



COLUMNISTS

Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg



*Winning Chess
the Easy Way*
by Susan Polgar

Annotated Scholastic Games

This month marks a small milestone of sorts – it's the one-year anniversary of this column. During the past twelve months I have had the wonderful opportunity of interacting with hundreds of players, parents, coaches, organizers, and chess administrators to provide the information we include here. My thanks go out to all of you and to our readers as well.

In order to keep things lively, we'll add an occasional twist or turn. Column features may change from time to time. One of my primary motivations is to explore the personalities that make up the fascinating world of chess, but this month I wanted to get into some of the games themselves. We feature two games in which young players held their own and more against much-higher rated opponents. Just for fun, we also have a word search puzzle spotlighting the current top fifteen players under age 15.

Everyman Quiz of the Month

We are pleased to continue our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book to three respondents with correct answers, 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 *Checkmate! My First Chess Book* by Garry Kasparov. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck! Please note – winners within the last three months are not eligible to enter subsequent contests.



We will accept all contest answers for one week following the appearance of the column, then randomly select our three winners from this group. This provides an equal opportunity to all, so that contestants aren't required to get their answers in within hours of the column's posting. In order to meet the one-week deadline, please e-mail your responses to me by November 16, 2005.

1. The 2005 U.S. Cadet Championship, 2005 U.S. Junior Open and the 2005 U.S. Junior Invitational were all held in which city?

a) Nashville, Tennessee

- b) Kings Island, Ohio
- c) Phoenix, Arizona

2. Tournament Director David Cohen's own first chess prize as a child consisted of:

- a) a t-shirt
- b) a hot dog and fries
- c) a toy store gift certificate

3. What school has won the past two Pan-American Intercollegiate team championships?

- a) Miami Dade College
- b) University of Maryland - Baltimore County
- c) University of Texas - Dallas

Upcoming Tournaments

A number of major tournaments are right around the corner. From November 18-20, the 2005 National Youth Action takes place in Atlanta, followed by the 2005 National Scholastic K-12 / Collegiate Championship December 2-4 in Houston. The final week of 2005 has Miami hosting the annual Pan-American Intercollegiate tournament, where the top college teams across the continent compete.

In January, GM Susan Polgar debuts her First Annual National Open Championships for Girls in Corpus Christi, Texas. This tournament consists of four sections and is open to girls who are under age 21.

SuperNationals III Update

MyChessPhotos.com has produced a beautiful coffee-table book featuring over 200 pages of photos from the massive SuperNationals III tournament this past April. A number of articles about chess training in general and the tournament in particular are included. For more information, see www.mychessphotos.com.



Scholastic Game # 1

Our first game is from the 2005 Polgar Invitational for Girls, between Alisa Melekhina and Abby Marshall, two of the three eventual co-champions of this event. The game begins as a drawish-looking Four Knights Defense, but tactical considerations begin to emerge. Abby shared her analysis of this game with me and offers an interesting look into her thought processes at crucial moments of the game. Her annotation also appeared in the Ohio online chess [newsletter](#).

Alisa Melekhina (2057) - Abby Marshall (1891)

2005 Polgar Invitational for Girls

Annotation by Abby Marshall

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Nc3 Nf6 4.Bb5 Bc5 5.0-0 0-0

This position could also come about after the Ruy Lopez move order (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.0-0 Bc5 5.Nc3 0-0). This system with 4...Bc5 is called the classical defense. The most testing variation of the line comes when instead of 5.Nc3, White plays 5.c3.

6.Nxe5

The best move. If 6.Bxc6 dxc6 7.Nxe5 then Black gets a good position after 7...Re8 8.Nd3 Bg4 9.Qe1 Bd4 regaining the pawn. After the text Black usually responds 6...Nxe5 7.d4 Bd6 and now 8.f4! is strong. Black can defend, but it's difficult.

6...Re8!?

This is a very old move. It may not be better than 6...Nxe5, but it's still interesting. One famous game played with it is Paulsen-Morphy New York 1857. The game went 7.Nxc6 dxc6 8.Bc4 b5 9.Be2 Nxe4 10.Nxe4 Rxe4 11.Bf3 Re6 12.c3? (This is considered Paulsen's big mistake. 12.d3 was better) 12...Qd3! 13.b4 Bb6 14.a4 bxa4 15.Qxa4 Bd7 16.Ra2 Rae8 17.Qa6 And now Morphy lives up to his reputation. 17...Qxf3! 18.gxf3 Rg6+ 19.Kh1 Bh3 20.Rd1 Bg2+ 21.Kg1 Bxf3+ 22.Kf1 Bg2+ 23.Kg1 Bh3+ 24.Kh1 Bxf2 25.Qf1 Bxf1 26.Rxf1 Re2 27.Ra1 Rh6 28.d4 Be3 and White resigned.

7.Nd3

The main line is considered 7.Nf3 Nxe4 8.Nxe4 Rxe4 9.d3 Re8 10.d4. 7.Nd3 is still considered critical.

7...Bd4

The line now stops. Black is going to get the pawn back so the question is what should White do? The current problem White has is the dark-squared bishop. The most obvious solution is forcing me to take on c3

then replying dxc3.

8.Re1

Definitely the best. 8.Qf3 is met by 8...Bxc3 9.bxc3 Nxe4 followed by ...d5 with a fine position.

8...Bxc3

I played this move quickly, but I think 8...d6 may be better. I'm threatening to disrupt her position with ...Bg4.

9.dxc3 Nxe4 10.f3

Or else I'll play ...d5 and when she kicks the knight I can play ...Nf6. I can't play 10...Nf6 after the text for reasons I'll show next move. 10.Nf4 is a move stopping ...d5. The only drawback is the knight somewhat blocks the c1-bishop. After 10.Nf4 I would play ...d6 and eventually play ...Be6 to get ...d5 in.

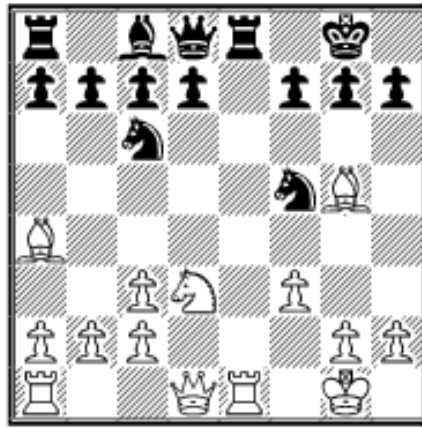
10...Nd6

10...Nf6 would be met by 11.Bg5. White threatens to double Black's pawns with Bxf6. If 11...h6 12.Rxe8+ Qxe8 13.Bxf6 is disastrous for Black. The only hope is 11...Rxe1+ 12.Qxe1 h6. But 13.Bxf6 Qxf6 14.Qe8+ Kh7 15.Bc4 or 15.Re1 looks very good for White. At this point in the game it's obvious White has some pressure. Since White has two bishops in an open position, is nearer to finishing development, and the fact the black knight is now blocking the d-pawn should be enough to say White has a small edge. The one thing Black has is a center pawn. If Black can get in ...d5 safely then she'll be fine. Some other strong players say that ...d6 may be better than ...d5 because the pawn could become weak on d5.

11.Ba4 Nf5

I think 11...Nc4 is a little better since it helps bring along d5 and can always drop back to b6. Also, in the variation 12.Bg5 f6 White doesn't have an annoying check on b3 with the bishop. On f5 the knight is a little loose and there are no good fallback squares.

12.Bg5



Brings a piece into the fray with tempo.

12...f6

I can't take on g5 because of Rxe8 mate. If I try 12...Rxe1+ 13.Qxe1 Qxg5 still doesn't work because of Qe8 mate. Instead of 13...Qxg5 13...f6 is better. I didn't want to play 12...Rxe1+ though because I wanted to keep contesting the e-file and

eventually play my bishop to e6.

13.Bb3+ Kf8

13...d5 is no good because of 14.Rxe8+ (During the game I thought 14.Bxd5+ wouldn't work because of Qxd5 15.Rxe8+ Kf7 and both rook and bishop are attacked. Of course 16.Ne5+ wins the queen) followed by Bxd5+ or the other way around. 13...Kh8 is the other option. I didn't play there because of the back rank issues that might follow such as 14.Rxe8+ Qxe8 15.Qe1 and I'd have to keep watch over the back rank. Moving one of the kingside pawns would be a considerable weakness. Note that 15...Qh5 or Qg6 lose to 16.Nf4! After the text I'm a little exposed, but I couldn't see a way for White to take advantage of that yet.

14.Bf4 d6

14...d5 is bad because of 15.Rxe8+ Kxe8 and 16.Nc5 wins the pawn.

15.Rxe8+ Qxe8 16.Qd2

Here I had a long think. Both 16...Be6 and 16...Ne5 suggest themselves. I don't think it matters what order the moves are played in. But the one thing that worried me was the variation 16...Ne5 17.Re1 Be6 18.Nxe5 dxe5 19.Bxe5 fxe5 20.Rxe5. I thought for almost half an hour and decided it would be okay.

16...Ne5 17.Re1 Be6 18.Bxe5 dxe5

This is inaccurate. 18...fxe5 was better to avoid the consequences of her next move and to keep the knight out of c5.

19.f4

19.Bxe5 fxe5 20.Rxe5 Qd7 was what I'd planned. 21.Qf4 is the only move to win the piece back by pinning the knight. 21...Bxb3 22.axb3 (22.Rxf5+ Bf7) 22...Qd1+ 23.Kf2 I was planning here to go 23...g6

(23...Qxc2+ may also be good: 24.Re2 [the rook eventually has to come back or Black will eat the queenside pawns then bring the black rook to d8 with a superior version of the other line] 24...Qb1 25.g4 Re8 26.Rxe8 Kxe8 27.gxf5 with a double-edged position that's probably about even) 24.g4 Rd8 25.Re2 (25.gxf5? Rd2+ 26.Kg3 Qg1+ 27.Kh3 Qg2+ 28.Kh4 g5+! 29.Qxg5 Qxh2+ 30. Kg4 Rg2#) 25...Qd6 26.Re4 Qd2+ will probably be a draw. I hadn't considered the text which actually wins a pawn.

19...Bxb3 20.axb3

20.cxb3 is worse because of 20...Rd8 21.fxe5 (21.Qc2 Qd7 avoids the pin and saves the pawn) 21...Qb5 22.c4 Qb6+ 23.Kh1 Qd4 to recover the pawn.

20...e4 21.Nc5 Nd6

Because of time I had to rush these next few moves. 21...e3 doesn't work because of 22.Qd5 attacking the knight and threatening various checks. This didn't look good for me.

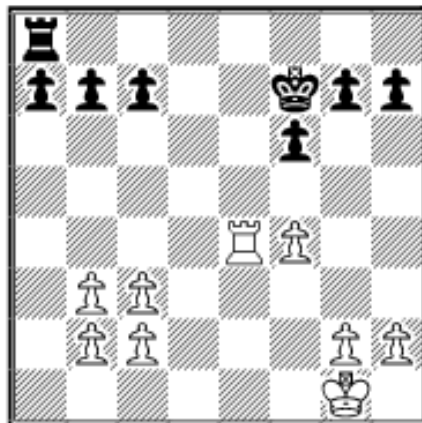
22.Qd5

22.f5 is a real possibility. 22...Qc6 23.Ne6+ Kg8 24.g4 I'd try chipping away at f5 with g6 or maybe playing ...a5 to drum up some play on the a-file.

22...Qf7 23.Qxf7

Wins the e-pawn. 23.Ne6+ Kg8 24.Nxc7 wins a pawn too, but allows Black to keep a strong passed pawn. White's queenside pawns aren't so mobile either.

23...Kxf7 24.Nxe4 Nxe4 25.Rxe4



This should be a draw and the queenside majority is in a box formation which can only help. Even with the pawns undoubled White cannot win with best play. Black has ideas like ...a5-a4-a3 to get the rook active and Black has good king position too.

25...f5

25...Rd8 26.Rd4! The text attempts to force White off the e-file and fix the f4-pawn.

26.Rd4

Otherwise Black will be able to play ...Rd8. For instance 26.Re5 Kf6 27.Kf2 Rd8 28.Ke2 (28.Ke3 allows 28...Rd1) 28...Rd6 and it's hard for White to make progress. If White tries attacking Black's pawns with 26.Rc4 or b4 then 26...c6 or ...b6 is fine.

26...Ke6 27.b4 a5

Black tries to activate the rook.

28.Rc4

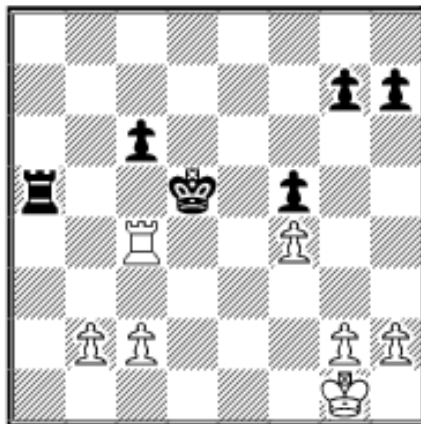
28.b5 a4 29.Kf2 a3 30.bxa3 Rxa3 and Black has improved her position. 28.bxa5 Rxa5 29.b4 Ra3 30.Rd3 Ra2 and draws.

28...c6?!

28...Kd6 looks stronger. I rejected it because of 29.Rc5. However, 29...axb4 30.cxb4 (30.Rxf5? bxc3 31.bxc3 Ra1+32.Kf2 Rc2 looks good for Black) 30...Ra1+ 31.Kf2 Ra2 32.b3 g6 and Black has a very active rook.

29.bxa5?!

29.b5! Kd6 (29...cxb5 30.Rc7 Rd8 31.Rxb7 Rd1+ 32.Kf2 Rd2+ 33.Kf3 Rxc2 34.Rb6+ Ke7 35.Rxb5 is good for White) 30.bxc6 bxc6 31.Ra4 threatening b4. White has saddled Black with isolated pawns which can only improve the White position.

29...Rxa5 30.Rb4 b5 31.c4 bxc4 32.Rxc4 Kd5

White has succeeded in undoubling all her pawns, but at the cost of allowing Black a very active king and rook.

33.Rb4

Here I considered 33...Ra1+ 34.Kf2 Rd1 35.c3 (35.Ke2 Rg1 36.Kf2 Rd1) 35...Rd2+ 36.Kf3 c5 37.Rb7 Kc4 38.b4 cxb4 39.cxb4 g6 40.b5 Rb2 which looks survivable but

complicated. With not much time left I decided to play it safe.

33...Ra7 34.Kf2 Re7

34...Ra2 looks better to tie the rook down to the defense of the b-pawn. I wanted to stop the white king moving to the e-file.

35.Ra4

She wants to attack my king from the side to get it off its active post.

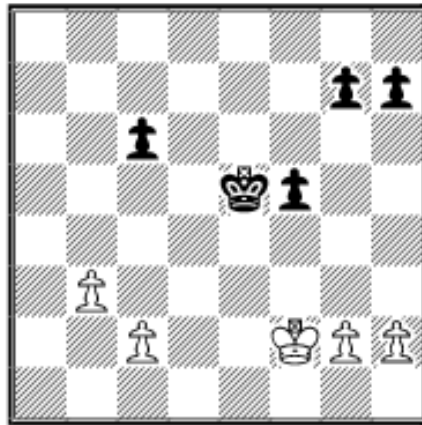
35...Rb7 36.b3 Re7?!

36...c5 keeps my king in the wonderful d5-square. If she plays 37.Ra5 any ideas of b4 are stopped with my rook on the b-file. 36...Re7?! gives her a chance to go into a pawn ending that requires me to play very accurately.

37.Ra5+ Ke4

37...c5 38.b4 Kc4 39.Rxc5+ Kxb4 40.Rxf5 Rc7 and with my king on the wrong side of the board it looks like I'm in trouble.

38.Re5+ Rxe5 39.fxe5 Kxe5



I have my pawn back, but usually in pawn endings the side with the outside passed pawn has good winning chances. The idea for White is to distract my king with her queenside pawns while her king mops up my kingside pawns. The factors in my favor are my excellent king position and the fact that the farthest queenside pawn will be on the b-file, so the distance to get back to my pawns is closer than if the pawn was on the a-file. My plan here is to advance my kingside pawns as far as possible to trade as many pawns as I can to leave her with a rook pawn. Hopefully I can get back in time so when she takes my rook pawn I can get into the safe f8-square. If that happens it's a draw.

40.Ke3 g5 41.b4 f4+ 42.Kd3 g4 43.c4 f3 44.gxf3 gxf3 45.Ke3 f2 46.Kxf2 Kd4 47.b5 cxb5 48.cxb5 Kc5 49.Kg3 Kxb5 50.Kf4 Kc5 51.Kg5 Kd5 52.h4 Ke6 53.Kh6 Kf7 54.Kxh7 Kf8 55.h5 Kf7 56.h6 Kf8 57.Kg6 Kg8 58.h7+ Kh8 59.Kh6 1/2-1/2

An exciting finish. I never had winning chances in the game but I'm proud that I managed to draw with some of those difficult positions.

Scholastic Game # 2

Alisa Melekhina is also featured in game #2, which occurred at the 2005 U.S. Open. Here she plays national master Carl Haessler, rated

nearly two hundred points higher than her. Alisa's father and coach Dr. Aleksandr Melekhin provides commentary in this game which demonstrates the danger of attacking before proper piece development has been achieved.

Alisa Melekhina (2057) - Carl Haessler (2241)

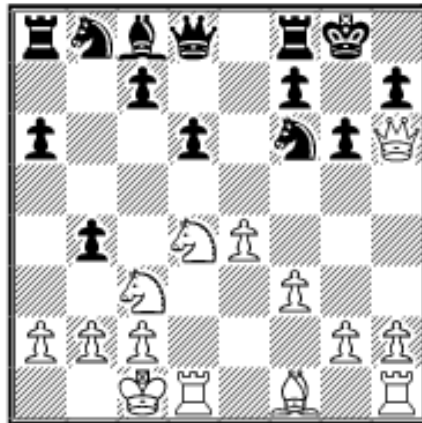
2005 U.S. Open

Comments and annotation by Dr. Aleksandr Melekhin

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 exd4 4.Nxd4 g6 5.Nc3 Bg7 6.Be3 Nf6 7.Qd2 0-0 8.0-0-0 a6 9.f3 b5

Black is in a good attacking mood.

10.Bh6 Bxh6 11.Qxh6 b4

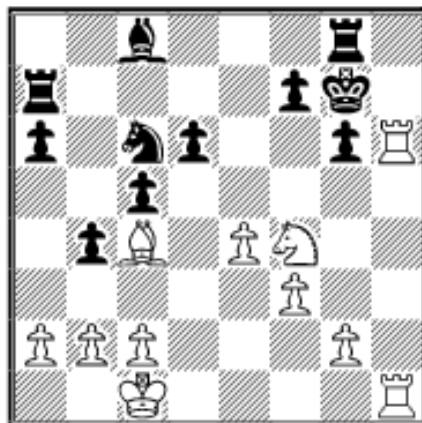


Forgotten development.

12.Nd5 c5 13.Nxf6+

13.Nf5 Bxf5 14.exf5 Nxd5 15.Rxd5 Nc6 16.fxg6 fxg6 17.Bc4.

13...Qxf6 14.Ne2 Rd8 15.h4 Nc6 16.h5 Qg7 17.hxg6 hxg6 18.Nf4 Qxh6 19.Rxh6 Ra7 20.Bc4 Kg7 21.Rdh1 Rg8

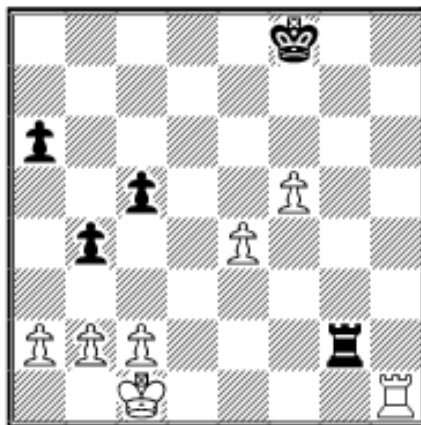


Didn't see a combination coming ...

22.Nxg6 Be6

22...fxg6 23.Bxg8 Kxg8 24.Rh8+ Kg7 25.Rxc8 Ne5.

23.Bxe6 fxe6 24.Nf4 e5 25.Rxd6 Nd4 26.Ne6+ Nxe6 27.Rxe6 Kf8 28.g4 Rf7 29.Rxe5 Rxf3 30.Rf5+ Rxf5 31.gxf5 Rg2



31...c4 32.e5 Rg5 33.Rf1 c3 34.e6 Rg2 35.f6 Re2 36.e7+ Kf7 37.bxc3 bxc3 38.Kb1 Re4 39.a4 Re2 40.Ka2 Rxc2+ 41.Kb3 Re2 42.Kxc3.

32.b3 Re2 33.Rh4 Rf2 34.Rh6 Re2 35.Re6 a5 36.Kd1 Rh2 37.Rc6 Rh1+ 38.Kd2 Rh2+ 39.Kc1 Rh1+ 40.Kb2 Re1 41.Rxc5 Rxe4 42.Rxa5 Rf4 43.Rc5

And Black resigned in a hopeless position.

Scholastic Word Search

Not exactly a tactical puzzle, but enjoy finding the first names of the top fifteen players under age 15 as of the October 2005 USCF Rating Supplement:

W S P H F I N W X N U W V L D
S A U Q N L X Z V T M I E R W
L A E J O A C F T R S I A X A
D O R H I U E L Y H N K B U M
D Q X K F V F C N A E S L V M
F R L Y I F L U D T Y A E D M
F I E E Y S V A E E E L O M W
A Y I H Z A T J S D J O J L S
N X S Z R A J A Z D P C O W B
D G E D H D G V U Y K I Z J I
P I H L T E O Z Q N Q N M W W
W A E Y A A O B B G X H O F A
N L D Y I Q E I L J V A L A B
B G E X B V D H R J L P F S V
R D N A S K E L A E L L I O T

Salvijus (Bercys)
Alex (Lenderman)
Daniel (Ludwig)
Zhe (Quan)
Joel (Banawa)
Nicolas (Yap)
Elliot (Liu)
Aleksandr (Pelekhaty)
Teddy (Coleman)
Xiao (Cheng)
Raja (Panjwani)
Vishnuvardhan
(Chirukandath)
Drake (Wang)
Zhi-Ya (Hu)
Sarkis (Agaian)

Answers to our October Everyman Quiz

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

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

answer: (c)

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
answer: (a)

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
answer: (c)

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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 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

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