



A Busy Summer

Salt Lake City, Utah

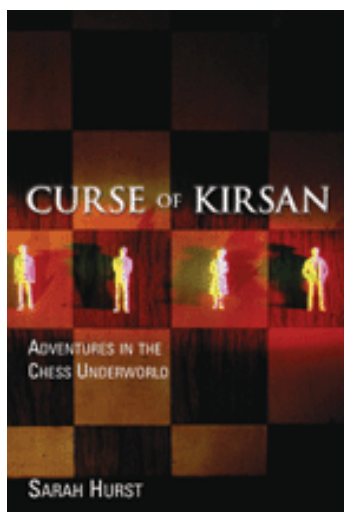
It has been a busy summer for me so far. Following my trip to Corpus Christi, Texas for the Grand Opening of the Susan Polgar South Texas Chess Center, I headed to Salt Lake City, Utah on June 3-5 to do a children's chess promotion. My activities included several lectures, simuls and signings. I even managed to play in a 14-round blitz tournament and scored 13-1.

Around 200 players competed in various tournaments including the official qualifying tournament to select a representative for the 2005 Susan Polgar National Invitational for Girls. An adult tournament was held consecutively as well.

COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



Curse of Kirsan
by Sarah Hurst



Press interview in Salt Lake City

Salt Lake City is a beautiful place and the people were just fantastic. The organizers Mr. Kevin Heath, Stephanie Pitcher, Kathryn Pitcher, Javier Pinedo and countless other volunteers did a wonderful job putting the entire 3-day event together. It was very professionally done and the hospitality from the organizers, players and fans was incredible. Thank you Salt Lake City for a memorable weekend!

Las Vegas, Nevada

Immediately after Salt Lake City, I headed to Las Vegas to meet up with my family for the Las Vegas International Chess Festival. This was the first time in about 12 years that my sisters and I made an appearance in the United States together. Their husbands, our parents, and our kids also joined us at this big family reunion.



Fred Gruenberg, Al Losoff, Glenn Panner and Paul Truong arranged this to promote the magnificent Las Vegas International Chess Festival. The event began on Wednesday night with the three of us signing literally thousands of items from chess boards, mouse pads, hats, playing cards, bags, to books, etc.

On Thursday morning, I conducted a special Susan Polgar Chess Camp, along with GMs D. Gurevich, W. Browne and IM Finegold. Five cameramen were on-hand to tape all my lectures and the Q&A sessions for an upcoming instructional DVD.



My sisters joined me in the afternoon for the historic 81-board Triplex Simul, where we each alternated moves at every board. It was actually quite

challenging since our styles are different and the level of competition included a number of very strong players.

The organizers warmly welcomed my parents and my sisters and they received rousing ovations and applause from the fans. I then presented my sisters and parents with the Polgar Medallion from the Susan Polgar National Invitational for Girls. And every player was given a signed playing card from the three of us, with three players receiving special prizes from the sponsors. After the simul, we stayed for another hour or so signing autographs.

At 8:30 AM on Friday morning, my sisters and I were joined by my parents for a breakfast Question and Answer session. Over 100 people joined us at the top of the Riviera Hotel and Casino. The fans had the opportunity to ask the three of us direct questions and some even asked questions of our Mom and Dad.



After the Q&A, the three of us gave two interviews, one for an upcoming chess DVD and the other to a documentary film producer for an upcoming chess film.

On Monday morning, following the Las Vegas event, I was invited to appear on the Live TV Talk Show “It’s all Good” (Ch. 35 in Las Vegas). I was the sole guest for an entire hour. I talked about chess, the benefit of the game, women’s chess, scholastic chess, the Las Vegas International Chess Festival and my three major girls’ tournaments.

We all had a fantastic time and the players and fans were wonderful. During the Las Vegas International Chess Festival, a new tournament was born. Starting from next June, there will be an annual Susan Polgar World Open Championship for Girls (under 21). It will be held at the same time as the National Open in Las Vegas, Nevada. I expect more than 400 participants in our inaugural year in 2006.

Stone Mountain, Georgia

Next came a week-long special chess camp at Stone Mountain, Georgia

organized by Kay Umeakunne. Over 60 boys and girls attended this very unique camp. The youngest was about 6 years old.

Besides learning chess, the children were also able to swim and have play time. Some of the campers learned how to make chocolate chess pieces and other chess arts and crafts. They also competed in chess and bughouse tournaments and were involved in other educational activities.

I have been involved in many chess camps in the past, but this was one of the most special of all. Thank you Kay and all involved for doing something very special for the children.

Mexico City

By July 1, I was exiting a plane in Mexico City where I was made to feel at home by the organizers and high ranking officials who were waiting for my arrival. Next we drove in a special VIP vehicle to the Presidente InterContinental hotel where I checked into my room which had a magnificent view of the entire city with the beautiful mountain range at the edge of the horizon.

We then proceeded to the Casa Del Lago in the historic Chapultepec park. When I arrived, media and countless chess fans were waiting, and there were many billboards, banners and signs with my picture hanging everywhere. I have rarely experienced such a welcome.



After my interview with the media, I was immediately swamped with welcoming fans asking for autographs. The organizer even had to stop the session so I could attend the opening ceremony. Many of the chess VIPs from Mexico City were in attendance. I gave a 45 board simul and each of the participants were given special gifts from AKRO company. The most amazing thing was that around 1,000 people showed up just to watch the simul. The final score was 43W-1L-1D.

The next day saw the beginning of a very special scholastic tournament organized by Astrid Martin Del Campo, and sponsored by the AKRO company and the University of Mexico. The tournament was limited to 400 young players from ages 5-24, each of whom had to earn the right to compete in this event.



All the players received countless gifts including special embroidered commemorative polo shirts and backpacks, books, etc. The winners received laptops computers, top of the line pocket digital cameras, palm pilots, chess clocks, chess gears, chess computers, and much more; all courtesy of the Saggiante family and the AKRO company.

After welcoming the players, I gave an open Q&A session to the Mexican media while the players started their round. Many interesting questions were asked and it was done in a very friendly but professional format.

Following the Q&A session, I was driven to Cuernavaca for a 26 board simul against strong opponents. It is a beautiful city known for its special climate. The hosts of this simul were grandmaster Marcel Sisniega and FIDE Master Alberto Campos, sponsored by AKRO. It took place at a very historic museum and church before hundreds of spectators. The final score was 23W-1L-2D.



On Sunday, when I arrived at Casa Del Lago at the Chapultepec Park, more than 20,000 people were already at the park. What exposure for chess in Mexico City! A Q&A session was held along with the closing ceremony. Players of all ages were able to ask many questions. I love events like this because it gives the players and fans the opportunity to interact with the grandmasters.

Following the Q&A session, the organizers and sponsors awarded the prizes to the winners. Mr. Jorge Saggiante also announced that the winner of the Girl's section would receive a trip to Las Vegas in June 2006 for the inaugural Susan Polgar World Open Championship for Girls (under 21). In addition, he would like to sponsor an annual match between the children of Mexico against the children of the United States, similar to the Collins' Kids versus Iceland matches.

On the last night in Mexico City, I was invited to attend the Ballet Folklorico de Mexico at the historic Palacio de Bellas Artes and the performance was breathtaking.

This was the most spectacular and most professional children's event I have ever attended outside of the United States. Many special thanks to everyone at Casa del Lago especially Jose Luis Paredes Pacho and Myrna Ortega, chief organizer Astrid Martin del Campo, arbiter Enrique Zaragoza, head of PR Alberto Andrade, Alejandro Preve (a chess organizer and sponsor from Merida), GM Marcel Sisniega and FM Alberto Campos, and many others for putting together such an extravagant and magnificent event.



My biggest thanks go to Mr. and Mrs. Saggiante, their children and the AKRO company. They are among the most generous sponsors and wonderful people I have ever met. I think chess in Mexico will have a very bright future.

A Historic Televised Event

On July 10, 2005, a historic long distance match between Russia and the United States will take place. The four members of the U.S. team will be playing from the Nashville International Studios and the Russian players will be playing from St. Petersburg. The players will play the match via sensory boards.

This event will be professionally televised for approximately 50 countries and most major markets in the United States. It will air on July 24 to a potential audience of 300 million people.

There has never been an event like this before and I hope that it will be the beginning of something very special for chess. Below is the information from the organizers.

“Chess MasterMinds” Show

Nashville, Tennessee

On Sunday, July 24, 2005, the world will see a chess match that has not been done in 60 years. This is the first long-distance chess match to be held between the old Soviet Union, (Russia) and the USA since the end of WWII and the start of the cold war.

July 10, 2005 will be the date of the first of three long-distant chess matches that are scheduled between Russian and U.S. players. The games will be 20-minute (per player) matches between four Russian chess grandmasters versus four U.S. chess grandmasters. The games will be played over the Internet using Shahcom’s e-boards. The players for the first match are located in St. Petersburg, Russia and Nashville, Tennessee.

The production of this event, provided by Nashville International Studios, (NIS), will be taped on July 10, 2005, in Nashville, Tennessee, with feeds coming in from Russia. The show will be called Chess MasterMinds and will be aired Sunday, July 24, 2005. In addition, these matches will be produced for video and made available to the rest of the world through satellite up-links.

Featured in this event of the century will be some of the world's greatest chess grandmasters, such as Susan Polgar, who became the #1 ranked woman player in the world at age 15 and has ranked in the top three in the world for the last twenty straight years. Polgar is currently the #1 ranked woman in the United States.

Not only is Polgar a dynamic player, she is rated as one of the best players in the world in both the men and women's divisions. Her passion for teaching and promoting chess to children, young girls and women has truly earned Polgar the title of "Chess Ambassador."

Also in the match for the U.S. team is grandmaster Alex Onischuk. Rated #4 in the United States, his defense and counter attacks have made for some of the most dramatic play over the board of battle. Using a style similar to boxing legend Muhammad Ali's "rope a dope"; Alex will wait until an attacker has "punched himself out" and then deliver a lethal combination.

Onischuk was the Olympiad Silver Medalist in 1996 and Bronze Medalist in 1998. He competed on board one for the 2004 US Olympiad team, which placed fourth in the Olympiad.

Two other members of the U.S. Team are well known top American players. GM Alexander Stripunsky tied for first at the 2005 US Championship and he is always among the leaders in the Grand Prix. GM Boris Gulko is the only person to have won the USSR and USA Championship. Boris is also one of a few people who have a plus score against Garry Kasparov.

On the Russian Team, we will have Alexander Khalifman, he is rated #42 in the World, and has become one of the strongest contemporary chess players in the world. An International Grandmaster in 1990, he became the Champion of Russia in 1996. He has been the winner of World Chess Olympiads three times (1992, 2000 and 2002); Khalifman was a two-time St. Petersburg Champion, winning in 1996 and 1997. He was the FIDE World champion in 1999. In addition, Khalifman was the winner of the World Team Championship in 1997 and the Europe Team Championship 2003. In addition to being an excellent player, he is a respected chess journalist and the founder of grandmaster chess school and website.

Konstantin Sakaev, rated #30 in the world, was born on April 13, 1974, and is one of the leading Russian chess players. He became an International Grandmaster in 1992. He was the winner of the Youth Russian Championship in 1990, as well as the three-time winner of the World Youth Championship games in 1990, 1991 and 1992.

Sakaev participated in four of last FIDE World Championships (1999, 2000, 2001, and 2004). He was the Champion of Russia in 1999, the Champion of St. Petersburg in 1990 as well as a two-time winner of World Chess Olympiads in 1998 and 2000. Sakaev is a four-time winner of Russia Club Championship (1992, 1995, 2000 and 2001).

Our commentators hosting the Chess MasterMinds show will be Paul Truong and Phil Innes. Paul Truong is a FIDE Master and was Captain and Manager of the historic 2004 Women's Olympiad Silver Medalist team. Paul is also an 11-time National Champion. Phil Innes created the program for qualitative assessment of on-line arts education, which appeared before the Senate Technology Committee in Washington D.C. Synchronously with business activities, worked with the inventor of chess broadcasting technologies in St. Petersburg, Russia, since 1996, to promote greater world-wide interactions and audiences for chess. The match will also include two arbiters. The U.S. Arbiter is Harry Sabine and the Russian Arbiter is Igor Bolotinsky, who is now the #2 Arbiter in Russia.

In addition, NIS is in the planning stage for a match on October 29th (between World Champions Karpov and Susan Polgar), with former President Gorbachev. He has agreed to visit Lindsborg, Kansas, to promote a Chess for Peace program at the Karpov International School of Chess. We are looking forward to hosting former President Carter at the same time to make the first ever chess match with two former Presidents and Nobel Prize winners.

Russia

Khalifman (2658)

Sakaev (2672)

Alekseev (2625)

Vitiugov (2519)

USA

Susan Polgar (2577)

Onischuk (2628)

Gulko (2589)

Stripunsky (2565)

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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