a full house. Children, as young as 6 years old, sat in the audience alongside our adult members eagerly waiting to grasp more chess information to help them improve. This was another memorable day for my chess club: the dinosaur of chess, and I hope there will be many more memorable days for years to come. Perhaps 20-30 years from now someone will look back and say: "Yes, I was there the day the Polgar Chess Center opened!" Yes, and this was one of those days that I will never forget!



The first lecture at the Polgar Chess Center

The new Polgar Chess Center is located at 103-10 Queens Boulevard Forest Hills, NY 11375. The club is now open, but the official Grand Opening Party will take place on March 7, 2004 from 2 PM to 8 PM. All are welcome to visit. There will be many chess celebrities in attendance as well as the media. Come by to join us and have some fun. Snacks and refreshments will be served. For more information and directions, please visit www.PolgarChess.com.

Back On the Road Again

After almost eight years of not playing competitive chess under normal time controls, I finally played in an Open tournament. The occasion was a 7 round special Swiss system event which took place at the Holiday Inn in Stillwater, Oklahoma from February 14-16. It was created to honor and support the ladies of the 2004 US Women's Olympiad Program: IM Irina Krush, WGM / IM-elect Anna Zatonskih, WIM Jennifer Shahade, WGM Rusa Goletiani, and I.

The tournament was sponsored by Mr. Frank Berry of Stillwater, Oklahoma. A total of 35 intense, hard fought, rated games were played by the team against male opponents. In the end, the ladies of the Olympiad Program scored 27 wins, 5 losses, and 3 draws: Irina 6W-1L-0D, Anna 5W-2L-0D, Jennifer 5W-1L-1D, Rusa 5W-1L-1D, and I 6W-0L-1D. It proved to be a good training ground for all of the team members.

Prior to the first round I gave a one-hour lecture, followed by a simultaneous exhibition against 19 strong opponents. Some were rated as high as 2300 and I was a little lucky to finish with a 19-0 score, as a couple of those games could have been draws with accurate play by my challengers. Overall, I was very happy with my play as well as the play of the other team members. The results were fairly good in an extremely difficult situation and under intense pressure. This type of training can only make all of us better.



The Oklahoma Simul

I must mention the superb hospitality of Mr. Frank and Jim Berry and the folks in Oklahoma and environs. It was a first rate event organized by first rate people. Thank you Frank, thank you Jim and thank you everyone for such a memorable weekend.

UTD, the National Champion

I was invited by Dr. Tim Redman and the University of Texas in Dallas to visit the University for a few days before visiting Stillwater, Oklahoma. Mr. Luis Salinas made all the arrangements for the trip and all the itineraries were planned out very professionally.

During my visit I met with some members of the National Championship team, many members of the faculty, students, and prominent individuals in the Dallas area. After my lecture at the McDermott library at UTD, I was presented with the 'Chess Educator of the Year Award' by Dr. Redman. I was also presented with a special commemorative plaque signed by the staff of the McDermott library.

Other activities included a visit to St. Philip's School and a face to face meeting with Haley Winston, a wonderful scholastic player in Texas, along with her mother and Katie Stone. I spent quite some time giving her chess pointers and played a few games with her.

I was invited to have dinner at the homes of some very special individuals (Zsuzsanna, Rodney and Charlie) on each of the three nights I spent in Dallas. All the hosts were so warm and wonderful; they all made me feel very welcome. One of the hosts is Hungarian, so I even got to eat some Hungarian food. This is the part of chess that I love, to be able to travel and meet wonderful people from across the globe. In this case, I can attest to what people say about Southern hospitality. The entire experience was truly magnificent.

I am also very happy that UTD strongly supports women's chess. The University has agreed to award a four-year scholarship to the top 11th grader or younger at the Annual Susan Polgar National Invitational for Girls. I hope that more Colleges and Universities will follow suit and award more scholarships to girls.

Here is a one of my games from the event in Stillwater, Oklahoma:

Susan Polgar – Mark Hulsey (2300)
Stillwater, Oklahoma (round 6), 16.02.2004

1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. e4 d6 5. h3

This line became popular in the early nineties.

5...0-0 6. Bg5 h6

Black would lose a pawn after the immediate 6...e5 7.dxe5 dxe5 8.Qxd8 Rxd8 9.Nd5. 6...c5 right away is perhaps more accurate.

7. Be3 c5 8. d5 e6 9. Bd3 Nbd7 10. Nf3 exd5 11. exd5

11. cxd5 would transpose to Benoni-like positions.

11...Re8 12. 0-0

White has space advantage and is slightly better. If Black plays passively, White will try to occupy the e-file. My opponent here tried to generate some activity.

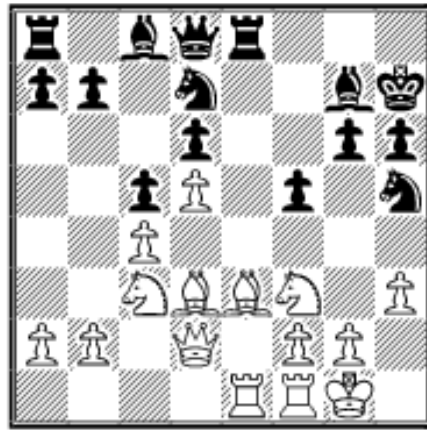
12...Nh5

Here is a sample game from one of the leading experts of this variation. He demonstrated nicely what happens if Black did nothing. 12...a6 13. a4 b6 14. Qd2 Kh7 15. Bf4 Nf8 16. Rfe1 Ra7 17. Rxe8 Nxe8 18. Rb1 f5 19. b4 Qf6 20. Ne2 Rb7 21. Ng3 Nd7 22. Re1 Qf8 23. h4 Ndf6 24. .h5 Nxh5 25. Nxh5 gxh5 26. Nh4 Rf7 27. bxc5 bxc5 28. Qe2 Bd7 29. Qxh5 Rf6 30. g4 Qf7 31. Qxf7 Rxf7 32. Bxf5+ Bxf5 33. Nxf5 Nf6 34. f3 Nh5 35. Bxd6 1-0 Suba - Nicoara, Elgoibar 1993.

13. Qd2 Kh7 14. Rae1

I was considering 14. g4 too.

14...f5



White has a strong position also after
14...Ne5 15. Nxe5 Rxe5 16. f4 Re7 17. f5

15. g4!

A very important move. Otherwise, the Black Knight returns from h5 to f6 and Black has a decent position.

15...fxg4 16. hxg4 Nhf6 17. g5

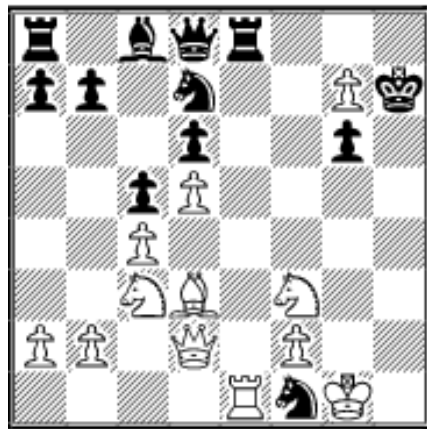
Better than 17. Qc2 Nf8 18. Bxg6+ 18...Nxc6 19. Nh4 Bxg4 20. Qxc6+ Kh8 21. Bxh6 Rg8 22. Bxg7+ Rxc7 23. Qh6+ Kg8 24. Ng6 Nh7 with complications. Also interesting was 17.Bxh6!? Bxh6 (17...Nxc6 18.Bxg6+! Kxc6 19.Rxe8+-) 18.g5 Bg7 19.gxf6 Bxf6 20.Ne4 with a strong attack.

17...Ng4

After 17...hxg5 18. Nxc5+ Black is lost.

18. gxh6 Nde5

The key variation was: 18...Nxe3 19. hxg7 Nxf1



And now - 20.Qg5!! A beautiful, quiet move that wins the game! 20...Qxc5+ 21. Nxc5+ Kxc7 22. Rxe8 and the black Knight on f1 gets trapped. 22...Nd2 23. Re2 Kf6 24. f4; Black loses after 18...Bxh6 19.Bxh6 Rxe1 20. Rxe1 Nxc6 21. Bxg6+ Kxc6 22. Re6+ Nf6 23. Qg5+ Kf7 24. Qxh6 Bxe6 25. Ng5+ Ke8 26. Nxe6 Qe7 27. Qh8+ too.

19. Ng5+!

This zwischenzug wins a piece. After 19. Nxe5 Bxe5 Black would get some counter chances.

19...Kg8

Moving into a discovery with 19...Kxh6 would be deadly too.

20. hxg7 Nxd3

20...Nxe3 21. Qxe3

21. Qxd3 Bf5

My opponent actually thought he was doing OK, until he realized that after 21...Nxe3 I don't have to recapture on e3, but can play 22. Qxg6!

22. Nce4

The rest was easy. 22...Ne5 23. Qe2 Kxg7 24. Kg2 Qe7 25. Bf4 Nf7 26. Qd2 Qd7 27. Qc3+ Ne5 28. Nxd6 1-0

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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