



COLUMNISTS

Susan Polgar on Chess

Susan Polgar



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2008 Spice Cup

Chess must be promoted on many fronts in order to become more popular. Since I officially took the position of Director of the Susan Polgar Institute for Chess Excellence (SPICE) at Texas Tech University, I have had the opportunity to do more to help college and professional chess.

One of the ways this was achieved was the organization of the annual SPICE Cup. The second edition of this event was a Category 15 (average FIDE rating 2605.5), ten-player round-robin tournament. The highest rated in U.S. history.

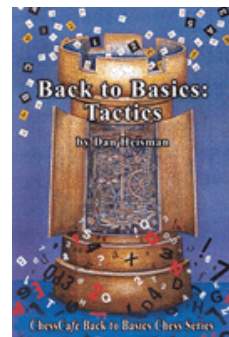


Heading into the final round, six players could have tied for first: GMs Akobian, Kritz, Mikhalevski, Becerra, Onischuk, and Pentala. In the end it was a four-way tie between Pentala, Onischuk, Kritz and Akobian.

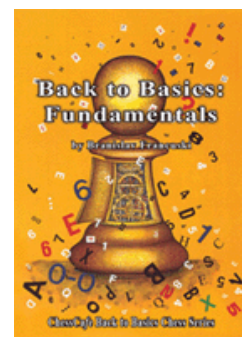
Here is the crosstable of the event:

Player	Rat.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Pts.
Kaidanov, Gregory	2605	x	1	½	0	½	1	0	½	0	0	3½
Stefansson, Hannes	2566	0	x	½	½	0	0	1	0	½	0	2½
Becerra, Julio	2598	½	½	x	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	5
Mikhalevski, Victor	2592	1	½	½	x	½	0	1	½	½	0	4½
Akobian, Varuzhan	2610	½	1	½	½	x	1	½	½	½	½	5½
Perelshteyn, Eugene	2555	0	1	½	1	0	x	½	0	½	½	4
Miton, Kamil	2580	1	0	½	0	½	½	x	½	0	½	3½
Onischuk, Alexander	2670	½	1	½	½	½	1	½	x	½	½	5½
Pentala, Harikrishna	2668	1	½	½	½	½	½	1	½	x	½	5½
Kritz, Leonid	2610	1	1	0	1	½	½	½	½	½	x	5½

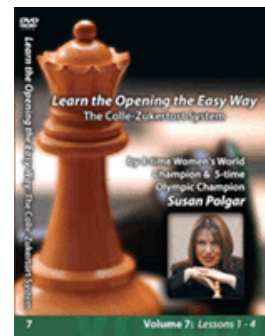
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Here is a nice game by GM Akobian:

Akobian, Varuzhan (2610) - Perelshteyn, Eugene (2555)

2008 Spice Cup, Texas

Queen's Gambit Declined [D38]

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.Nf3 Nf6 4.Nc3 Bb4

The Ragozin variation of the QGD is a relatively popular and attractive alternative to the more common 4...Be7.

5.Qa4+

More frequently seen is 5.cxd5 or 5.Bg5.

5...Nc6

Luckily for Black, he blocks the check and protects the bishop on b4 at the same time.

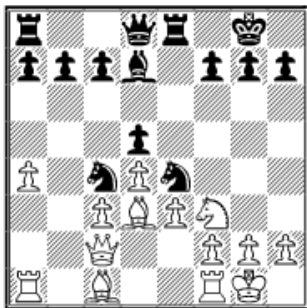
6.e3 0-0 7.a3 Bxc3+ 8.bxc3 Bd7

Threatening Nc6xd4 with a discovered attack, which explains White's next move.

9.Qc2 Na5

A typical and good move.

10.cxd5 exd5 11.Bd3 Re8 12.a4 Nc4 13.0-0 Ne4



Now White takes the initiative.

14.Bxc4! dxc4 15.Ne5

Black has only one move to avoid losing material.

15...Nd6! 16.e4

White has clear superiority in the center.

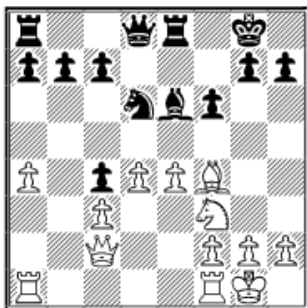
16...Be6 17.Bf4

I would prefer either 17.Re1 or 17.Ba3. On the other hand, Black would be fine after 17.f4 f6 18.Nf3 f5 19.e5 Ne4.

17...f6?!

Better would have been 17...Qh4! trying to force a weakening pawn move in front of White's king.

18.Nf3



18...f5

An interesting pawn sacrifice, which White does better to not accept.

19.Bxd6 cxd6 20.Rfe1

The right choice. If 20.exf5, Black gets excellent compensation for the pawn after 20...Bd5 21.Nd2 Qg5 22.f3 Re2 23.Rf2 Qe3 24.Raf1 Rf8 with clear

initiative for Black.

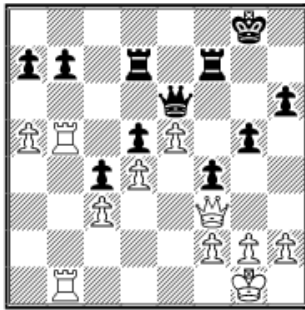
20...Qd7 21.Ng5 h6 22.Nxe6 Qxe6 23.e5 d5

Now White has a clear advantage, by having a protected passed pawn on e5, and weaknesses in Black's camp on d5 and potentially b7 as well as f5.

24.Reb1 Re7 25.Rb5

A perfect square for the rook targeting two pawns at once.

25...Rf8 26.Rab1 Rff7 27.Qe2 f4 28.Qf3 Rd7 29.a5 g5

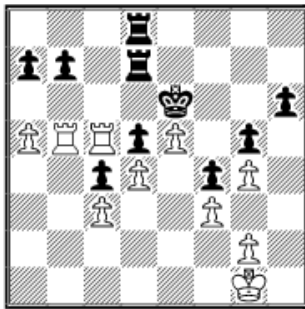


Threatening with g5-g4, followed by f4-f3; however, White can easily stop this and all Black will be left with is a weakened kingside.

30.h3 Kg7 31.R1b4 Rfe7 32.Rc5 Rd8 33.Rbb5 Red7

And the time has arrived to trade queens.

34.Qg4 Qxg4 35.hxg4 Kf7 36.f3



36...Ke6 37.a6!

This breaks Black's seemingly solid defense.

37...Rb8 38.Kh2 Ke7 39.Rxd5

39.g3 was perhaps even more accurate.

39...Rxd5 40.Rxd5 b5

Upon 40...bxa6 41.Rc5 Kd8 42.Rxc4 Rc8 43.Ra4 Rxc3 44.Rxa6, White is winning.

41.Rc5 Kd7 42.d5 Rb6 43.g3

43.d6 was also good.

43...Rxa6 44.gxf4 gxf4 45.Rxb5 Ra2+ 46.Kh3 Rf2 47.g5!

A final cute finesse to activate the king.

47...hxg5 48.Kg4 Re2 49.Rb7+ Kc8 50.Re7 a5 51.Kxg5 a4 52.Kxf4 Kb8 53.d6 Rd2 54.Rc7 1-0



SPICE Cup Blitz

On the rest day, Tuesday, September 23, the Lubbock International Cultural Center (The Center of Global Understanding) sponsored a luncheon reception for the grandmasters hosted by the Texas Tech International Cultural Center.

Following the luncheon, the grandmasters competed in the SPICE Cup Blitz tournament. After nine exciting rounds, grandmaster Alexander Onischuk (USA) and grandmaster Hannes Stefansson (Iceland) tied for first with 6½ points, followed by grandmaster Victor Mikhalevski (Israel) and grandmaster Julio Becerra, both with 6 points.

SPICE Scholastic Cup

While the grandmasters were competing for the prestigious SPICE Cup, the youngsters in West Texas and surrounding areas competed for the SPICE Scholastic Cup in three different divisions: K-2, 3-5, and 6-12. The event took place on Saturday, September 20.

In addition to testing their wits and skills against their peers, these young players also got a rare opportunity to observe ten world-class grandmasters in action. Here are some of the top finishers:

SPICE Scholastic Cup Individual Competition

Sixth to twelfth grade

1. Truong, M. Paul (Monterrey) 4.0 points; 2. Dominguez, Andrew (Home) 3.0; 3. Smith, Latasha (Alderson) 3.0; 4. Perez, Bernadette (Mackenzie) 2½; 5. Galaviz, Bryan (Mackenzie) 2½

Third to fifth grade

1. Polgar, Tom (Murfee) 4.0 points; 2. Arland-Jackson, Jordan (New Life Academy) 3.0; 3. Polgar, Leeam (Murfee) 3.0; 4. Zettl, Heidi (Lovejoy) 3.0; 5. Haraldsson, Eirik (Home) 2.0

Kindergarten to second grade

1. Thomasson II, John (Home) 4½ points; 2. Mulligan, Brian (All Saints) 4.0; 3. McCarty, Joey (Ramirez) 2½; 4. Carey, Tabitha (Harmony) 1.0

SPICE Scholastic Cup Team Results

Third to fifth grade

1. Murfee 7.0 points: Polgar, Tom (4.0) Polgar, Leeam (3.0)

2. Ramirez 4½ points: Trevino, Robert (2.0) Mora, Logan (1½)
McCarty, Danny (1.0)
3. Home School 3.0 points: Haraldsson, Eirik (2.0) Chaney, Deacon (1.0)
4. Harmony 3.0 points: White, Lauren (2.0) Fay, Corbin (1.0)

Sixth to Eighth grade

1. Alderson 7.0 points: Smith, Latasha (3.0) Smith, Quinton (2.0)
Guajardo, Daniel (2.0)
2. OL Slaton 4½ points: Galaviz, Bryan (2½) Galaviz, Samuel (2.0)
3. Mackenzie 4½ points: Perez, Bernadette (2½) Perez, Felix (2.0)
4. Home School 4.0 points: Dominguez, Andrew (3.0) Winders, Zane (1.0)
5. Levelland 2½ points: Booth, Colton (2.0) Johnson, Caleb (½)

SPICE Cup Grand Prix

Several strong players took part in the SPICE Cup Open Grand Prix, which took place over the final weekend on September 27-28. Some of the top seeds include GM Alejandro Ramirez, IM Jacek Stopa, IM Gergely Antal, and FM Michael Langer. In the end IM Antal of Hungary and GM Ramirez of Costa Rica were co-champions.

Texas Women's Open Championship

WGM Sabina Foisor of Romania, who just participated in the Women's World Championship in Nalchik, Russia, won clear first. WFM Zorigt finished second, but won the Texas Women's Champion title as the highest finishing Texan. Other strong players included former U.S. Women's Champion WIM Alexey Root and WFM Karina Vazirova.

Many pictures from all the events are available at my [blog](#).

Special thanks to our sponsors and supporters for helping us to make this a historic event:

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Giant Chess Sets at Lubbock International Airport

SPICE in conjunction with the Susan Polgar Foundation, the Lubbock Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the City of Lubbock has placed two permanent giant chess sets inside the passenger terminal at the Lubbock International Airport (one on each end of the airport). Information about SPICE will also be placed at these locations. Special thanks to Marcy Jarrett of the Lubbock Convention and Visitors Bureau and Mr. James Loomis for making this project happen.



Next to me is Mr. James Loomis, Assistant City Manager and Director of Aviation at the Airport.

I was informed that Lubbock International Airport is the first in the country to have giant chess sets in the terminals. SPICE is fortunate to have incredible support for chess from Lubbock and Texas Tech University. Lubbock was named the 2008 Co-Chess City of the Year (with Tulsa) and Texas Tech University was named the Co-Chess College of the Year (with UTD).

Paul Truong assisted Susan Polgar in the preparation of this column. Susan Polgar is the director of the Susan Polgar Institute for Chess Excellence (SPICE) at Texas Tech University. For more information, visit www.spice.ttu.edu or email: SusanPolgar@aol.com.

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