



COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



Breaking Through by Susan Polgar

A Groundbreaking Opportunity

I have been in chess for over thirty-three years, and I have traveled to about fifty countries, as well as all over the United States. Yet, a recent trip on my schedule stands out as memorable.

Not long ago, Paul Truong, my business manager, received an email from a gentleman by the name of James R. Wilkinson. It was similar to thousands of other emails that he received about chess. The only difference being that this gentleman purported to be the Chief of Staff for the Department of the Treasury.

Well, Paul was taken aback by this, because bogus email solicitations are ubiquitous. He was unsure as to whether this was real or not, but just in case he suggested that I give Mr. Wilkinson a call.



With Chief of Staff Wilkinson

I was skeptical as well, but I made the call nevertheless. As it turned out, Mr. Wilkinson *is* the Chief of Staff of the Treasury Department! The next question that occurred to me was, “what on earth would he want with me?”

Anyway, Mr. Wilkinson wanted to invite me and my family to the U.S. Department of the Treasury in Washington, DC to give a lecture about chess! Of course, I gladly accepted. After all, I spent the last five years promoting chess in America and this was an opportunity that could not be refused.

I usually book my events up to two years in advance, so finding a suitable date on short notice was difficult, but we eventually succeeded in finding a mutually acceptable date. In fact it would immediately follow my [trip](#) to Cincinnati for the Cris Collinsworth ProScan Foundation. I told my children about it and they were quite excited about visiting

Washington, DC.



Outside the Treasury

On the first day, we had a general tour of the city. It was a wonderful experience for all of us, as well as an educational one for my children. It is quite different learning things from a text book versus experiencing it in person. They got to see just about all of the most important places there is to see in the nation's capital.

On the second day, thanks to the Chief of Staff, we received special VIP passes for a tour of the Bureau of Printing and Engraving. This gave us access to areas not open to the public, and we got to see the step by step process of how money is printed, from sorting the paper, the computerized scanning, the cutting, the packaging and wrapping, etc. It was fascinating! One of the funniest signs we saw was: "Free Samples Tomorrow."



With Secretary Paulson

On the third day, we went to the Department of the Treasury to meet the Chief of Staff. Wilkinson then introduced us to the Treasury Secretary, Hank Paulson. After a short tour of his beautiful office with a direct view to the White House, Secretary Paulson introduced us to Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez. As soon as the word chess was mentioned, Secretary Gutierrez immediately boasted about the Miami-Dade College Chess. He is Cuban American and he is very proud of their accomplishment.

After this meeting, we had a private lunch with the Chief of Staff, during which he told us the spellbinding story of how he learned chess. A little more than a year ago, the Chief of Staff was in Iraq on official business. The place where he was visiting got hit by an enemy missile, but luckily it did not explode. However, because of security concerns, he had to be moved to a safer location, and while he was there he learned the game of chess – from the Iraqi guards! From that moment on, he has been fascinated with the royal game.



After lunch, I spoke to a group of about twenty senior staffers. One of whom is Treasurer Anna Escobedo Cabral. Both Ms. Cabral's and Mr. Paulson's signatures are on all the new bills. I must say, it was quite an impressive gathering of government functionaries.

During this hour long discussion, I presented the many benefits of chess and how it can create the foundation for strong leadership. Everyone was very supportive and we discussed plans on how to further promote chess. A major chess event at the Treasury Department and perhaps the White House is not out of the question. I will continue working with the Chief of Staff and update you as events unfold. This is a ground breaking opportunity for U.S. chess!

Kramnik – Leko, Rapid Match

On April 23-30, Vladimir Kramnik, the reigning world champion, took on Hungarian Peter Leko, in an eight-game rapid chess match in Leko's hometown of Miskolc, Hungary. In 2004, Leko held Kramnik to a 7-7 draw in a world championship match.

Kramnik struck first by winning game three, and then took a commanding lead by winning again in game five. However, Leko closed the gap by winning game six, but two further draws ended the match in Kramnik's favor 4½-3½.

Here are the three decisive games of the match. The difference was Kramnik's ability to take advantage of Leko's mistakes, while Leko failed to capitalize on his winning chances.

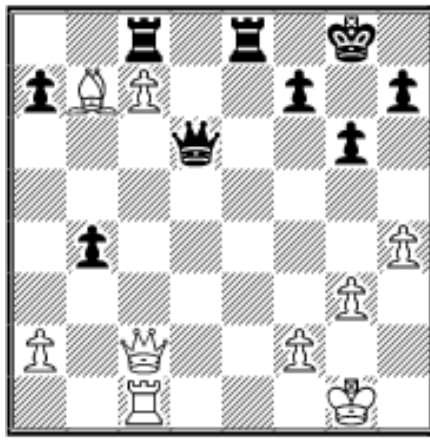
Kramnik, Vladimir (2772) - Leko, Peter (2738)

Rapid Match Miskolc, HUN (3), 04.26.2007 [E15]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 b6 4.g3 Ba6 5.b3 Bb4+ 6.Bd2 Be7 7.Bg2 c6 8.Bc3 d5 9.Ne5 Nfd7 10.Nxd7 Nxd7 11.Nd2 0-0 12.0-0 Rc8 13.e4 c5 14.exd5 exd5 15.dxc5 dxc4 16.c6 cxb3 17.Re1 b2 18.Bxb2 Nc5 19.Nc4 Bxc4 20.Qg4 Bg5 21.Qxc4 Nd3 22.Be5 Nxe1 23.Rxe1 Bf6 24.Bxf6 Qxf6 25.c7 Qd6 26.Rc1 b5 27.Qc2 b4 28.Bb7 g6 29.h4 Rfe8



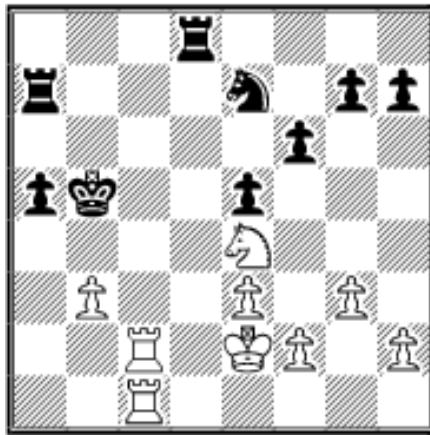
30.Qa4 Qd2 31.Qc6 a5 32.Bxc8 Rxc8 33.Kg2



Kg7 34.Rc2 Qd3 35.Rc5 a4 36.Qxa4 Qe4+ 37. Kh2 Qd4 38.Qc2 h5 39.Kg2 Qd6 40.Qb2+ f6 41. Qc2 Kf7 42.Qc4+ Kg7 43.Rc6 Qd7 44.Qc5 Kf7 45.Kh2 Kg7 46.Qb6 Qf5 47.Qd4 Kf7 48.Rxf6+ Qxf6 49.Qd7+ 1-0

Kramnik, Vladimir (2772) - Leko, Peter (2738)
Rapid Match Miskolc, HUN (5), 04.28.2007 [A30]

1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.Nc3 Nc6 4.g3 d5 5.d4 cxd4 6. Nxd4 dxc4 7.Nxc6 Qxd1+ 8.Nxd1 bxc6 9.Bg2 Nd5 10.Ne3 e6 11.Nxc4 Ba6 12.b3 Bb4+ 13.Bd2 Bxd2+ 14.Nxd2 Nb4 15.Kd1 0-0-0 16.a3 Nd5 17.Rc1 Kb7 18.Ke1 e5 19.e3 Kb6 20.Bf1 Bb5 21.Bc4 f6 22.Ke2 Rd7 23.Rc2 a5 24.Rhc1 Ne7 25.Bxb5 cxb5 26.a4 Rhd8 27.axb5 Kxb5 28.Ne4 Ra7



29.g4 h6 30.h4 Kb6 31.g5 hxg5 32.hxg5 fxg5 33. Rg1 Rc8 34.Rd2 Nc6 35.Rxg5 a4 36.bxa4 Rxa4 37.Nd6 Rc7 38.Ne8 Rca7 39.Nxg7 Ra2 40.Rxa2 Rxa2+ 41.Kf3 Kc5 42.Nf5 Nb4 43.Ng3 Kd5 44. Ne4 Ra8 45.Nf6+ Ke6 46.Ng4 Nd3 47.Rg6+ Kf5 48.Rf6+ Kg5 49.Rd6 Rf8+ 50.Kg3 e4 51.Rd5+ Rf5 52.f4+ Kg6 53.Rd4 Nc5 54.Ne5+ Kg7 55.Rc4 Nd3 56.Nxd3 exd3 57.Rd4 1-0

Leko, Peter (2738) - Kramnik, Vladimir (2772)
Rapid Match Miskolc, HUN (6), 04.28.2007 [C84]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.d3 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.a4 Bd7 9.Nc3 Na5 10.Ba2 b4 11.Ne2 c5 12.Ng3 0-0 13.Nh4 g6 14.Bh6 Re8 15.Bd2 Bg4 16.f3 Be6 17.Bxe6 fxe6 18.f4 exf4 19.Bxf4 Nc6 20.Nf3 Nd7 21.c3 bxc3 22.bxc3 Nde5



23.Bxe5 dxe5 24.Qc2 Ra7 25.Rfd1 Bf8 26.Nf1 Bh6 27.N1d2 Bxd2 28.Rxd2 Rd7 29.Rb1 Kg7 30. h3 Qc7 31.Rf1 Nd8 32.Rdf2 Qd6 33.Qc1 Nf7 34. Nh2 h5 35.Qe3 Ree7 36.Rf3 c4 37.dxc4 Qd2 38. Qb6 Ng5 39.Re3 Rf7 40.h4 Rb7 41.Qc5 Rb2 42. Qxe5+ Kh7 43.Qxg5 Rxf1+ 44.Nxf1 Qf2+ 45. Kh2 Qxf1 46.Rg3 Qf7 47.c5 Re2 48.Qe5 Qb7 49. Rxg6 1-0

Gausdal Classics International Chess Tournament

The Gausdal Classics took place in Norway from April 18-26, 2007. The field included an interesting group of players. The headliner of the

event was the wunderkind Magnus Carlsen, who is now only seven points away from the charmed 2700 mark. Other big names included the legendary Hungarian GM Lajos Portisch and America's own IM Irina Krush. The most unusual participant was American NM, Dr. Eric Moskow.

Irina took an early lead by defeating IM Jones and GM Dreev, and seemed to be on her way to a GM norm. Unfortunately, three consecutive losses in the middle of tournament did her in. She closed out the event with a draw against the tournament winner Magnus Carlsen and

a win against NM Moscow. In spite of the three devastating losses, Irina still ended up with an even score and a performance rating of 2546.

Carlsen won the tournament by 1½ points, after defeating his main rival GM Krasenkow in the last round, even though he only needed a draw to secure first place.

Here are the final standings:

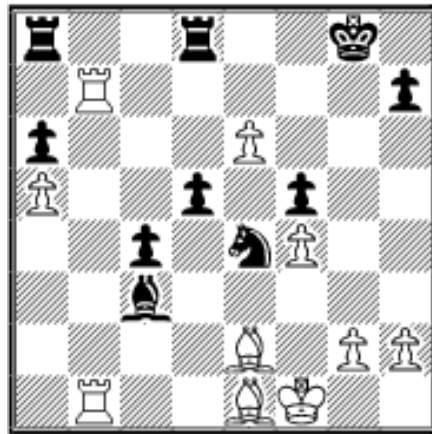
- GM Magnus Carlsen, NOR (2690) 7.0 (a 2748 performance!)
- GM Mikal Krasenkow, POL (2651); GM Lajos Portisch, HUN (2512); GM Eduardas Rozentalis, LIT (2578) 5½
- GM Kaido Kulaots, EST (2526) 5.0
- IM Irina Krush, USA (2449) 4½
- GM Alexei Dreev, RUS (2658) 4½
- GM Kjetil Lie, NOR (2529) 4.0
- IM Gawain Jones, ENG (2509) 2½
- NM Eric Moskow, USA (2260) 1.0

Here are some of Irina's best games:

Krush, Irina (2464) – Jones, Gawain (2518)

Gausdal Classics (1) 04.19.2007 [A57]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.b6 d6 6.Nc3 Qxb6 7.e4 g6 8.a4 Bg7 9.a5 Qb4 10. Ra4 Qb7 11.Nf3 Bg4 12.Be2 Bxf3 13.Bxf3 Nbd7 14.O-O O-O 15.Be2 Ne8 16.f4 Bd4+ 17. Kh1 Nc7 18.Bc4 Nb5 19.Qd3 Nxc3 20.bxc3 Bg7 21.Bd2 f5 22.Rb1 Qc8 23.Ra2 Nf6 24. exf5 Qxf5 25.Qxf5 gxf5 26.Be1 Ne4 27.Ra3 Rfb8 28.Rab3 Rd8 29.Kg1 Bf6 30.Kf1 e5 31. dxe6 d5 32.Be2 c4 33.Rb7 Bxc3



Bxf3 18.gxf3 Ne5 19.Rh5 Rc5

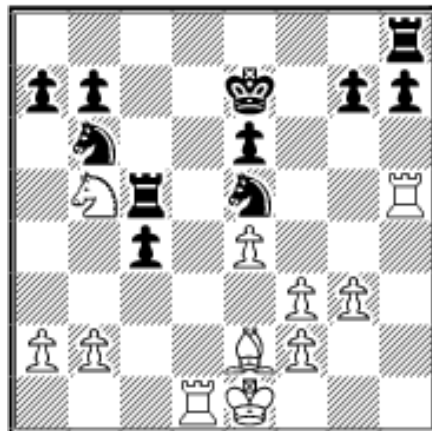
34.Bh5 Bf6 35.e7 Re8 36.Bxe8 Rxe8 37.R1b6 d4 38.Rxa6 d3 39.Rxf6 Nxf6 40.a6 Kf7 41.a7 Nd5 42.Rb8 Nc7 43.Bb4 Na8 44.Ke1 c3 45.Rxe8 Kxe8 46.Bxc3 Kxe7 47.Kd2 Ke6 48.Kxd3 Kd5 49.Ba5 Kc5 50.Bd8 Kd5 51.h3 h5 52.Ke3 1-0

Dreev, Alexey (2633) – Krush, Irina (2464)

Gausdal Classics (2) 04.19.2007 [D23]

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.c4 dxc4 4.Qa4+ Nc6 5.Nc3 Nd5 6.e4 Nb6 7.Qd1 Bg4 8.d5 Ne5 9.Bf4 Ng6 10. Bg3 e5 11.dxe6 Qxd1+ 12.Rxd1 fxe6 13.Be2 Bd6 14.Nb5 Bxg3 15.hxg3 Ke7 16.Nxc7 Rac8 17.Nb5

20.f4 Nd3+ 21.Kd2 Nxf2 22.Rxc5 Nxe4+ 23.Kc2 Nxc5 24.Bf3 a6 25.Nc3 Rd8 26.Rg1 Rd3 27.Be2 Rd4 28.Re1 Kf6 29.Bf3 h6 30.Nd1 Nd3 31.Re2 Na4 32.a3 b5 33.Ne3 Nac5 34.Bg2 h5 35.Kc3 Rd6 36.Nxc4 Na4+ 37.Kb3 0-1



Krush, Irina (2464) – Carlsen, Magnus (2693)

Gausdal Classics (8) 04.25.2007 [E25]

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.f3 d5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.



bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 Nxd5 8.dxc5 Qa5 9.e4 Nf6 10.Be3 O-O 11.Qb3 Nfd7 12.a4 Qc7 13.Qa3 Na6 14. Bxa6 bxa6 15.Ne2 a5 16.O-O Ba6 17.Rfe1 Rfc8 18.Nd4 Nxc5 19.Nb5 Bxb5 20.axb5 Nd3 21.Re2 Qc4 22.Rd2 h6 23.Qxa5 Nc5 24.Bxc5 Qxc5+ 25.Kh1 Rab8 26.Qxa7 Qxc3 27.Qd4 Qxd4 28.Rxd4 Rxb5 ½-½

2007 Sigeman & Co. Chess Tournament

At the same time that Gausdal was taking place in Norway, the 15th Sigeman & Co. Chess Tournament took place in Malmö, Sweden. The biggest names of this event was legendary GM Jan Timman of the Netherlands and Ivan Cheparinov of Bulgaria, who is best known as a second for former world champion Veselin Topalov.

Cheparinov took the early lead and never looked back. He won the event with one round to spare and finished with a 1½ point margin. After five rounds, Timman was at –1. But he scored three consecutive wins and scored 3½ points in the last four rounds to jump into a tie for second with GM Tiger Hillarp-Persson and GM Emanuel Berg of Sweden.

Here are the final standings:

- GM Ivan Cheparinov, BUL 7.0
- GM Jan Timman, NED; GM Emanuel Berg, SWE; GM Tiger Hillarp-Persson, SWE 5½
- IM Pontus Carlsson, SWE 5.0
- GM Vassilios Kotronias, GRE 4½
- GM Erwin I'Ami NED, GM Parimarjan Negi, IND 4.0
- GM Jonny Hector SWE, IM Emil Hermansson, SWE 2.0

Match of the Chess Legends

The Hungarian Chess Federation recently organized a “Match of the Chess Legends” between Hungarian chess legend Lajos Portisch and former world champion Boris Spassky. The event took place from April 13-15, 2007 in Hévíz, Hungary. The format was a six game rapid chess match (20 minutes + 5 seconds per move).

Hévíz lies in the west of Hungary and is famous for the Hévíz Spa. The venue was the Hotel Palace Superior Hévíz, which was also the main sponsor of the match. The hotel is located at the Hévíz Thermal Lake, which is famous for its magnificent and therapeutic water.

Spassky struck immediately in the first game to lead 1-0. The next two games were drawn. In game four, Spassky inexplicably blundered a knight in one move and immediately resigned, allowing Portisch to tie the match. The last two games ended in draws for a final 3-3 score. Here is the best game of the match:

Spassky, Boris (2548) - Portisch, Lajos (2512)

Match of Chess legends Heviz (1), 2007 [C67]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 Nxe4 5.d4 Nd6 6.Bxc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 Nf5 8.Qxd8+ Kxd8 9.Nc3 Ne7 10.Bf4 Ng6 11.Bg3 Ke8 12.Rad1 Bg4 13.Rd3 h5 14.h3 Bxf3 15.Rxf3 Rd8 16.Rd1 Rxd1+ 17.Nxd1 h4 18.Bh2 Rh5 19.Re3 Bc5 20.Re4 Kd7 21.b4 Be7 22.Ne3 Nf8 23.Kf1 Ne6 24.Ke2 g6 25.c3 Rh8 26.Ng4 Ng7?! 27.e6+ Nxe6 28.Ne5+ Ke8 29.Nxg6 fxg6 30.Rxe6 Kf7 31.Re4 Bd6 32.Bf4 Rh5 33.Be3 a5 34.a3 axb4 35.axb4 c5 36.b5 b6 37.c4 Rh8? 38.Bg5 Ra8 39.Bxh4 Ra2+ 40.Kf3 Ra3+ 41.Kg4 Ra2 42. Bg3 Rd2 43.h4 Kf6 44.Kf3 Rd3+ 45.Ke2 Rc3 46.





Bf4 Kf5 47.f3 Rc2+ 48.Bd2 Bg3 49.Rg4 Be5 50. Kd3 Ra2 51.h5 gxh5 52.Rg5+ Ke6 53.Rxh5 Bg3 54.Rh3 Be5 55.g4 Ra1 56.Rh6+ Kf7 57.f4 Bd6 58. Ke4 Rd1 59.Be3 Ra1 60.f5 Ra4 61.Kd5 Ra3 62. Re6 Rd3+ 63.Kc6 Rc3 64.g5 Rxc4 65.g6+ Kg8 66.Bh6 1-0

A Hero of the Virginia Tech Tragedy

On the morning of April 16, 2007, the worst shooting tragedy in the United States took place at Virginia Tech. Seung-Hui Cho killed thirty-two people and wounded many more before committing suicide.



Derek O'Dell

One of the injured students was Derek O'Dell, the President of the Virginia Tech Chess Club and this year VT Intramural Chess Champion. Derek's heroic and precise thinking helped save his own life as well as some of his classmates. I spoke to Derek's father and no words can describe their emotions.

Here is what Michael Atkins wrote about the event. This article has input from Derek O'Dell, Roger O'Dell, and Rusty Potter.

From every tragic drama and, in particular, those surrounding a mass shooting, heroes arise: ordinary people who do extraordinary things in the midst of a chaotic crisis. One of the heroes that emerged from the April 16th Virginia Tech massacre is a chess player.

Derek O'Dell is both the President of the Virginia Tech Chess Club and this year's Va. Tech Intramural Chess Champion. He is a sophomore majoring in Biological Sciences and Pre-Veterinary Medicine. Virginia Tech is located in southwestern Virginia in the small town of Blacksburg.

Derek was in German class when the deranged student burst in and immediately began shooting, leaving no time to prepare or respond. Cho Seung-Hui apparently shot the first student he saw, who was seated in the front row. The gunman then turned and shot the class instructor, Prof. James Bishop. The killer promptly fired at virtually every other member of the class as they ducked for cover.

Derek, sitting in the second row, was shot in the arm as he crouched. He was more fortunate than most. Moving closer after quickly re-loading, Cho then aimed a second time at many students. The professor and several students were shot execution-style at close range, seemingly to ensure their deaths. In all, 13 of the 15 students in Derek's class and the professor were shot. Six of the 13 victims died. After finishing his German class rampage, the shooter left to attack other classrooms.

Derek rushed to the door and slammed it shut. He was quickly joined by two uninjured classmates, Trey Perkins, and Katelyn Carney. They faced a very difficult dilemma: since there was no suitable furniture to barricade the door, they would have to attempt to prevent the attacker from re-entering by pushing against the door with their bodies. The murderer did indeed return to their classroom, perhaps with the grim intent to finish off any survivors. Unable to re-enter, the frustrated Cho emptied a cartridge of bullets into the door.

While Derek and his two classmates waged a desperate struggle to keep the door closed, bullets pierced the door. Katelyn was shot through the hand as the three watched. Another bullet grazed her head. Then the door opened a couple of inches. Cho's gun aimed menacingly at Garrett Evans, an already wounded student lying in close range on the floor. Pressing hard again, the door was re-closed. After moving down the hall, Cho returned a third time, and again was kept out. Soon thereafter, the killer turned the gun on himself, resigning from the battle, and ended it all. Due to the timely actions of these brave students, several lives were saved, including their own. Garrett saw it unfold before his eyes, unable to help, but gave them due credit for saving his life in a subsequent interview on national TV.

Derek, too, was interviewed, photographed, and taped dozens of times by the news media from across the country and around the world for much of the following week. Describing his assailant, Derek said, "He just opened the door and started shooting. He didn't say anything - that was the weirdest part. No screaming, no yelling. He just shot people - he was like the silent killer." One can only imagine what these students at Virginia Tech are going to have to deal with in the coming months. Trauma like this produces Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and students who were not even directly involved could easily be affected.

The chess connection to Derek became clear at a recent meeting of the Arlington Chess Club when member Chris Bush reported that Derek was a former chess student of both himself and Rusty Potter. That a chess player became a hero really isn't that surprising when you think about it. Chess teaches you to make correct decisions under pressure, often with little advance notice and little time left for further thought. On April 16th, Derek was obviously forced to do just this for both his own survival as well as the survival of his remaining classmates. While it is extremely sad that this horrific event ever happened, the fact that a fellow chess player could step up and respond admirably to the crisis gives honor to players everywhere. There can be no doubt that Derek's quick-thinking saved lives in his classroom and helped to checkmate his crazed opponent.

In honor of his heroism, the USCF is giving O'Dell a free room and entry at the US Open and a free lifetime USCF membership. Also, the Susan Polgar Foundation is awarding O'Dell a \$1,000 cash scholarship and \$250 in chess books and equipment to the Virginia Tech Chess Club.

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

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