



## C O L U M N I S T S

Scholastic  
Chess

Steve Goldberg



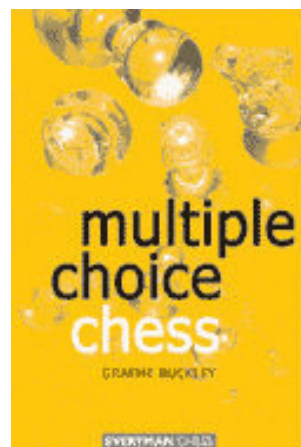
*Winning Chess  
the Easy Way*  
by Susan Polgar

## O, Canada! Part One

This month we begin an in-depth look at the world of chess in Canada. While much is similar to chess in the U.S., there are a number of interesting differences. Canadian Champion IM Pascal Charbonneau shares his thoughts below, and we include coverage of the recently completed 2005 Canadian Open, held at the world's largest indoor mall, in Edmonton, Alberta. Part 2 will include additional interviews with prominent Canadian junior players and organizers.

## Everyman Quiz of the Month

For the sixth consecutive month, we present our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book, courtesy of Everyman Chess Books, to the first three respondents with correct answers. 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 *Multiple Choice Chess*. 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. The recently completed 2005 U.S. Junior Invitational, 2005 U.S. Junior Open, and 2005 U.S. Cadet Championships were all held in which city?

- a) Lindsborg, Kansas
- b) Crossville, Tennessee
- c) Kings Island, Ohio

2. On July 7, 2005, a free screening of the famous chess movie *Searching for Bobby Fischer* was held in which locale?

- a) World Chess Hall of Fame in Miami
- b) Guggenheim Museum in Manhattan
- c) American Visionary Art Museum in Baltimore

3. What is the age of European Women's Chess Champion IM Kateryna Lahno?

- a) 15
- b) 21
- c) 34

**Did You Know?**

Which former U.S. chess champion was born in New York City, but spent nearly twelve years in Montreal, Canada prior to winning a string of U.S. chess championships?

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

The most recent World Youth Chess Championship (WYCC) was held in Belfort, France and certainly generated quite a stir among the participating federations, coaches, parents and players. Here's a sampling:

from ChessScotland.com: "Many congratulations to [three of Scotland's players] for succeeding in what are very difficult playing conditions, with poor organisation, lengthy journeys and long delays before starting the first round. By all accounts this tournament will go down in the records as the worst ever!"

from the Canadian chesstalk.com public forum: "There needs to be a serious investigation into why the CFC [Chess Federation of Canada] sent a team to France into adverse conditions ... On day one there was 3+ hours on buses for most and a very late arrival back at the hotel. Some players didn't get home until 2:00 A.M."

from the more reserved British Chess Federation: "It is the opinion of the English team management that this year, although the running of the chess competition was of quality, the supporting environment had not been up to standard, especially on food, transportation, security, hygiene and over-hot playing conditions ... We were just able to successfully maintain high team spirits this year with significant help from all parents onsite, despite the adverse conditions ... in what can only be described as a very hostile environment."



*Play is heating up at the 2005 WYCC*

U.S. delegation coach Aviv Friedman was more pointed in his comments in an article posted at *This Week in Chess* and at [chessninja.com](http://chessninja.com). He describes an environment of massive disorganization and lack of responsiveness. Upon arriving in France after many long hours of travel, most of the U.S. contingent found that the promised transportation to their hotel was non-existent. When they did manage to arrive at their designated lodging, Friedman found that “the rooms were small, without air conditioning, or even a table and chairs to work with the kids, and the shower was the size of a coffin.” Apparently, other federations were placed in even more deplorable conditions, and at exorbitant prices. He describes the playing hall as “semi reasonable” when the weather was nice, but “nothing short of a Turkish bath” when the weather turned hot, with no water supplied. Aviv Friedman concludes his commentary by summarizing: “Conditions were terrible, the organization was below amateurish and their attitude was miserable, and they madly overcharged us all. Everyone I spoke to, players, coaches, parents, heads of delegations, all agreed it was the most poorly organized and run event they have ever attended.” On the other hand, both Friedman and the British Chess Federation note that hotel staff and local residents were often very helpful and gracious.

Despite the difficult environment, U.S. and Canadian players did well. Alex Lenderman won the first gold medal for the American team in a number of years by finishing clear first in the Under 16 Boys division. Other top U.S. finishers included Robert Hess (5th place, Under 14 Boys), Daniel Naroditsky (5th place, Under 10 Boys), Ray Robson (6th place, Under 12 Boys), and Parker Zhao (10th place, Under 12 Boys). It was a good month for 9-year-old Daniel Naroditsky, who also won first place in the age 5-9 division of the Internet Scholastic Chess Championship in early July (Canadian Daniel Kazmaier won the age 10-16 division).



*Mark Bluvshtein at the 2005 WYCC*

For the Canadian team, GM Mark Bluvshtein tied for 3rd place in the Under 18 Boys section, while Hazel Smith placed 9th in the Under 14 Girls division and Nikita Kraiouchkine finished in 10th place in the Under 10 Boys category.

A total of 1108 players attended the annual tournament, representing 82 different national chess federations.

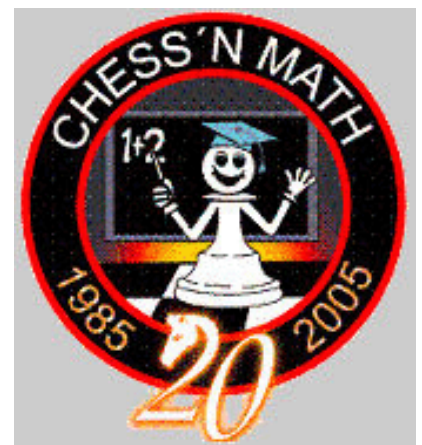
### **Upcoming Tournaments**

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

The 2005 U.S. Open, with its associated Denker Tournament of High School Champions and Susan Polgar Invitational for Girls, is underway as this column goes to press. We'll report on the various events next month. Scholarships ranging from \$200 to \$500 are provided to the top four finishers of both of these scholastic tournaments and a full four-year scholarship is offered by the University of Texas – Dallas to the top player from each event.

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

The Chess'n Math Association (CMA) is the Canadian national scholastic chess organization and is celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2005. The CMA is hosting this event for the top 20 Canadian players in each grade, from K-12, although several teams of players are also coming from the U.S., as part of the



Chess in Schools program.

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

This five-round event will be held in eight sections from Unrated to Master, in Chesterfield, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis. Since this tournament takes place virtually in my backyard, I plan on visiting during at least part of the proceedings. If you see me, come over and say hello.

### **Hockey Is Not the Only Sport in Canada**

The Canadian world of chess is much like that in the United States. Clubs, teams, and tournaments are formed and nurtured largely with the help of a few dedicated individuals, Internet chess is wildly popular, political wrangling and infighting is commonplace, but ultimately, the game is still played within the confines of the same 64 squares.

According to chess historian, writer, and teacher David Cohen of Toronto, chess was introduced into Canada in the 17th century as Europeans arrived in North America. The game allowed for a pleasant diversion from a predominantly rural life throughout the 1700s and 1800s. The Canadian Chess Association was formed in 1872, followed seven years later by the creation of the Ontario Chess Association. By that time, chess had taken root and chess events became more numerous. For a comprehensive review of Canada's chess history to the present day, see Cohen's [website](#).



After two name changes, the Canadian Chess Association evolved into the present-day Chess Federation of Canada (CFC), whose website can be found at [www.chess.ca](http://www.chess.ca). The nation's premier scholastic organization is the [Chess'n Math Association](#) (CMA), founded by Larry Bevand in 1985. It is interesting to note that as of May, 2005, the total CFC

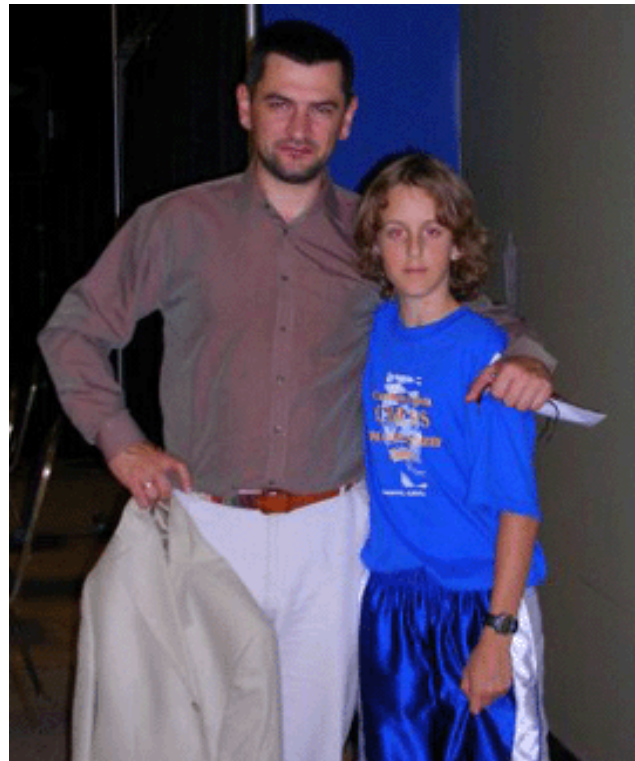
membership came to 2589, with over half of this coming from the province of Ontario.

Chess Canada Échecs is the bimonthly magazine of the CFC. Current and two-time Canadian champion IM Pascal Charbonneau tells me that there are also two Quebec-based French-language chess magazines – Echec+ produced by the FQE, the Quebec provincial chess federation, and a new magazine by IM Jean Hebert known as Au Nom du Roi ("In the name of the king").



The major adult tournaments include the Canadian Open Championship, the Quebec Open Championship, and the Guelph Pro-Am. The Canadian Chess Challenge (similar to the USCF National K-12 championship) and the Canadian Youth Chess Championship (producing national representatives to the World Youth Chess Championship) are the primary scholastic tournaments. These last two events were covered briefly in our June Scholastic Chess column.

The 2005 Canadian Open was held July 9-17 in Edmonton, Alberta in western Canada, and featured three FIDE 2700+ super GMs: Vassily Ivanchuk, Alexei Shirov and Viktor Bologan. Head Organizer Ford Wong indicated that typically the Canadian Youth Chess Championship (CYCC) immediately precedes the Canadian Open, allowing for a good number of junior players at the Open, but this year the CYCC had to be held much earlier since the World Youth Chess Championship was scheduled to begin the day after the end of the Canadian Open. "As it was there were still quite a few juniors who made the trip to Edmonton," Wong reports. "For those juniors who came, they really had a great time. Some like Kevin Breel came just so that he could meet his hero Bologan. Breel was afraid to approach Bologan for his autograph and a picture but when I told Bologan about Kevin, Bologan said that he could approach him anytime. And on Saturday Kevin got his picture and autograph with Bologan! I'm sure that this completely made Kevin Breel's tournament."



*Bologan with Kevin Breel*

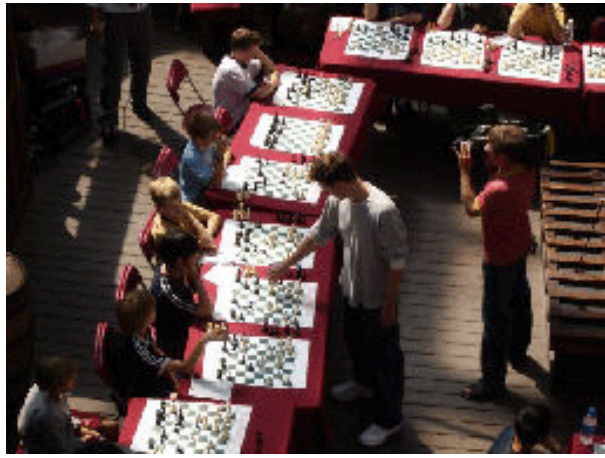
"One of the more enjoyable aspects of the tournament was the Super Gs would sometimes wander around the playing hall after their games were done and stop by and quietly analyse with some of the players,"

Wong adds. “It was nice to see the Super G’s mingling with the lower [rated] players ... They were all quite friendly and showed that they were approachable and human. Mark Bluvstein gave a simul on board the Santa Maria, a replica of one of Christopher Columbus’ ships, at West Edmonton Mall and it was watched by over 600 people.”



*Ivanchuk analyzes with a young fan*

Head Organizer Wong continues: “The Canadian Open included not only games but had many interesting side events: simuls by Ivanchuk, Bologan, Shabalov and Krush, Quick Chess with Thomas Roussel-Roozman, a speed chess tournament, and a bughouse tournament. Other interesting events were the ‘Chessbase’ Secret Move where a secret move was drawn and anyone playing that move in the previous round was eligible to win some Chessbase software, Charles Graves Tie Day where almost half the players wore a tie and Chess Widow where players who confessed to having a chess widow (someone left behind to look after the house, family, etc) was given a mini box of truffles to take home and any real people at the tournament such as chess moms, chess spouses were given a rose and a carnation. At the end of the event, there were draws for an Alberta Centennial Picture Album, an enlarged autographed picture of Irina Krush thinking at the board, a copy of Chessbase Basic and a limited Edition print of Kasparov vs. Deep Blue made by local Calgary artist Chris Bailey.”



*GM Mark Bluvshstein conducts a simul  
on board the Santa Maria*



Pascal Charbonneau, a participant at the Canadian Open, encourages such creativity at tournaments. “What we need to do to,” he says, “is to completely revamp the tournaments, make them fun. There needs to be activities, side events, things to do.”

The 2005 Canadian Open ended in a five-way tie for first, among GMs Ivanchuk, Shirov, Bologan and Bluvshstein, and IM S.R. Chowdhury.

22-year-old Montreal native Charbonneau was kind enough to take considerable time to review with me both his own background and the nature of chess in Canada. “My dad taught me the moves of chess at a fairly young (though normal nowadays!) age, around five,” he explained. “I was taken by the game, but what really impressed me was my first provincial scholastic championship, held at a nice Sheraton hotel in Montreal. The huge room, the silence, somehow, I just wanted to be good at this game. And I liked it a lot! ... Chess has played a big role in my life, but it suddenly became much bigger when I became Canadian champion, in the year 2002. This came sort of unexpectedly to me, but gave me more opportunities, and some kind of a moral obligation to try to do well. If the Canadian champion loses all his games, Canada will be reminded that it has more deer and bears



than people! In my childhood, chess was probably my most important hobby, but it had to share the same 24 hours with tennis (which I played a ton of and am a licensed coach), basketball, piano, and other things mainly academic. I believe it's important to have several interests, not to put all your eggs in the same basket, so to speak ... For a long time, both in my teens and a little after, I did commentary (first typed, then audio as technology grew) on the World Chess Network, a partly Canadian company ... But I've also taken a liking to teaching, particularly in summer camps, which I think are fun and beneficial for the kids, although I wish more emphasis would be put on sports...it seems that doing chess studying 6 hours a day and then playing blitz for 6 more hours is just a bit too much for the average kid."



*IM Pascal Charbonneau*

"After I became Canadian champion," he continues, "I got a little bit more exposure, and so I have been involved in chess activities a fair bit more. Recently, thanks to a friendship with Paul Hoffman, and Accoona's support, I have performed commentary at some great events in New York City, like the latest Kasim-Accoona Toolbar chess match. I have found these to be fun, and while I still like to think of myself as a chess player, I am also a chess commentator. I love to try to bring chess to larger audiences, and show that it's a fun game. Similarly, I continue to teach in chess camps, and try to spread my love for the game." Pascal added that "For a long time I have been a supporter of Chess'n Math, which organizes chess in schools in the Quebec and Ontario regions primarily."

I asked Charbonneau to discuss a bit about the nuances of Canadian

chess. He explained: “Chess in Canada differs from chess in the USA in a few ways: Firstly, because Canada is such a huge country with such a small population, it is difficult to have very large events. However, this is not the sole reason for the lower Canadian prize funds. Entry fees are much lower. I do not believe a tournament like the World Open, or the HB, which charge \$300 or more, would work in Canada. The mentality just seems to be a little bit different. This does not mean we don’t have our sandbaggers going after 200 dollars, mind you. Another difference is with regards to scholastics chess: there is Chess’n Math, a non-profit organization, which runs lots of scholastic events, but the CFC also wants a share of the pie, and runs the national events. As you can guess, the two organizations do not get along very well, and this has led to problems. Quebec, my province, also has its own federation.”



*Pascal Charbonneau at work in his hotel room*

“Canadian chess is particularly ‘happening’ in the summer. For example, August 3-14<sup>th</sup>, there is a strong tournament in Montreal, invitational, with probably the highest average rating of any tournament in America this year. There are also several opens in the summer which could interest US players. The CFC has a [website](#), but the more interested reader should probably check out [ChessTalk](#), the Canadian version of the multiple American forums. Of course, you will also be treated to silly quarrels, but those can be fun too.”

While the United States Chess Federation has had its share of infighting and controversies, Pascal opined that “The politics of chess in Canada are perhaps even worse than in the US. The main problem

we have, I believe, is the lack of cooperation between the individuals. While all of these people do good things on their own, old disputes prevent them from ever working together. And we are talking here about disputes way older than me. Chess'n Math and the CFC, in an ideal world, would not simply compete for the same market, but share it in a good way. The issues are complicated, and probably beyond the scope of this interview, but there are problems everywhere. Not to mention the disagreements between the top players."

On a positive note, he adds that "Definitely, scholastic chess has grown, thanks mainly to the efforts of Chess'n Math." When I asked him to address the issue of chess dropouts as high school students' graduate, he said "It can become difficult to continue to play chess during college. Often, the person is moving out, which leads to extra responsibilities and freedom ... I believe the key to keeping the interest is to make the tournaments cooler. If our tournaments attract more people, are more fun, then everything can come together. Of course, one possibility in the meantime is to pick a school, like UMBC [University of Maryland – Baltimore County], which supports chess. UMBC and its near surroundings probably qualifies as one of the highest rated couple of square miles in the world, and we have lots of students who have come to study at a good school but not give up their favorite game. These range from the lower levels to strong masters."

UMBC and the University of Texas – Dallas (UTD) both offer generous chess scholarships to top players, but Charbonneau notes that "Canadian universities do not offer the same type of scholarships that UTD and UMBC do, but part of the reason for that is that scholarships in general are much less common in Canada, because the cost of education is so much less. Going to McGill, if you are a Canadian citizen, costs only a few thousand per year in tuition, while being recognized as one of the very top schools in North America. Government support is huge for universities. I chose to go to UMBC so that I could continue to play chess more easily, and of course, the scholarship was great. I do not regret my decision, as I think I've been getting a good education (and they even allowed me to do a semester abroad in Paris), and I've continued to play a good amount of chess."

How does Pascal envision the future of Canadian chess? "Long term goals for chess in Canada should be the following: Getting numbers back similar to the Fischer days in our tournaments; having one of our juniors win a medal in a World Youth championship; support the national team and have it place in the top 15."

In a parting piece of advice, Charbonneau notes that some players obsess over their ratings but he advises: "I think chess players in North America can not attach too much importance to their rating, mainly because of the volatility of the open systems. Someone like

Shabalov wins a ton of tournaments, and if we counted money winners would be doing great, but his rating oscillates vastly, because the occasional losses hurt him a lot.”



*Another scene from the 2005 Canadian Open*

Stay tuned – our Canadian coverage is to be continued with more interviews and more in-depth analysis of the world of chess throughout Canada.

### **August 2005 USCF Rating Supplement**

A look at the August 2005 USCF rating list shows a 12-year-old, Fabiano Caruana of Florida, ranked # 18 in the Under Age 21 list, with a healthy rating of 2367. Thirteen-year-old Robert Hess is close behind, tied for # 20, at 2350. A total of six players aged 15 or less sport 2300+ ratings, with a seventh only a few points away.

### **Answer to Did You Know?**

Frank Marshall was born in New York in 1877 but moved to Montreal at the age of 8, living there until he was 19 years old. He reigned as U.S. Chess Champion from 1909-1936. (*source: Wikipedia online encyclopedia*)

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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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