



C O L U M N I S T S

## Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg

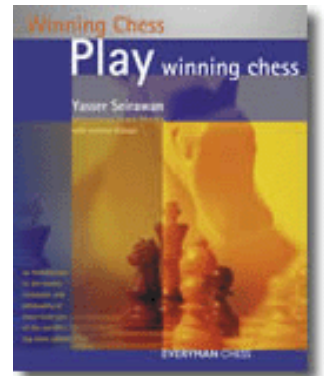
## Chess Camps 2005

The most prominent event in American scholastic chess in several years is now complete. The SuperNationals were held in Nashville from April 8-10; next month we'll provide in-depth coverage of some of its personalities and we expect to have many photos to display. For those of you who attended the SuperNationals and are looking for some beautiful visual mementos, MyChessPhotos.com will be putting together a coffee-table book with stunning photos and insightful articles about this special tournament. See their website for more information.

In much of the U.S., the weather is now warming and schools will be out in a number of weeks. Summer chess camps can be an ideal way to continue chess activity while enjoying the sun and the time away from school. We report on a number of excellent chess camps below.

### Everyman Quiz of the Month

Last month we began our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book, courtesy of Everyman Chess Books, to the first three respondents with correct answers. Remember, the questions are taken from one or more earlier **ChessCafe** Scholastic Chess columns, which can be found in the [ChessCafe Archives](#). This month, our winners will receive *Play Winning Chess* by GM Yasser Seirawan. Send your answers to [scholasticchess@chesscafe.com](mailto:scholasticchess@chesscafe.com). Good luck! Please note – previous winners are not eligible to enter subsequent contests.



1. How many chessplayers were selected to the most recent Trophies Plus All-America Chess Team?

- a) 58
- b) 34
- c) 15

2. The winners of each section of the SuperNationals III tournament (Elementary, Junior High, and High School) receive a full four-year scholarship to which university?

- a) Any accredited university of their choice
- b) Stanford University

c) University of Texas – Dallas

3. A \$500 scholarship was awarded by MyChessPhotos.com at the 2005 SuperNationals for what accomplishment?

- a) The win with the fewest moves
- b) The greatest upset win
- c) The youngest player to achieve a plus score

### **Did You Know?**

“The pin is mightier than the sword” was coined by one of the more prolific chess writers in history. Can you name this person?

### **Summer Chess Camps**

There are a number of fine chess camps that are available to out-of-school kids. The list below is not meant to be exhaustive in any way – you may want to contact your state or national chess association for further resources or recommendations. I did find that there is quite a bit of variety in the way that various camps operate. Each has something special to offer and must be evaluated carefully to determine which camp may be most suitable for any given individual.

#### *Castle Chess Camp; July 10-17*

I’m told that this is the oldest chess camp in the U.S., having begun in 1981. It is run by Dr. Robert Ferguson of Bradford, Pennsylvania, the expert in studies demonstrating the academic benefits of chess. The camp is held on the campus of Penn State University – State College and boasts a 9:1 student; master ratio. The days are long, running from 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M., and challenging. Many national scholastic champions and many masters have attended this camp. A remarkable 80% of campers attend for multiple years. For more information and camp fees, see [www.amchess.org](http://www.amchess.org).



*Instructor GM Joel Benjamin*

#### *Emory Castle Chess Camp; June 5-12*

This camp, an affiliate of the Bradford-based Castle Camp, is held on the campus of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. The one-week camp is limited to 132 campers (divided into 12 sections of 11 players each) and tends to fill fairly quickly, with participants from across the U.S. and even

Singapore the last couple of years. Emory Castle Camp boasts an excellent 4.5; 1 camper; staff ratio. Although most campers are kids, every year approximately 6-10 adults join the group. Campers must have a minimum rating of 900 (established or provisional) to attend. On their website, the camp advises: "Those who will enjoy the camp the most are those who love the game and who genuinely want to improve their play. If your child has recently learned to play or has never played in a tournament, this is probably not the camp for him or her." Last summer the average rating of all campers was 1365. The top-notch instructional staff includes 5 GMs, 2 WGMs, 2 IMs, 2 FMs, and a National Master. As with the original Castle Chess Camp in Pennsylvania, the Atlanta affiliate camp has full days, beginning at 8:00 A.M. and continuing until 9:00 P.M. At the end of camp, a Grand Prix is held which offers \$8650 in guaranteed prize money. Camp fees range from \$579 – \$799. More information is available at [www.emorychess.org](http://www.emorychess.org).



*Program Director IM Jonathan Schroer*

*Polgar Chess Camp; sessions in July and August*

GM Susan Polgar runs a one-week summer chess camp three times during the summer: July 18-22, Aug. 22-26, and Aug. 28-Sept. 2. Camp runs from 10:00 A.M. until 4:00 P.M. at her Polgar Chess Center in Forest Hills, NY. It is intended for kids age 5 and above and as Polgar's promotional flyer states: "Everyone will be taught with a special training method that has been exclusively developed by 4-time World Champion and 5-time Olympic Champion Susan Polgar." The weekly fee is \$399, but discounts are available. See [www.polgarchess.com](http://www.polgarchess.com) for additional information.



*GM Susan Polgar and students*

*Kopec Chess Camp; sessions in June and July*

This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year of operation for the camp run by IM Dr. Danny Kopec, author of multiple chess books and videos. There are two locations this

summer – the New Jersey camp takes place in Lawrenceville from July 10-24, and the New Hampshire camp occurs in Bethlehem from June 26-July 2. Campers can attend for a few days up to a full two weeks (NJ camp). Approximately 60 campers attend each week, with about half from age 7 to 10, and half older. Typically 5-10 adults will attend as well. Kopec's motto is "First Class Instruction in a First Class Setting" and he stresses proper etiquette and behavior among his campers. Kopec takes pride in the fact that he frequently is able to groom outstanding campers into outstanding instructors and players. As an example, former camper Josh Friedel served as a junior counselor in 2003 and recently completed the final requirements for his IM title. Aside from chess, two hours of tennis instruction are provided daily (3:45 P.M. – 7:00 P.M. is set aside for non-chess recreation) and baseball, swimming and other sports are available as well. Fees range from \$360 to \$1455. For more information go to [www.kopecchess.com/camps.html](http://www.kopecchess.com/camps.html).



*Instructor with students at the Kopec Chess Camp*

#### *Zeb Fortman Chess Camp; August 1-5*

This Midwestern camp takes place on the campus of Rockhurst University in Kansas City and is divided into two sessions. Campers who will be entering grades 3-6 in the fall meet from 8:00 A.M. until noon, while those going into grades 7-12 meet from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. There is a maximum of 40 campers in each section, which are taught by several different instructors, including two former state champions. Fortman has coached chess for over 20 years, bringing his "Be Your Best, Play Chess" program to local schools. After spending one summer as a camper himself at the Karpov Chess School in Kansas, he was asked to return the following year as an instructor. This will be the fourth year he has run his own camp, which encourages diversity of participants by providing several scholarships to the neediest children. Fortman is especially proud to have been the coach of the winning teams in the Missouri K-5 championship for each of the previous four years. The camp costs \$100 for the week. For more information, see [www.zebfortman.com](http://www.zebfortman.com).





*Camp Director Zeb Fortman (back row, right)  
with fellow instructors and campers*

### *Mid-South Chess Camp; June 13-17*

Memphis, TN is the site for this camp to be held June 13-17 on the campus of Rhodes College. The impressive list of instructors includes GM Alex Stripunsky, WGM Martica Fierro, WIM Jennifer Shahade and NM Jake Kleiman. Camp runs from 10:00 A.M. until about 4:00 P.M. each day and includes an hour for sports activities. The cost is \$295 for the week, with evening grandmaster instruction available for an additional fee. Their website is [www.chesscamp.us](http://www.chesscamp.us).



*At Mid-South Camp*

### *Mountain Lake Chess Camp; June and August sessions*

This California camp is actually composed of two camps – a northern division and a southern division. The Northern Camp is held at Capital Mountain in the Sierra Nevadas from June 20-24, and the Southern Camp takes place at Big Bear Lake in the San Bernardino Mountains from August 15-19. Activities begin early in the morning and continue until well into the evening, with a wide assortment of sports activities accompanying the chess instruction and tournaments. IM Larry D. Evans and his staff of instructors operate the camps for kids between the ages of 6 and 17, with a fee of \$459 per week. More

information can be obtained at [www.chesscamp.net](http://www.chesscamp.net).



*Mountain Lake Chess Camp*

### *Davis Chess Camp; July 20-22*

This is the second year for this camp, hosted by the University of California – Davis Chess Club. It runs from 9:00 A.M. until 3:30 P.M. for three days, on the campus of UC – Davis. Beginner and advanced sections are available; with a fee of \$125 including lunches and snacks. Instructors are masters Jim Dean and John Langreck. Here is [a link](#) to the camp flyer.

### *Chess Learning Center camps; June, July, and August sessions*

Three separate one-week camp sessions are offered by the Chess Learning Center in Columbus, Ohio. Camp 1 will be held from June 20 through June 24 and is designed for beginning and intermediate players. Camp 2 takes place July 11-15 for intermediate and advanced players. The final camp, called All Star Camp, is from Aug. 15-19 and is intended for more advanced players. All three are held at the Columbus Montessori Education Center and run \$225 for the week. Activities begin at 8:30 A.M. and continue until 5:00 P.M. daily. For more details visit [www.chesslearn.com](http://www.chesslearn.com).



*A happy camper at the Chess Learning Center*

### **Meet the new USCF National Scholastic Director**

The United States Chess Federation recently announced the appointment of Jerry Nash to the position of National Scholastic Director. An affable high school teacher, sports and chess coach, and Baptist Minister, Jerry first became interested in chess in the summer prior to beginning 9<sup>th</sup> grade. He was intrigued to see a diagram of a chess board in an encyclopedia and he taught himself to play. It wasn't until reaching college that he began playing in tournaments.

Nine years ago Nash received a call from a school administrator who had been awarded a grant to begin a pilot chess program, but who didn't play the game herself. She asked if he would help to get the program rolling. Jerry enthusiastically accepted the offer and, together with another chessplayer, began organizing chess clubs, teaching chess, and started teaching other teachers how to start and run a chess program. "This was in 1996 – the fall before the first Super Nationals in Knoxville," Jerry states. "Along with some area teachers, we took a bus load to that tournament and had a blast. That tournament really made a difference in how the parents viewed chess." He has been teaching chess and organizing tournaments and clubs ever since. In addition, he has served as the scholastic coordinator for the Louisiana State Chess Association the last two years.



*USCF Scholastic Director Jerry Nash and family*

I asked him to discuss some of the difficulties he has encountered getting chess programs up and running. "One difficulty is faced everywhere in the U.S. – we live in a culture that values physical sports far more than mental sports. 'If you cannot kick it, catch it, or bounce it, it's not worth spending money on it.' Maybe someday that will change but not in the near future. Probably the greatest difficulty was having teachers trained to the point that they felt confident to direct a chess club or use chess in the classroom ... When a teacher does achieve that level of competence and has a strong program it really makes a difference. But if that teacher leaves the area or goes to another school, that program often dies. Of course another difficulty is finding the funding to help programs have the resources needed for students (and teachers) to develop their skills and even attend tournaments. Imagine a football team practicing all year and never playing another school! But many chess clubs are limited to intramural play."

What are his goals as the new scholastic director? "I hope to develop scholastic chess to the point that it impacts American education. Educators keep crying out for increased math skills and better critical thinking skills in students. What one activity has the ability to do both of those better than



chess? When you compare the cost for chess resources compared to what is spent on physical education equipment, chess is by far the best buy! But I digress. I have several goals as the scholastic director: teacher training and resources, the overall promotion of chess in the schools, increased tournament participation and memberships, as well as increased funding for our international teams. Of course I don't expect to accomplish all of these goals at once – it may take weeks! I know that this is an uphill struggle and that there are huge obstacles to overcome. I also know that the USCF is not alone in the struggle to promote scholastic chess. But I believe that the USCF is uniquely placed to be a leading voice in that effort. I believe my role, among my other responsibilities, is to keep that voice loud and clear – and persistent.”



*At a chess match in Russia*

Jerry also addressed the issue of “chess dropouts” as young players move on to college and beyond. “I worked with college students for about 15 years so I know the choices they have to make as they consider family and career. I am also a husband and father of two daughters so I also know the demands of family and career firsthand. While being a chess player is not likely to be a prime career choice any time soon, someone who has learned to play at an early age and had the opportunity to play in tournaments is more likely, I think, to keep some connection with the game after high school. I hope that the trend of colleges offering scholarships to winners of chess tournaments will maintain that interest after high school and will spur younger players to develop their skills.”

There have been some who have made persuasive arguments that scholastic and adult chess are at odds with one another, but Nash differs with this assessment. “A strong scholastic program increases the chances of a broader adult chess constituency,” he states. “If we want to grow the adult market we will have to increase our efforts to ‘market’ the game at a younger age. This is not a win-lose scenario for the older group. Without the next generation of players, eventually there is no adult chess program. Certainly we cannot abandon our efforts to develop the resources for adult players. The finances for scholastic development must eventually come from different sources than



the adult programming if we are to do what has to be done. Finding those alternate sources is another aspect of the overall struggle.”



*An impromptu match with visiting dignitaries*

Jerry has now relocated to the new USCF headquarters in Crossville, TN. His wife Ruth and daughters Sarah and Rebekah will join him after the end of the current school year. Does his family enjoy chess? “My wife *hates* strategy games! My daughters learned the rules of chess but do not play. Now, if I could figure a way to combine chess with *shopping* – well, then, I suspect both my daughters would soon become grandmasters!”

Asked what changes he envisions for the world of scholastic chess, Nash responded that “Actually I intend to do a lot of *listening* over the next few months – to chess professionals, to parents, to teachers, to anyone connected to scholastic chess. Yes, I have my vision for the development of scholastic chess, but I also want to listen and learn from those who share that passion. There are a lot of good things going on out there and have been for some time. I hope to build on them.”



*Jerry Nash and family at the Great Smoky Mountains*

Do you have any questions or suggestions for Jerry? He'd love to hear from you. Send your e-mails to [jnash@uschess.org](mailto:jnash@uschess.org).

### **Upcoming Events**

*Second Annual All-Girls Open National Championships, May 13-15, 2005*

Six aged-based sections comprise this 6-round, game/60 tournament held in Chicago. In addition to the main event, there will also be blitz and bughouse tournaments held. For more information, see [www.kasparovchessfoundation.org](http://www.kasparovchessfoundation.org).

*HB Global Chess Challenge, May 18-22, 2005*

This Minneapolis mega-tournament will include a one-day, 4-round, game/30 scholastic tournament on May 21 for those age 18 and below. Special treats include a number of giveaways and the appearance of Josh Waitzkin of *Searching for Bobby Fischer* fame. Following the tournament there will be a "Meet the Grandmasters" autograph session and simultaneous exhibition. Note that there will be no on-site registration offered – all registrations must be done online at [www.hbfoundation.org](http://www.hbfoundation.org).

*2005 U.S. Junior Open, June 10-12, 2005*

This 6-round swiss tournament, with game/120, will be held at the Kings Island Resort & Conference Center in Mason, Ohio. The winner of the top section (under 21) will be seeded into the 2006 U.S. Junior Invitational Championship. More information is available at [www.ohio4fun.org/chess2005.asp](http://www.ohio4fun.org/chess2005.asp).

*2005 Denker Tournament of High School Champions, August 7-12, 2005*

This annual event will again be held in conjunction with the 2005 U.S. Open, at the Arizona Biltmore Resort & Spa in Phoenix, Arizona. See [www.uschess.org](http://www.uschess.org) for additional information.

*Second Annual Polgar Invitational for Girls, August 7-12, 2005*

As was done last year, this invitational tournament will also occur in conjunction with the U.S. Open. Last year's inaugural tournament was quite a success and GM Polgar expects even bigger and better things this year. Additional events for 2005 include a blitz tournament, a puzzle-solving contest, and a special chess training program for girls. Further details are available at [www.susanpolgarfoundation.org](http://www.susanpolgarfoundation.org)

**Answer to Did You Know?**

Fred Reinfeld wrote the quip, "The pin is mightier than the sword." (Source: [www.chess-poster.com](http://www.chess-poster.com))

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Have something newsworthy you'd like to share? E-mail me at [scholasticchess@chesscafe.com](mailto:scholasticchess@chesscafe.com). I can't promise that I'll be able to respond to each e-mail, but every one will be read and considered. For all games submitted, please provide the following information: (1) Names and age of both players; (2) Ratings of both players; (3) When and where the game was played; (4) The time control used in the game; and (5) Any other information you think would be helpful for us to know.

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