



COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



Breaking Through by Susan Polgar

Scotland, Mexico and China

I had the pleasure of attending the first ever Chess in the Schools and Communities International Conference (CISCCON) held at the King's College Conference Centre, University of Aberdeen, in Aberdeen, Scotland from August 30 – September 1, 2007. Representatives from about fifteen nations attended. Many areas of chess and education were on the [agenda](#), including:

- Children's Involvement in Education: Ethical Issues and Empowering Research Policy and Practice
- Chess and Education: the Re-creation of Learning School, Home and Community
- Children and Social Capital
- Chess: Just a Game or a Powerful Teaching Strategy for Learning Mathematics
- The Rewards of Self-Control and the Joys of Concentration: What Chess Might Teach Us About Learning
- Children's Health and Well Being: the Process of Mentoring and Coaching in Informal Education

The hospitality was great and the conference went extremely well, as many views about chess and education were shared among some of the foremost experts in this area. In addition, a new centralized chess education and research [website](#) will be created within the next few weeks. It will include a lot of the valuable research that was presented at this conference.



Also, all future chess and education research from around the world can be placed on this website. It can be searched by subject, author or title, etc. This will be a monumental step towards centralizing information about chess and education.

The World Chess Championship in Mexico City

The next World Chess Championship begins on Wednesday September 12, 2007. The format will be an eight person double round robin [tournament](#). Three players qualified by finishing in the top four in the previous World Chess Championship tournament in San Luis, Argentina. They are: Vishy Anand (India), Peter Svidler (Russia) and Alexander Morozevich (Russia). Reigning World Champion Vladimir Kramnik (Russia) qualified by defeating Veselin Topalov (Bulgaria), the winner of the San Luis World Championship, in a match in Elista.

The final four players qualified via a series of candidates' matches. Here are the results of those matches:

Aronian	7.0 - 5.0	Carlsen
J. Polgar	2½ - 3½	Bareev
Adams	5½ - 3½	Shirov
Gelfand	5½ - 3½	Kasimdzhanov
Ponomarev	2½ - 3½	Rublevsky
Leko	3½ - ½	Gurevich
Kamsky	3½ - ½	Bacrot
Grischuk	3½ - 1½	Malakhov
Aronian	3½ - 2½	Shirov
Leko	3½ - 1½	Bareev
Grischuk	5½ - 3½	Rublevsky
Gelfand	3½ - 1½	Kamsky

I recently conducted a World Championship poll in which Anand and Kramnik were voted the favorites to win. Here are the results:

- Anand 40%
- Kramnik 34%
- Aronian 16%
- Leko 4%
- Gelfand 3%
- Morozevich 2%
- Grischuk 1%
- Svidler 0%



China, the Chess Superpower

When Xie Jun became the World Women's Champion, chess became much more popular in China. Now after a decade and a half, China has become a chess superpower.

During the past few weeks, China and Russia engaged in a ten player match with five male and five female players. The fourth China versus Russia chess match took place from August 18 - 31, 2007 in Nizhniy Novgorod, Russia. Every player from each team (male and female) had to face the other team twice (one white and one black). China won the match by five points.

Here are the final standings:

1	Alekseev, Evgeny	7.0
2	Inarkiev, Ernesto	5½
3	Jakovenko, Dmitry	5.0
4	Tomashevsky, Evgeny	3½
5	Timofeev, Artyom	3½

Total score for the Russian Men's Team: 24½.

1	Kovalevskaya, Ekaterina	5½
2	Korbut, Ekaterina	5.0
3	Kosintseva, Nadezhda	5.0
4	Kosintseva, Tatiana	5.0
5	Tairova, Elena	2½

Total score for the Russian Women's Team: 23.0. Total score for Russia: 47½.

1	Bu Xiangzhi	5.0
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2	Wang Hao	5½
3	Wang Yue	5½
4	Zhang Pengxiang	5.0
5	Ni Hua	4½

Total score for the Chinese Men's Team: 25½.

1	Ruan Lufei	6.0
2	Zhao Xue	5½
3	Shen Yang	5½
4	Huang Qian	5.0
5	Wang Yu A	5.0

Total score for Chinese Women's Team: 27.0. Total score for China: 52½.



*Susan Polgar with David Leslie (l) and
Lord Provost of Aberdeen, Peter Stephen (r)*

USCF Q&A

How did the USCF Chairman position come about? What is your opinion about these new titles?

After the new board was elected, there were two candidates for the position of President, current President Bill Goichberg and myself. We each have our own strengths and weaknesses. Bill and I discussed this situation at length to come up with the most efficient way to maximize our talents to best help the USCF. In addition, we have a very unique board with exceptional talents and expertise in various areas that can greatly help the USCF.

So the idea of creating different positions arose. Bill, with decades of experience, knows the ins and outs and the structure of the USCF quite well. I am best in my own environment, which is to be the public face and voice of the USCF to positively promote chess and deal with potential supporters and sponsors.

The USCF by-laws committee and Mr. Harold Winston were consulted about the legality of this idea. They came to the conclusion that there is nothing in the USCF by-laws that would prevent it. Therefore, in the first meeting of the new board, this idea was proposed and we had unanimous votes for every position. This was a triumphant first step to unite the board, especially after a very bitter election.

How will you deal with those who were very critical of you during the election?

I want to unite everyone for the best interest of chess. I am not a vindictive person and I have no interest in revenge. I will lead by example. I was elected by the members to change the USCF for the better and that is what I will concentrate on.

Do you think it is possible to unite the various membership groups?

Yes, but I cannot do it alone. I need the cooperation of my fellow board members. Before we can unite people, we need to show everyone the proper respect.

What is your view about chess and education? Should chess be a part of the school curriculum or after school program?

I think this is absolutely essential. The future of chess depends on it. In many countries, there are a lot more young players than adults and this trend will not change any time soon. In addition, research has proved that chess can help children in many ways. This is why we must continue to push the agenda of chess and education forward, especially chess in the schools.

What is your goal with SPICE? What will be the relationship between SPICE and the USCF?

The goal with SPICE is to promote chess as vehicle for enriching education, as well as to serve as the global center for chess research, education and development. We also support and promote competitive chess at the college level. I hope that SPICE will be able to help the USCF in many ways for years to come.

Is there is a conflict of interest in being the Chairman of the USCF and the President of the Susan Polgar Foundation?

Absolutely not! SPICE and the SPF are here to complement the USCF, not work against it. The success of SPICE and SPF will help the mission of the USCF. The same can be said about the success of UTD, UMBC, AF4C and many other chess organizations. The federation has had a poor history of reaching out to work with others, and this will be one of the areas that will be improved.

There are more organized chess players outside of the USCF than there are in it. Do you think it is possible to change this?

Yes. I view this as a positive thing. It shows me that there are quite a few people interested in playing chess. It also shows that the USCF has not done enough to offer what chess players want. That is why they are not members. It means that we must do more to attract these players to join our federation.

How important is it to improve the image of the USCF? Do you feel that this can help raise sponsorship for the USCF?

It is vitally important to improve the image of the USCF to have any chance of acquiring sponsorship. The SPF and other organizations have found many sponsors for various events, while the USCF has had a hard time. But it is not only about sponsorship, we need to improve our image as well.

Now that you have moved to Texas, what will become of the Polgar Chess Center?

The Polgar Chess Center will remain open. I return to NY quite often and I have volunteers and staff running the center in my absence. In addition, GM Stripunsky lives nearby and he

will be the resident grandmaster of the Polgar Chess Center.

What are some of your priorities to help the USCF?

There are many things I would like to accomplish during my term on the USCF Executive Board. Here are some of the more immediate needs:

- Improve the image and reputation of the USCF.
- Help find sponsors for the next US and US Women's Championship.
- Help raise the level of memberships in all categories.
- Help find funding for more scholastic training and create more opportunities to train teachers on how to teach chess.
- Create sound and logical programs to better promote chess for adult, scholastic, collegiate, correspondence and military chess.
- Keep the budget sound and balanced.

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:

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