



COLUMNISTS

Scholastic
Chess

Steve Goldberg



*Winning Chess
the Easy Way*
by Susan Polgar

O, Canada! Part Two

This month we continue our Canadian chess coverage. O, Canada! Part One appeared in our August [column](#) and included a lengthy interview with Canadian champion IM Pascal Charbonneau. For Part Two we speak with one of the most prolific chess organizers/directors/historians in Canada and also are privileged to hear from one of the most promising juniors from the north.

Everyman Quiz of the Month

We are pleased to continue our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book, courtesy of Everyman Chess Books. The questions are taken from earlier **ChessCafe** Scholastic Chess columns, which can be found in the [Archives](#). This month, our winners will receive *Winning Chess Strategies* by GM Yasser Seirawan. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck!

Please note – winners within the last three months are not eligible to enter subsequent contests.



Readers this past month have offered two suggestions that, upon reflection, I have agreed to implement immediately:

- Most months our winners have already been determined within the first few hours this column appears, thereby excluding those who may not have the opportunity to read the column and respond to the quiz as rapidly. I will therefore accept all quiz responses that are received within one week of the appearance of the column. The three winners will then be randomly selected from all correct entries.
- The majority of respondents are able to answer all three questions correctly, but a number of readers have requested that the answers to the previous months' quiz be posted. I have therefore included the questions and the correct answers from our September Everyman Quiz at the bottom of this column.

These policies are subject to change, but I appreciate your input! As an interesting note: in September, for the first time all three of our quiz winners came from outside the U.S. They hail from Bulgaria, Canada,

and Kenya!

1. Which co-winner of the 2005 Polgar Invitational had never before played in a U.S. tournament?
 - a) Abby Marshall
 - b) Alisa Melekhina
 - c) Anya Corke

2. Who is the volunteer coach for the perennially strong Indianola Alternative Elementary School chess team?
 - a) NM Mark Morss
 - b) IM Aviv Friedman
 - c) Zhi-Ya Hu

3. What Chicago-area chess player might be able to shoot the crown off the opposing king at 100 yards while blowing his horn as he calls your bluff?
 - a) Eric Rosen
 - b) Dan McNally
 - c) Josh Dubin

Canadian Chess Report Continues

The chess skills of 17-year-old Jonathan Tayar have matured steadily over the past several years. In 2003, he performed well at the Toronto Class Championships and the Toronto Open, but Jonathan really came into his own in 2004, winning the Canadian Youth Chess Championship in the Under-16 division, thus earning the right to represent his country at the 2004 World Youth Chess Championship, held in Greece. Later that year, he turned in a 2376 (Canadian) performance rating at the Macedonian Open, beating several masters in the process.

His growth has continued in 2005, winning the 2005 Canadian Grade 11 Championship and as reported in this column last [month](#), Jonathan also finished in a two-way tie for first in the top section (grades 9-12) at the recent Chess'n Math Association Canadian Scholastic Invitational tournament.



Jonathan Tayar, right, with the black pieces

The Toronto native is currently in his final year of high school and has only been playing competitively for the past four years. It wasn't until Jonathan was 13 that he played in his first scholastic chess tournament. He is largely self-taught, spending time with chess books and experimenting with various opening strategies via the Internet. However, IM Stephen Glinert has assisted him in the past, and IM Yan Teplitsky currently works with Jonathan from time to time. Because of a demanding school schedule, he doesn't keep to a specific training regimen, instead fitting in time as he is able.

Asked to offer advice to other players, Jonathan (rated FIDE 2162) responded, "It's really a personal thing, you need to find out what works for you. For me, playing blitz and then analyzing has worked well, but only to a certain degree. There is of course no substitute for over-the-board tournament chess and a good training partner." Furthermore, he warns against over-use of Internet play. "Playing chess on the Internet had become overly-excessive for me at one point. I was always trying to get my rating higher and higher. One day, fortunately, I came to the obvious conclusion that getting my Internet chess rating as high as possible was no goal, and I began to use ICC in a way that was more rewarding." He hopes to reach the International Master level himself, "sooner rather than later," by continuing to gain experience by playing and being challenged as much as possible.

Eager to help others, Jonathan happily volunteered his services and conducted a simultaneous exhibition at the Howlett Academy in Toronto on October 2, 2005, with all proceeds benefiting the Hospital for Sick Children. True to form, the IM-to-be went undefeated.

The chess exhibition for charity has become a regular event, thanks to the work of long-time organizer, director, tutor and author David Cohen, also of Toronto. I asked David to share some of his thoughts

with us regarding the state of chess in Canada.

“In Canada,” he said, “we’ve always had our own home-grown openings, and a whole generation has been influenced by GM Duncan Suttles, so that there is a ‘Canadian’ style of play. More recently, we have a generation of talented kids, some home-grown from chess in the schools, like our current two-time Champion Pascal Charbonneau, and some who are immigrants, like our newest GM Mark Bluvshtein.”

“Regarding the organization of chess,” he continues, “the USA has had more success at retaining and growing membership, obtaining participation in national kids championships, and attracting sponsors. In Canada, we’ve been reduced to squabbling amongst ourselves... I attribute all this to a generation that’s grown up with the Fischer model of chess – work by yourself.”

Cohen has quite an extensive background in the world of chess. Growing up in Canada’s capitol of Ottawa, he learned the game of chess at the age of eight and quickly became adept at the game. When summer rolled around, he told me, “I got hauled off to the local boys and girls club for their summer activities. Again, I don’t remember playing other kids, but I do remember being good enough that the counselor at the club challenged me, and promised me a club T-shirt if I beat him. I used my knight to fork his king and rook, beat him, and got my first prize from chess!”

Shortly thereafter came the 1972 Fischer-Spassky world championship match, which energized him further. Throughout elementary school, the young Cohen helped in the formation and running of his school chess club. He exhibited the same leadership at the high school level, not only setting up the school chess club, but also helping to arrange the city-wide high school team chess championship. “But my best chess memories from these years” he said, “were the continual battles with the two best chess players in the school: the janitors! Every lunch hour I would play Stan from Poland; many days after school I would play Steven from Hungary, when he could sneak away from his duties on his night shift. I would raid the computer science teacher’s library with the latter. Steven was working on his university degree in computers, and did end up in the field, as I discovered when I ran into him many years later!”

Over the years, he counts ten first-place finishes in various local and club tournaments and he finished in the money (or was awarded a trophy) at a number of larger open events in the U.S. and Canada. But now, he muses, “As I’ve gotten older, I’ve given up over-the-board play, especially events that require more than one game per day.” He now primarily plays correspondence chess via a web server, where he has also met with a nice measure of success.

Cohen's organizing activities began in college at the University of Waterloo where he ran the chess club for four years and organized his school's participation in the Pan American Intercollegiate Team Championships. He tells an amusing story about his first tournament directing experience: "My first organizing experience with rated events came about through my university classmate, future IM Deen Hergott. He was competing in the Ontario Junior Championship, and the event was being held around the corner from where I lived. I dropped in the first night to watch him play. By noon of the second day, I was a familiar sight. Then the strangest thing happened. The tournament director, Ed Thompson, walked up to me, pinned a great big Chess Federation of Canada badge on me, said, 'Here, I'm going out for lunch, you're in charge', and walked out! He was so organized, with everything under control and the rulebook handy for my reference, that he could do this. So I read it and became an Assistant Tournament Director. Eventually, I worked my way up to National Tournament Director, running local tournaments, then the Ontario Open Championship, and finally the Canadian Open Championship. I went on to run a couple of Canadian Under-16 Championships... In 2004, I finally received my International Arbiter title from FIDE, and served as Assistant TD at the Canadian Closed Championship." He adds that twenty years later, "I'm playing correspondence chess by e-mail, and my opponent is the person who got me started organizing at this level, Ed Thompson!"

Cohen has been teaching chess to grade school children on and off since the mid-1980s, and has written chess teaching materials under the supervision of Roman Pelts. Cohen is especially impressed with Pelts' *Comprehensive Chess Course* texts, but adds, "Even his books are not enough – we need to teach the teachers! I'm writing a manual so that teachers who know nothing about chess – except its value for the kids – can teach it in their classroom. My long-term goal is to give every kid the benefits that come from learning chess at a young age (by age 8 or Grade 3). I can't write chess teaching materials in a vacuum, so I'm out there teaching once again." This past summer, he ran a children's chess club with multiple tournaments and also taught at a couple of day camps.

Despite being a self-proclaimed loner (at least as a child), Cohen has taken an active role in trying to improve and promote chess in Canada. "I just retired from the Board of Governors of the Chess Federation of Canada, after my second 5-year involvement. My big idea was that we needed sponsorship money to solve our funding woes. There is no federal government support for chess in Canada. We wasted a lot of years trying to get funding as a sport. We've finally been able to obtain some for tourism, and some from being a cultural activity. But mostly we need sponsors, yet they won't give to us until chess is seen as part of the culture. Working backwards, I figured we needed publicity, to attract some sponsors. Finally, I thought that to get publicity, we needed some sense of our history. It was better to have a track record, so we

could approach a sponsor for the 40th Championship, than to not even know how many events we had run. So, I started compiling and publicizing our historical information: championships and biographies. At last, we could send out press releases whenever, for example, a kid won an event – because I had compiled a complete list of the kid’s championship victories and trips to World Championships. As I sought greater publicity, I started copying other sports: I created the Canadian Chess Hall of Fame, Canadian Chess Player of the Year, and Top-Ranked Canadian Chess Player at Year-End. And so it grew into my Canadian Chess [website](#)”

This website is indeed quite extensive, offering a comprehensive timeline of important events in Canadian chess history, biographies of numerous Canadian chess personalities, and a number of interesting articles David has written. National, regional and city champions are listed, as well as inductees of the Canadian Chess Hall of Fame. Another page of the website lists Canadians who have been awarded FIDE titles. The site also provides information about recent and upcoming tournaments and has a listing of useful chess links.

When I asked if he has seen improvement in corporate sponsorship of chess in Canada, Cohen responded, “No. Canada has always depended on one rich person. Bernard Freedman, diamond merchant, sponsored Yanofsky in 1930s, 1957 World Junior Championship, etc. John Prentice bankrolled the Olympiad Teams and the magazine in 1950s-1980s. This decade, Sid Belzberg paid for Olympiad Teams pre-Libya fuss, and now for the Canadian Championship.”

His advice for improving the state of Canadian chess? “My recommendation for now: we need professionally trained administrators who can work well together to run a non-profit organization to promote chess. My recommendation for the future: teach kids double chess [bughouse], and emphasize mentoring and team competitions.”

Cohen’s most recent project has been the development of a new [website](#), whose stated mission is “to teach chess in an environment which encourages the learning of math, logic, sports and life skills.” Cohen, who also has an MBA from Yale University School of Management, teamed with partner Ted Winick in the production of this new website. Winick has taught chess for a number of years in the Toronto area. Why the new project? Cohen is concerned that, “Nobody else will do it if I don’t. It’s promoting chess, which I love, it’s an attempt to improve my community (raising math marks, teaching kids life skills so they do grow up working well with others in their community), and an attempt to make some use of my degree from Yale – managing a non-profit organization.” The Chess Institute of Canada is providing its chess program to students at the Howlett Academy in Toronto this fall, which will also be the site for the Chess Institute’s series of “Sunday Chess Club and Tournament” events.

This past summer Cohen and Winick provided their services to a camp for troubled children, and the camp director had the following to say (as posted at the Chess Institute website):

“Ted approached me about delivering his chess program to our daycamp for children with severe behavioral problems. He felt there was a good fit between programs due to the common goal of teaching the children to think before they act, considering the consequences of their behavior. Their program not only delivered opportunities for the children to practice thinking about the consequences of their choices, but went above and beyond. Through teaching the children chess, we witnessed the budding of interest in a game the children can enjoy throughout their lives, which increased their ability to focus and pay attention. This is no small task given the challenges presented by the children attending our camp. Ted and David tailored their teaching approach to match the needs of the children at our camp. They were interested in connecting with campers individually, and their dedication to improve the lives of our children is commendable.”

The Chess Federation of Canada has also worked to assist in teaching chess to children. It offers teachers a 303-page Chess Teaching Manual written by IM Tom O'Donnell.

For additional information about the world of Canadian chess, visit this [website](#).

Upcoming Tournaments

2005 National Youth Action: November 18-20, 2005

A blitz tournament on November 18 opens this event, followed by the main nine-round, game/30 tournament on Nov. 19 and Nov. 20. A bughouse championship is set for the evening of Nov. 19.

2005 National Scholastic K-12 / Collegiate Championship: December 2-4, 2005

Fourteen sections are available for this major annual event, one section for each grade from kindergarten through 12th grade, plus the collegiate division. The time limit is game/90 for each of the seven rounds. Bughouse and blitz tournaments will take place on Dec. 1, prior to the main event, and a simultaneous exhibition is slated for the morning of Dec. 2. To allay fears about the tournament taking place as scheduled in Houston, the USCF recently issued the following press release:

“Houston withstood Hurricane Rita very well. The Hilton Americas remained open, never lost power and were able to service guests all weekend. Although the airport was closed briefly, all services are back to normal schedule. The Convention Center is no longer being used to house some of the evacuees from Louisiana, and is in fact being used this weekend for a convention. Houston is a ‘GO for US Chess’ in

December.”



2005 Pan-Am Intercollegiate: December 27-30, 2005

This prestigious event, won the last two years by the strong University of Texas - Dallas (UTD) team, will be held in Miami, Florida, hosted by Miami Dade College. Perennial power University of Maryland - Baltimore County will be looking to unseat rival UTD.

Answers to our September Everyman Quiz

Included below are the questions from our quiz last month, together with the correct answers:

1. The Canadian Chess Association, forerunner of the Chess Federation of Canada, was created in what year?

- a) 1915
- b) 1872
- c) 1848

Answer: (b)

2. Canada's primary scholastic chess organization is which of the following?

- a) Chess Canada Échecs
- b) Canadian Scholastic Chess Association
- c) Chess'n Math Association

Answer: (c)

3. According to the August 2005 USCF Rating Supplement, how many USCF players under age 16 have ratings at or above 2300?

- a) 6
- b) 8
- c) 10

Answer: (a)

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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