



Chess Mom and Coach

There are approximately 1,600 children competing in the National K-12 / Collegiate Championship in Houston, Texas. Since I started attending a few years ago, this is the first time I am here as a chess mom and coach, because my son Tommy is playing his first ever national scholastic event in the K-1 division. I see things in a different light and there are routines my son and I have to follow.

COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



Breaking Through by Susan Polgar

The most important thing is that my son has to enjoy playing chess, studying the game and competing in tournaments. I have seen too many incidents of parents and coaches screaming at their children because of a lost game. Some of these kids were frightened to tears and that is so unfortunate.

Winning and losing is just a part of the game. There are valuable lessons that all children can learn with either result. Therefore, it is up to the parents and coaches to motivate them to learn and do the right things. Here are some of my suggestions to the parents and coaches of young players:

1. Control yourself

I realize that parents and coaches are disappointed when their youngsters do not win. But that is when they need you the most. Screaming, yelling, and hitting will not help and it can backfire. The children can get intimidated and may not be able to play at their full strength. In addition, they may start to hate chess or hate competing.

2. Stay strong, give support and encouragement

When your youngsters win, that's great. Congratulate them. However, when they lose, give them even more support and encouragement. That's when they need you the most. That is when their psyche is most vulnerable and when they need reassurance that you still love and support them.



3. Make it fun and motivating

Young children usually have difficulty focusing and concentrating for a long period of time. Therefore, you should take one game at a time and avoid discussing future games or opponents. Teach them to focus and concentrate on each move and each game, and when that game is over then focus and concentrate on the next game.

4. Rating does not matter

Too many parents and coaches are preoccupied with ratings. It's just a number. Ratings are unimportant at such a young age and they tend to be skewed depending on where the youngsters live. Additionally, many children play chess on the Internet and can improve in between tournaments, so their over-the-board rating may not reflect this. Teach the youngsters to play the positions and not the opponents. Do not let your youngsters overestimate or underestimate their opponents.

5. Follow the principles of chess

Teach your children to follow the basic principles of chess:

- **Control the Center!** — The center consists of the squares e4, d4, e5 and d5. So when you start the game place your pawns in the center to occupy and control it as much as you can.
- **Develop Your Pieces as Soon as Possible!** — Get your knights and bishops out. This should be done before you try to checkmate your opponent.

- **Castle as Soon as Possible!** — Castle at the very first chance you have in order to keep your king safe. Remember, you can't win if your king isn't safe and you get checkmated first. So don't forget to castle! Then after you castle, connect your rooks by developing your queen.
- **Keep Your Pieces Protected!** — Don't leave your pieces unprotected. Each and every piece you have is very valuable, so don't lose them.
- **Have Fun! Win with Grace and Lose with Dignity!** — First and foremost, chess should be fun. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose, it's all part of the game. When you win, be a good sport and don't trash talk or make fun of your opponent. When you lose, be an even better sport and not a sore loser. Shake hands and congratulate your opponent. This will go a long way toward making good friends.

6. Do not dwell on the past

Every youngster will have bad games here and there. If you want to go over the game quickly to learn from the mistakes, that is fine. But do not be so pre-occupied with the loss. The players need to move on and focus on the next game. Help your youngsters relax and concentrate in subsequent rounds. It will not help getting angry and upset over a bad loss. Otherwise, it can affect the next few games.

7. Don't play too quickly

Teach your children to use their time properly in all phases of the game. Too many children move at the speed of their opponents. Don't! Play at your own pace. Even when they have a winning position, they should still take their time and be very careful of traps and counter-attacks. As the saying goes, it isn't over until it's over. Therefore, every move in every position is important.

8. Conserve energy

I understand that this is tough to do. However, try to help your children conserve their energy. Many children want to run around and play actively. That is OK but not 15-30 minutes before the round. They should take a walk, get some fresh air, concentrate, and get their minds ready for the next battle.

2005 FIDE World Cup Knockout

The 2005 FIDE World Cup Knockout is taking place in Khanty - Mansyisk, Russia. 128 grandmasters are participating in this event which serves as a qualifier for the world championship.

Nine of the top-rated 15 players are absent, making the Ukrainian superstar Vassily Ivanchuk the top seed. He was promptly knocked out in the second round at the hands of the young Bulgarian star Cheparinov, who also happened to be Topalov's second in San Luis, Argentina.

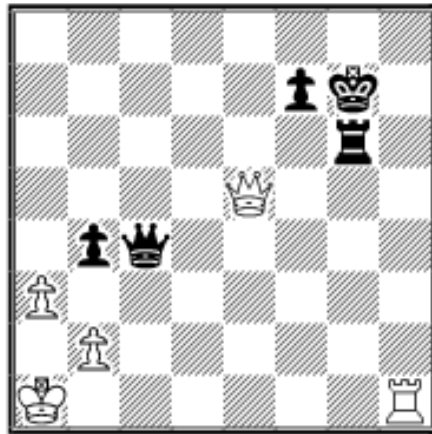
First round upsets included the ousting of Volotikin (2666), Karjakin (2658),

Nakamura (2662), Zvjaginsev (2659), Alekseev (2632), Jakovenko (2644), Azmaiparashvili (2658), Krasenkow (2658), Navara (2646), Granda (2637) and Movsesian (2635), etc. The biggest surprise for me was that Nakamura lost 0-2.

Second round upsets included the reigning World Junior Champion Mamedyarov (2674), Bologan (2682), Moiseenko (2663), Khalifman (2653) and Sasikiran (2663), etc.

The knockout format can be very exciting and even though I disagreed with using it to decide the world championship, I have no problem when it is for the World Cup or as a world championship qualifier. However, my biggest complaint is with the fast time control, which has caused so many incredible blunders. Here are some of them:

GM Korneev, O. (2599) – GM Miroshnichenko, E. (2634)
2005 World Cup Knockout (Round 1)

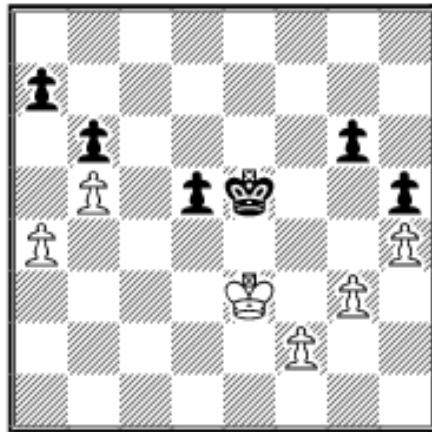


Black resigned??

He could have played 1...Rf6! 2.Rg1+ Kh7! 3. Qxf6 Qa2+! 4. Kxa2 b3+! 5. Kxb3, Ka1 or Kb1 stalemate (3.Qh5+ Rh6 4.Qf5+ Rg6 5.Rh1+ Kg7 +=).

A draw would have allowed Miroshnichenko to advance to the next round. By resigning, the match ended in a tie and Korneev defeated Miroshnichenko in the rapid playoff by the score of 1½-½.

GM Bareev, E. (2675) – GM Naiditsch, A. (2641)
2005 World Cup Knockout (Round 2)



1...d4+??

Black could have easily drawn with 1...Ke6 2.Kd4 Kd6 3.f3 Ke6 4.g4? (4.Ke3 Kf5 5.Kd3 Ke5=) 4...g5! 5.gxh5 (5.hxg5 h4 6.Ke3 d4+ 7.Kf2 d3--+) 5...gxh4 6.h6 Kf7 7.Ke3 h3 8.Kf2 d4--+.

2.Kd3 Kd5 3.f3 Ke5

3...Kc5 4.g4 Kd5 5.gxh5 gxh5 6.f4 Ke6 7.Kxd4 Kf5 8.Ke3 Kg4 9.Ke4 Kxh4 10.f5

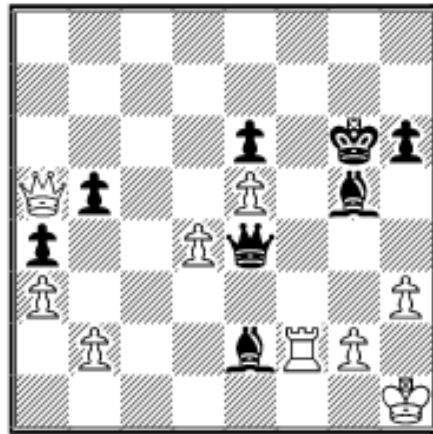
Kg5 11.Ke5 h4 12.f6 h3 13.f7 h2 14.f8Q h1Q 15.Qg7+ Kh4 16.Qh6+ Kg3 17.Qxh1+-.

4.Kc4 1-0

Instead of moving to the third round, Naiditsch lost the playoff match and was painfully eliminated.

GM Kamsky, G. (2690) – GM Bocharev, D. (2592)

2005 World Cup Knockout (Round 2)



1.d5??

Kamsky could have achieved a very strong advantage with 1.Qc7 Bf4 2.Rxf4 Qxf4 3.Qc2+ Kg5 4.Qxe2 Qxd4 5.Qxb5±.

1...Bc4 2.d6 Qxe5 3.Qa7 Bf4 4.Rxf4 Qxf4 5.d7 Qd6

Here, Bocharev could have eliminated Kamsky with this easy move 5...Qf1+!

6.Kh2 (6.Qg1 Qd3 7.Qa7 Bd5 8.Qf2 Be4+) 6...Bd5+ 7.Qg1 Qf4+ 8.Kh1 Qc7+.

6.Qb7 Qd1+ 7.Kh2 Qd6 and the players agreed to a draw. Kamsky went on to beat Bocharev in the rapid playoff by the score of 2-0.

There were many more missteps by other players, which shows that in a pressure packed situation (especially with fast time controls), even grandmasters make horrendous blunders.

It Takes a Village!

When the Susan Polgar South Texas Chess Center opened earlier this year, many locals in Corpus Christi volunteered their time and effort to help run the operation. Kids are being taught chess daily and the excitement in the area is at a peak. When I arrived on Wednesday before the event in Houston, approximately 150 players, parents and coaches showed up for various events. Three local television networks came to cover the activities and I was also on two very popular local radio shows including the #1 Spanish Radio station in the area. The local support is tremendous!



A delegation of more than 50 from Corpus Christi showed up for the National K-12. In addition, many parents and coaches volunteered to hand out flyers and promoting girl's chess. This is what it's all about! It takes the cooperation of many to push chess to the forefront.



It's a Matter of Taste

There have been many heated debates on the Internet recently about promoting chess in general, promoting chess for women and promoting chess for young people. People are free to disagree with my views but this is where I stand and I am proud of my position.

1. Class and dignity

Anyone can promote chess anyway they wish. I believe in promoting chess with class and dignity. I love this game which has given me so much. I want young people from across the USA to be able to benefit from this beautiful game.

As a world champion and a role model for countless young people, I will

continue to set a good example for them. Parents and coaches can feel safe that their youngsters will learn proper things from me. I do not care for chess politics and I am not here to promote special causes or political issues. If others feel that it is OK to promote women's chess or chess for young people by posing nude or in skimpy bikinis then let them. I will always dress appropriately in all events. My message is that you can look good and behave with class at the same time.

Chess can help children excel in school and with their every day lives. If you want something bad enough, you can get it with hard work. I promote chess with substance and not artificial hype. Physical beauty fades with age, but the accomplishments on the chessboard will be part of history forever. That is the best way to make a name for yourself. That's substance!

2. Win with Grace, Lose with Dignity

I will always teach young people to follow this motto. I believe in good sportsmanship and doing the right things.

3. Excel through Chess!

The first annual Susan Polgar National Open Championship for girls in January 2006 in Corpus Christi, Texas offers a laptop to the winner of each division beside the normal trophies and medals. Then there are other chess prizes such as \$200 for 2nd, \$150 for 3rd, \$100 for 4th and \$50 for 5th (in chess products) in each section. Texas Tech University is offering three \$1,000 scholarships! World Chess Network offers a free one year Gold membership (\$49.95) to each participant of the Susan Polgar National Open Championship for Girls and one \$1,000 scholarship! This way, young players can continue to learn, play and improve every day online. Other sponsors include USCF Sales, Polgar Chess, International Chess Marketing, Chess on DVDs, House of Staunton, Excalibur Electronics, World Chess Hall of Fame, ChessBase, Viva Media, Mon Roi, etc. All in all, we have sponsorship from 26 different companies to date! What message does that give? It says that these companies believe in what we do with chess promotion for young people, especially girls.

Earlier this year at the second annual Susan Polgar National Invitational for Girls, we awarded more than \$155,000 in prizes, stipends and scholarships including 3 full scholarships to UTD (University of Texas in Dallas). I am working with more colleges and universities to offer more scholarships to young people. Thank you so much for all your support.



4. Promoting the Positive, Not the Negative

When parents and coaches ask me about various events, I always encourage the young people to play as much as possible. I always tell kids about upcoming tournaments, regardless of who organizes them. This is for the benefit of chess and the entire chess community.

Unfortunately, some people feel that they must malign other events or people in order to promote their own activities. One example took place during the National K-12 Championship in Houston. Some organizers were handling out flyers to promote their tournaments. When some parents and coaches ask about another event, they immediately told these people not to take their kids to them.

I am very much against this kind of behavior. I work with anyone who puts the best interest of chess and children first. I encourage all parents and coaches to stay away from people who behave inappropriately. Chess needs more unity, not divisiveness. We as parents and coaches must set good examples for the children.

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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