



C O L U M N I S T S

Scholastic
Chess

Steve Goldberg



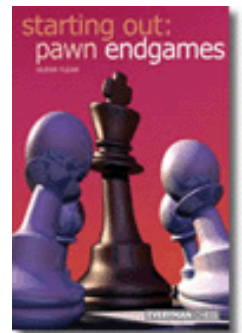
**Winning Chess
the Easy Way**
by Susan Polgar

Powerful Polgars and Chess in the
Sculpture Barn

The busy chess summer continues. This month we report on recent events in Las Vegas and in Ohio, and look forward to the major events associated with the 2005 U.S. Open in the Arizona desert in August. We also profile a young up-and-coming player whose rating catapulted over 600 points in 2004. Read below to learn why a sculpture museum provided a free showing of a classic chess movie, and watch next month for a special “Chess in Canada” coverage.

Everyman Quiz of the Month

We continue 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 [Archives](#). This month, our winners will receive *Starting Out: Pawn Endgames*. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck! Please note – previous winners are not eligible to enter subsequent contests.



1. Which of the following states did not have a representative at the SuperNationals III tournament?

- a) New Hampshire
- b) Rhode Island
- c) Vermont

2. Who placed first in the under-18 boys division of the 2005 Canadian Youth Chess Championship?

- a) Shiyam Thavandiran
- b) Jonathan Tayar
- c) Mark Bluvshstein

3. One of the unusual awards presented at the monthly Polgar Scholastic tournaments is:

- a) top finisher smaller than 5 feet tall
- b) top sibling results
- c) top-finishing left-handed player

Did You Know?

How many players emerged victorious against the Polgar sisters in their “triplex” simultaneous exhibition at the 2005 National Open?

Recent Events

Las Vegas International Chess Festival / National Open: June 9-13, 2005

This truly was a chess festival, spread over five days and encompassing a variety of events. Nearly 700 chessplayers came to rub shoulders with the likes of GMs Dmitry Gurevitch, Nick DeFirmian, Arthur Bisguier, Susan Polgar, Judit Polgar, and assorted other titled players from around the world.



Polgar simul in progress

The scholastic section of the National Open had 65 competitors and the Intergalactic Bughouse Championship drew 8 teams of players, all from the Milky Way galaxy. Leopold Lacrimosa reported on ChessBase News that there was a local taxi strike at the beginning of the festival – perhaps this contributed to the dearth of players appearing on time from other galaxies.



GM Judit Polgar signing casino cards

There was a powerful Polgar presence, with multiple lectures by Susan Polgar, the “triplex” simul by sisters Susan, Judit and Sofia Polgar, and the appearance of the Polgar parents. Even Susan’s six-year-old son Tommy played a part, participating in his first tournament away from his mother’s New York chess center. He finished first (where else?) in his division. A bubbling Susan noted in her new weblog at www.susanpolgar.blogspot.com: “Beside the simul, we had a breakfast session with more than 100 fans where they can ask questions directly to the three of us. Everyone had a blast... It was a big family reunion. I also conducted the Polgar Special Chess Camp during the National Open and a number of lectures (over 100 people in each lecture). The overall event was very well organized.” Susan announced a new tournament to debut at the 2006 National Open: the first annual Susan Polgar World Open Chess Championship for Girls, open to girls under age 21.



Polgar sisters and proud parents

2005 Pan American Youth Festival: June 11-18, 2005

Twelve youngsters represented the U.S. at the 2005 Pan American Youth Festival in Brazil. Three U.S. players won silver medals: Ray Robson (Under 12 boys), Julia Kerr (Under 16 girls), and Robert Hungaski (Under 18 boys). In addition, a bronze medal was won by Christopher Heung in the Under 10 boys division. Congratulations to all of the participants and to coaches Aviv Friedman and Armen Ambartsournian.

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

Days before the 2005 U.S. Junior Open was scheduled to begin, only about 80 players had registered, and organizers were hoping as many as 125 might show up for the opening bell. As it turns out, a record 138 participants competed in this six-round, game/120 event, won by Ohio's Benjamin Coraretti on tiebreak points over the previously unrated Roger Rojas-Suarez from Michigan. As the winner of this open tournament for players under 21 years of age, Coraretti is automatically seeded into the 2006 U.S. Junior Invitational championship. The 2005 U.S. Junior Open, the 2005 U.S. Junior Invitational, and the 2005 U.S. Cadet Championship were all held in Kings Island, Ohio and organized by the Warren County (Ohio) Convention and Visitors Bureau.

2005 U.S. Junior Invitational: June, 2005

An invitational event for top players under age 21, the 2005 U.S. Junior Invitational was won by Daniel Fernandez of Florida, now a student at the University of Texas - Dallas (UTD), a perennial chess powerhouse. With a score of 8/10, he finished a full two points ahead of his nearest competition. The 2399-rated Fernandez thus qualifies to participate in the 2006 U.S. Chess Championship.

2005 U.S. Cadet Championship: June 12-16, 2005

This double round-robin invitational tournament, for American players under 16, was won by Elliot Liu from California. As 2005 U.S. Cadet Champion, Elliot receives a four-year scholarship to the University of Maryland - Baltimore County (UMBC), which routinely battles UTD for college chess supremacy.

2005 U.S. Blind Chess Championship: June 24-25, 2005

Jeff Siebrandt was declared the winner on tiebreak points over Alex Barrasso in the annual Blind Championship held in Elkins, West Virginia. The tournament was directed by Tim Just and Ira Lee Riddle and organized by Rick Varchetto. Held for over 25 years, the U.S. Blind Chess Championship was one of the tournaments for which the USCF was seeking sponsorship. Varchetto arranged to have his local Lions Club provide support to make it happen; kudos to Rick for his hard work.

Although none of the eleven participants was of scholastic age, a number of youngsters aided in the event. "All my helpers were middle

school and early high school students, ages 12-15,” explained Varchetto. “They recorded the games, helped the players with their meals, and guided them throughout the hotel. I had six girls and four boys as helpers. They were absolutely outstanding.”

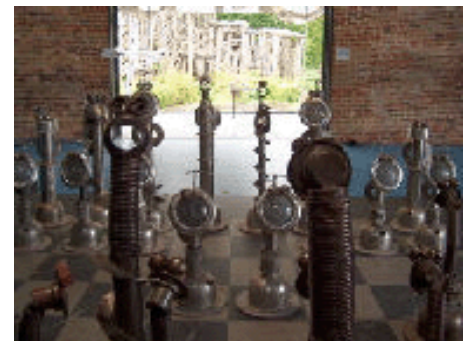
Chess Night at the American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore: July 7, 2005

The American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) is located adjacent to Baltimore’s famed Inner Harbor and its primary purpose, according to Director of Communications Pete Hilsee, is to educate visitors in a fun and enjoyable manner. A giant chess set has been a permanent fixture in the Tall Sculpture Barn since the museum’s inception approximately ten years ago. Made from various pieces of scrap metal, the chess pieces reach four to five feet in height. “A bit smaller for the pawns, of course,” Pete was quick to add.

A 30-foot-wide remote-controlled movie screen is housed within an old whiskey warehouse on the museum grounds, held up by an 11-foot-long golden hand sculpture. This outdoor screen was the intended site for a showing of the classic movie *Searching For Bobby Fischer* the evening of July 7. Rain unfortunately forced everyone inside, where the film was played in a large meeting room. This is the first year of this outdoor film series for the museum, providing free family-appropriate movies once per month during the summer. The chess movie covering Josh Waitzkin’s early chess life was selected since it is one of the favorite films of the family which endowed the museum’s outdoor film program.



Jim Rouse Visionary Center



Chess Set in the Sculpture Barn

A number of chess tables were set up to accommodate those patrons wishing to play and twenty travel chess sets were given away to those fortunate enough to find a special gift card in their popcorn bag.

The Director of Communication for the museum said he expected around 500 people to be in attendance for this free event for the community. The rain kept the crowds down, but as Hilsee stated, “What we lacked in quantity, we made up in quality.” He described the many kids as “incredible,” noting that he was inspired to see kids

playing each other across all cultural, age and gender boundaries. Visitors were treated not only with the free movie, but also free popcorn, soda and ice cream. A surprise visitor was GM Kamil Miton, the newly-crowned World Open champion, who graciously played a number of quick games for the crowd and signed the travel chess sets given away by the museum.



A youngster unbothered by the rain



GM Kamil Miton (right) with fan

Prior to the chess night, AVAM held a pet parade consisting of nearly 100 animals and over 250 people. They have also sponsored a “kinetic sculpture race,” whereby participants must produce a sculpture that has the ability to float, move through sand, and navigate the remainder of a 15-mile course, pushed or pulled or driven by a human helper. The winner of this race, incidentally, is the person and sculpture to finish in the precise *middle* of the pack, thus celebrating mediocrity!

As indicated, the goal of the museum is to educate in an enjoyable manner. It would seem that they have been quite

successful in that regard. The museum grounds are available to be rented by community groups (i.e. an organizer wishing to hold either an indoor or outdoor chess tournament in a rather unique environment). For more information, contact AVAM at (410) 244-1900 or see www.avam.org.

Upcoming Tournaments

2005 World Youth Chess Championships: July 18-29, 2005

Thirty players, including many of the most recognized names in scholastic circles, will be representing the United States at the 2005 World Youth Chess Championships in Belfort, France. Good luck to all!



2005 U.S. Open: August 6-14, 2005

In addition to the primary 9-round U.S. Open, a number of other major events are taking place:

- a four-round, Game/40 U.S. Open Scholastic tournament on August 6
- the seven-round, Game/5 U.S. Open Blitz championship on August 7
- a three-round U.S. Bughouse championship on August 8
- G/60 quads on August 9 and August 12
- the four-round, Game/30 U.S. Action championship on August 10
- Denker Tournament of High School Champions from August 7-11
- Susan Polgar Invitational for Girls from August 7-11
- a five-round, Game/90 swiss tournament on August 13-14

Lectures are scheduled to be given by Michael Khodorkovsky and WGM Anjelina Belakovskaia, who will also conduct a simultaneous exhibition on August 12.

Chess'n Math Association Canadian Scholastic Invitational: August 19-21, 2005

Open to the top 20 Canadian players in each grade from K-12, this six-round event takes place near Montreal and typically includes a number of American invitees as well.

2005 U.S. Class Championships: August 26-28, 2005

This five-round event will be held in eight sections from Unrated to Master. For those who want non-chess distractions readily available, there are probably in excess of 200 various stores, movie theatres, and other entertainment venues within a mile of the hotel.

Player Profile

Ilan Meerovich celebrated his 14th birthday on July 7, and if he continues at the pace his rating has been rising, he could achieve grandmaster status by the time he turns 15. At the start of 2004, his rating was an even 1300, and by the time 2005 began, his rating stood at 1901, a whopping 601-point gain in one year. After the first half of 2005, he is now at 1927. That GM title may have to wait just a little longer, but Ilan has had a number of remarkable accomplishments. He recently placed second in the Under 2000 section of the Chicago Open after having won the Under 1400 section of the same tournament in 2004. This past March he won the Illinois State Junior High Chess Championship, defeating a master on his way to scoring 6½/7. In 2004, besides winning his section of the Chicago Open, he also placed first in the Under 1800 section of the Illinois Class Championships with a perfect 5-0 score, and came in second in the same section of the Midwest Class Championships.



Ilan Meerovich

Ilan learned to play chess at the age of 9, but only in the last two or three years has he taken chess seriously. The Chicago native will be attending Niles North High School in the fall and one pundit describe the team's coach as salivating over the prospect of Ilan joining the squad that won the High School Team Unrated title at the recent 2005 SuperNational tournament in Nashville. Ilan and his family are also excited about him playing for the Niles North team since the school already has a winning tradition and they have a history of assisting students in attending statewide chess events.

Ilan has also played in a number of national tournaments, including the 2004 U.S. Junior Open, the 2004 National K-12 tournament and the recent 2005 SuperNationals. Tentative plans call for him coming to the U.S. Class Championship event in August in St. Louis. Although Ilan has utilized personal chess coaches in the past, he currently trains on his own. During the school year, he'll typically spend about 5 hours per week poring over his chess books, more over the summer. In addition, he spends countless hours honing his chess skills with Internet play, amassing thousands of games on Chess Live, the Internet Chess Club, and the World Chess Network. Last month he attended the Yuri Shulman Chess Camp, featuring noted GMs Yuri Shulman and Alex Onischuk.



Ilan in a familiar pose

Ilan credits various ChessBase products and *Dvoretsky's Endgame Manual* with assisting in his improvement. He advises others looking to upgrade their abilities to “love the game, play the game, but above all, study the game.”

Chess is not Ilan's only interest, however. Like many teenagers, he also makes time for such diversions as soccer, ping pong, and track events. Not surprisingly, he enjoys an assortment of computer and Internet games.

Asked what short-term and long-term goals he has set for himself, he responded that he'd like to achieve a 2050 rating a year from now, and be in the 2300 range within five years. Given his degree of dedication and level-headedness, it's probably a safe bet he'll meet or exceed these goals. Ilan, we look forward to following you and your new teammates at Niles North in the coming years.

Other News

The Susan Polgar Monthly Scholastic Newsletter debuted in June with a 21-page pdf file available via e-mail. In addition to containing information about the whirlwind activities of GM Susan Polgar, the newsletter provides instructional material covering all aspects of the game – opening principles, middlegame tactics, and endgame analysis. An especially appealing element is the inclusion of the game Polgar – Cramling (Tilburg 1994), with explanations for every move by both sides, along the lines of *Logical Chess Move by Move* by Chernev, one of my favorite early chess books. While much of the instruction in this issue is geared toward beginners, players of all abilities will find valuable tidbits inside. To be placed on the mailing list for this newsletter, send an e-mail to PolgarFoundation@aol.com.

In early June, Garry Kasparov treated 33 promising young players to a

weekend in New York of intense analysis and instruction. The program, sponsored by the Kasparov Chess Foundation, is part of the overall plan of upgrading the quality of chess among American youth.

Youth continues to reign supreme. U.S. chess champion GM Hikaru Nakamura is 17 years old and the new European Women's Chess Champion is Ukrainian 15-year-old IM Kateryna Lahno, who touts a FIDE rating of 2467. The 12-round event occurred from June 10-25, 2005 in Moldova.

Speaking of Nakamura, he was recently selected to be the next Samford Fellow, an award that comes with a generous financial stipend designed to allow the winner to devote his or her full energies for one to two years to chess. The previous recipient was current U.S. Women's Chess Champion WGM Rusudan Goletiani.

Answer to Did You Know?

Although 64 players lost to the Polgars and 11 drew with them, there were 6 fortunate players who triumphed in the National Open unusual "triplex" simultaneous exhibition.

Have something newsworthy you'd like to share? E-mail me at 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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