



## COLUMNISTS

## Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg



*Winning Chess  
the Easy Way*  
by Susan Polgar

## Knights of the South Bronx

There is so much going on right now relevant to scholastic chess that I simply couldn't fit everything into one column and do justice to it all. In December we had the phenomenal National K-12/Collegiate Championships, followed by the Pan-Am Intercollegiate tournament. Now in January 2006 we have the debut of Greg Shahade's U.S. Chess School and Susan Polgar's inaugural National Open Championship for Girls.

However, the focus of this month's column is the wonderful new film starring Ted Danson entitled *Knights of the South Bronx* which aired in early December on the A&E cable television channel. It is an adaptation of the career of chess teacher extraordinaire David MacEnulty, who took a group of kids from some of the roughest parts of New York City and molded them into national champions. He was also a featured speaker at the recent National K-12 championships and, in case you missed his lecture in Houston, he details his amazing story below. But stay tuned, I have some interesting tidbits later in this column.



I have pleaded with the people at A&E to replay the movie and they tell me that it may well be repeated either on A&E or the Biography channel, but no dates are set as of this writing. For a brief look at the movie, click on the "[Videos](#)" button and you'll find several excellent 25-second videos of MacEnulty and Ted Danson discussing chess and children. Special thanks go out to Joan DuBois of the USCF office, Vicky Kahn of the A&E Network, and to David MacEnulty. They each contributed greatly to this month's column.

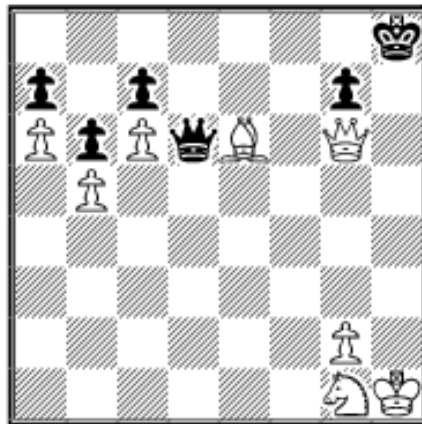
Next month we'll provide more coverage of the National K-12 tournament, with profiles and games of several of the top players and we'll hear some excellent advice about chess training from one of America's very top grandmasters.

### Everyman Quiz of the Month

Each month Everyman Chess Books sponsors our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book to three respondents with correct answers. I'm pleased to report that the new format produced the greatest response yet to our monthly Everyman Quiz. This month, winners of our quiz will receive *Improve Your Opening Play* by GM Chris Ward. Send your answers to [scholasticchess@chesscafe.com](mailto:scholasticchess@chesscafe.com). Good luck! Please note - winners within the last three months are not eligible to enter this month's contest.

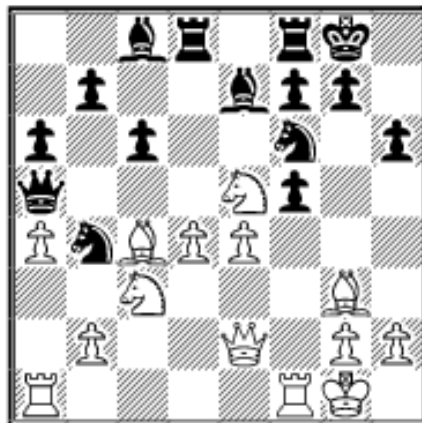


We will accept all contest answers for one week following the appearance of the column, then randomly select our three winners from this group. This provides an equal opportunity to all, so that contestants aren't required to get their answers in within hours of the column's posting. In order to meet the one-week deadline, please e-mail your responses to me by January 18, 2006.



Problem 1:

In this diagram from GM Yasser Seirawan's excellent *Winning Chess Tactics*, it is Black's move. What is your suggestion?



Problem 2:

Also from *Winning Chess Tactics*, it is now White to move. How would you proceed?

For both problems, send your answers to [scholasticchess@chesscafe.com](mailto:scholasticchess@chesscafe.com).

### Masterminds Update

Last [month](#) we wrote about 8-year-old Odette Moolten and her involvement with the Masterminds Chess Club in Philadelphia. After the column appeared I heard from Leteef Street, Vice-President of the Masterminds club. He mentioned that the club has monthly tournaments

and that he had recently started a chess league in the Philadelphia area that includes the Masterminds team. The highlight of recent club activities, however, was the simultaneous exhibition, lecture and book signing by Jennifer Shahade. It turns out that she and Leteef were former teammates on their middle school chess team in Philadelphia, although I believe that Jennifer was quoted in Maurice Ashley's book *Chess for Success* as saying that she had decreased her chess involvement during middle school. Leteef reports that chess is also the topic of his master's thesis he is working on at Temple University.



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

Twenty-nine teams from North and South America competed in the annual Pan-Am Intercollegiate tournament, hosted this year by Miami Dade College the final week of December, 2005. The University of Texas-Dallas (UTD) was attempting to win this event for the third consecutive year, but both the UTD-A and UTD-B teams were defeated by the group from the University of Maryland-Baltimore County (UMBC). The combined UTD teams have enough IMs and GMs to field a baseball team, but the UMBC squad was lead by GM Alexander Onischuk, IM Pascal Charbonneau and GM Pawel Blehm, all rated 2600+. Here are the top ten finishers from the six-round event:

1. University of Maryland-Baltimore County – A team
2. University of Texas-Dallas – B team
3. University of Texas-Dallas – A team
4. Miami Dade College – A team
5. Duke University
6. University of Toronto – A team
7. University of Maryland-Baltimore County – B team
8. Emory University
9. University of Waterloo
10. Stanford University

The [Susan Polgar Foundation](#) and the [South Texas Chess Center](#) proudly present  
**the First Annual Susan Polgar  
 National Open Championships**  
 **for Girls under 21**  
**January 27-29, 2006 | Corpus Christi, Texas**

## **First Annual Susan Polgar National Open Championship for Girls: January 27-29, 2006**

This new national championship event is rapidly approaching, but any interested girls under age 21 can still attend. South Texas is a hotbed of chess, and several hundred young chessplayers are expected to converge on Corpus Christi from around the country to usher in this event. The local hotels promise to handle any potential overflow, but this is currently their “off-season” so plenty of space is still available. As of this writing, girls from 13 states have registered, including a Mexican national girls champion currently enrolled at the University of Texas-Brownsville, and at least one FIDE Master. An assortment of prizes are available, including laptop computers and college scholarships, and a number of entertaining side events are scheduled. For more information, contact Dan DeLeon at (361) 883-3930 or see [www.susanpolgartexas.com](http://www.susanpolgartexas.com).

## **The Knights of the South Bronx: What We Did**

David MacEnulty

The A&E movie, *Knights of the South Bronx*, is, to my mind, a beautifully filmed fictionalized account of the chess team in the Bronx that I had the privilege of coaching for eight years. Ted Danson deeply believed in the story, and put a lot of energy into really understanding what it took to get a group of marvelous children in a horribly underserved population to the top. I hope he gets another Emmy.

Many people have asked how this came to be a movie. The quick answer is, Perri Peltz. She was the reporter for CNN (now with NBC) when they did a big piece on our team. A friend of hers, Diane Nabatov, a Hollywood producer, was looking for a good story, and Perri suggested this one. The three of us had a breakfast meeting (Hollywood people seem to always want to discuss things over food), and after several years of pushing and prodding and relentlessly pursuing the idea, viola, a film starring Ted Danson!

Although inspired by a true story, every chess teacher will recognize immediately that this is fiction. There is no way to take one class of fourth graders, no matter how talented, hard-working and dedicated, from not knowing how to play chess to national champions in one year. However, that the writers truncated several years into one is not a big deal. What matters is the real truth of the film: children in these underserved areas can and will reach for the stars if we give them the opportunity.

I had the good fortune to be the one to give them that opportunity. I got to work with the children at a school fed by the two highest crime precincts in the Bronx, and in the heart of

the poorest congressional district in the country. Nothing in my life has ever been as difficult, demanding, frustrating, or as challenging and rewarding, as the eight great years with those magnificent children and their parents.

Given the resources available at the school, we had a lot to overcome. But just as flowers search for the warm glow of the sun to stimulate their growth, these children were searching for something to stimulate their minds. Chess was their sun, and my job was to clear away the clouds. The question was, how? I hadn't been trained as a teacher, and contrary to the depiction in the film, I am not a chess master who can demolish everyone in a simul. However, I did have two of the greatest assets a coach can have: Bruce Pandolfini and Bruce Alberston were my friends and mentors. Whenever I would have a problem or want to test out an idea, I could bounce things off these two absolutely amazing chess minds and very experienced teachers. How much better could it get?

Bent Larsen was once asked: "How do you get better at chess?" He responded: "First you learn one thing really well. Then you learn something else really well. Then you go on to something else. Pretty soon you know a lot."



5-year-old Daniel Lambert and David MacEnulty.  
(Photo credit: Vicky Kahn)

That was my approach to helping the children in the Bronx. After learning the moves and rules (which took longer than I thought it should in the classroom), we would focus on one idea at a time. One checkmate pattern, then another, and another, opening principles, forks, pins, discoveries, etc. Rather quickly they were beyond simple opening principles and we could move on to specific opening lines, and then to pawn structures, open



files, and other more interesting chess ideas. We also spent a huge amount of time on endings, with the happy result that we won or drew nearly all the games that actually made it to an endgame. Although most of the other coaches could beat me, I discovered that my real strength, organizing material so children could learn efficiently and thoroughly, was more than enough to compensate for not being a master player. Larsen's advice worked; in a couple of years, the children at the school knew a lot. This was long-term planning, and it paid off. It was also a great life lesson for children in an area where instant gratification was generally more highly rewarded.

For a time there were a group of parents at the school who wanted to help the children with the issue of self-esteem (one called it "their self of steam"). Predictably, this was a very real problem at the school. These well-intentioned but misguided parents thought they could build self-esteem by giving out awards for almost anything, and pretty soon nearly everyone in the school was walking around with some sort of award. Come to Math Club twice in September, drop out for the rest of the year, and the next thing you know you have a Math Club Award. What the parents didn't realize is that an award that doesn't have some significant achievement behind it is meaningless. The steam went right out of that experiment, because no one believed in it.

However, when one of the children learned to play chess well, *that* was a significant achievement. And it was one that was easily provable. When Lisa won first place at the P.S. 9 tournament, no one could dispute that she had *done something impressive!* Things began building when we would win six or seven of the top ten places in some of the local tournaments. When the team came in first place in the New York City and in the New York State Scholastic Chess Tournaments, their "self of steam" could have powered a locomotive all the way to California.

So how did they get so good so quickly? The answer, in real life and in the film, was quite simple. Work. Lots and lots of work. We practiced every morning before school, every afternoon after school some part of the team would practice, then we played weekend tournaments at least twice a month, and on the alternate weekends and on school breaks we held special sessions where I hired (thanks to many donors) outside masters to work with the kids. Each special session was devoted to special themes, such as tactics, mating patterns, a particular opening, rook endings, or the creation and use of open files.



Ted Danson and cast. (Photo credit: L. Pief Weyman)

But it wasn't just technical knowledge of the game that brought them the fabulous string of successes that they achieved. We also spent a lot of time on sportsmanship and developing a "warrior mentality." I think that just chess alone is not going to turn out good citizens, which was my real goal. You can be a jerk in anything, and chess is no exception. We have all seen rude nasty behavior at the chessboard, and we have all encountered the occasional cheater at our great game. Honing thinking skills is a great thing to do, but as has been proven over and over lately in the business and political arenas, "smart" can be put to any use whatever, including greedy, self-serving manipulation of rules and regulations, laws, money, and even people. Smart alone can cause a lot of damage in the world if it isn't held in check by some ethical standards.

Childhood is a time when little people-in-training are figuring out what works and what doesn't. Their brains will make sense out of whatever is around them. They will test your ideas, look for ways around them, see if others are doing things that way, and be very creative in interpreting the world they see. If they see that deviousness works, they'll stick with it. And if they see that good behavior, concern for others, and a good work ethic is a better way to go, that's where they will head. A solid ethical base is as important as any technical knowledge, whatever the field.

In working with the children on a chess team, I wanted to get across the idea that when you are engaged in something as highly competitive as chess, where winning and losing are clear-cut outcomes, and winning is rewarded while losing is not, that losing has its own beneficial reward. If someone beat you, they knew something you didn't. That should be respected. You lose with dignity. The goal is not to lose the same way again. Learn from it, internalize the knowledge you didn't have and the loss

will make you stronger.

There is a natural temptation to avoid loss by some form of cheating. Cutting time from the opponent's clock, lying about whether or not you touched a piece and other little tricks can enter the game. I liked to stress that the handshake before the game actually has a real meaning to it. That handshake says "We are about to compete, and with this hand I promise to play fairly." The handshake at the end also has a meaning: "The game is over, and I accept the result. Since the game is finished, so is the competition between us."

I also stressed developing a warrior mentality. By that I do not mean some brute concept of winning no matter what, or crushing the opposition. To me the true warrior on the chessboard is one who respects the rules and traditions and the art, science, and sport of chess, respects the opponent, and will fight like a tiger every inch of the way, refusing to give in or let up until the game is over. No matter how bad the situation on the board, you always look for the strongest moves. No matter how good the situation on the board, you keep looking for the strongest moves. We have all seen games turn completely around by one thoughtless move. I wanted it to be our opponent's thoughtless move, not ours. Of course we played quite a few thoughtless moves ourselves, but that just reinforced the lesson. *All* the lessons needed constant reinforcement. I was as relentless in these lessons as I insisted the children be over the board.

Much as I wanted the children to succeed, the only way I wanted it to happen was in good, solid over the board play. There is no glory in a trophy won by nefarious means. If you touch a piece, you have to move it. You can deny it, and probably get away with it, but I would rather come in twentieth place honestly than win the national title with a lie. No victory is worth your integrity.





L-R: Antonio Ortiz (Dawson), Malcom David Kelly (Jimmy).  
(Photo credit: L. Pief Weyman)

This belief in good sportsmanship and developing the warrior within actually was one of the major reasons for our success, but not in any way I would have predicted. In the film, there are two donors, one who gave me money to buy chess clocks, and another who gave us the check to travel to Dallas for the national tournament. In fact those two events did happen, along with a host of others like it. Over the course of the years I was in the Bronx, many of the donations came from *parents of children we competed against*. Without fail, they spoke of how gratifying it was to help children who were so dedicated to the game and who performed so well and had such good sportsmanship. One man gave us a five hundred-dollar check after one of our girls beat his daughter at the national tournament in Little Rock. Several years later that same man gave us the fifteen thousand dollars we needed to travel to Dallas, where we did in fact win the national title. Good sportsmanship paid way beyond my wildest dreams.

So what did we get for all this work? What did the many donors get for all the money they contributed? We produced a whole big group of children who learned how to succeed. They were confident, well-spoken, and highly accomplished. They had come from very little, they matched brains with some of the most privileged children on the planet, and come out on top. There is no stopping these kids. The first group is now graduating from college, and I have every confidence that they will be as successful in life as they were on the team.

That someone would find this story worth making a film about was not even remotely on my mind. But I am thrilled that A&E did, and even more thrilled at how well they did it. My hope is that people will see the movie and come to two big conclusions.

First, the children in these underserved populations deserve far better than we are giving them, and second, that chess belongs in every school curriculum. I would hope that politicians and school administrators would be as relentless in pursuit of these two goals as our children were in the pursuit of theirs, and as Diane was in getting this film done.

Chess parent Brad Rosen of Chicago attended MacEnulty's lecture at the National K-12 Championships and in his blog dated 12-06-05 had the following to say about the presentation he described as "riveting":

*MacEnulty appears to be a humble guy yet has a commanding presence, is articulate as they get, and passionately believes that chess can serve as a vehicle to improve the lives of all children. Ted Danson [plays] the role inspired by MacEnulty in the movie, which promises to be the most important movie about youth chess since the 1993 film Searching for Bobby Fischer—where MacEnulty himself played a small role. I asked MacEnulty how he thought Knights of the South Bronx might impact the scholastic and youth chess landscape or the general consciousness about chess. MacEnulty responded that he had no great expectations but he would be ecstatic if the movie did two things: 1) show that chess is good thing for all children, and 2) help a significantly underserved population of disadvantaged kids.*



L-R: Keke Palmer (Kenya), Yucini Diaz (Renee).  
(Photo credit: L. Pief Weyman)

U.S. Chess Director of Communications, National Events, Outreach, Website Content and Correspondence Chess (did I leave out anything?)  
Joan DuBois noted:

*David began with a packed room ... Hearing a little about 'behind the scenes' was indeed interesting. Most people don't realize that not only did the actors have to get a concept of chess*

*but they had to look like it also. The variety of mannerisms, eye movement and just overall expression when one plays had to be learned by the actors and I must say they did quite well. I've known David for many years but had no idea of his many life accomplishments outside of chess – very interesting. David has a unique personality in that he seems to be able to relate to anyone of any age. I think most people were surprised to hear he is not an extremely highly rated player but this has no bearing on how good a teacher he has become. I was thrilled with the movie and felt inspired to pick up the pieces again myself which is what it is all about!*

I had the chance to chat with teacher MacEnulty recently and I would agree that he is certainly passionate about what he does. He stressed that his goal was never to win a national championship, but rather to get as many kids involved as possible. Although his various teams did win several national titles and numerous state and city championships, he feels that had he limited the team to perhaps 5-10 students, they might well have won additional national titles. Instead, he insisted on having as many kids as possible involved, bringing along as many as 35 students at a time to national events. Many of these kids had never seen the inside of a hotel or an airplane or had even left the Bronx before chess tournaments opened their horizons.

His teaching was not limited to chess. In fact, he stressed many non-chess issues to his players, emphasizing good citizenship over good chessplaying, telling his players not to be louder than those around them. He provided practical instruction as well, discussing the importance of proper rest and nutrition. Noting that the human brain represents perhaps 2% of one's body mass but consumes approximately 25% of the oxygen utilized by the body, David suggested that if a player exerts too much energy running around, his legs will extract oxygen that could have gone to his brain. Similarly, he taught that if a large meal is eaten just before a game, the stomach will require extra blood and oxygen to aid in digestion. Thus he advised eating well before game time.

David and I were discussing the importance of parental involvement in a child's success in any endeavor and he related an interesting story. When he was discussing the possibility of teaching chess at an inner-city school, David mentioned to the principal the need to have parents involved and committed to the success of the program. The principal responded that if parental support was necessary, they might as well forget the idea of a chess club since the kids' parents couldn't be counted on to be of help.

What happened was that the first year, this was the case. However, by the second year, when parents began seeing their kids having some success and bringing home legitimate trophies, they did get involved in a positive way. As MacEnulty explains, "Education was not the path to

success for many parents, so they didn't believe it would work for their kids." He added that schools often don't do enough to counteract this attitude. But when the parents began seeing that a level of success was being achieved, they began to change their attitudes.



David MacEnulty (Photo credit: Vicky Kahn)

My assumption was that MacEnulty was teaching a standard core subject in school, with chess as an after-school activity, but he corrected me, stating that he has always taught chess only. I was curious how an inner-city school might manage to hire a chess teacher when funds are always notoriously a problem. Again, an interesting story came to light.

His first year at the South Bronx school he was assigned there by the American Chess Foundation (now Chess in Schools). By the end of that first year, the principal had duly noted the kids' notable performance in tournaments and was impressed with how David was working with the children (showing them respect rather than talking down to them). She asked him to stay at the school, although he would need to obtain teacher certification to do so. He could, however, continue teaching while working to obtain the certification. The school board had other thoughts, complaining that there were already certified teachers who were waiting for a position to open up at the school. This principal then asked the board in what subject area was there no "waiting list" of teachers. It turns out that they had no source of drama teachers, to which the principal replied, "I need a drama teacher!" with MacEnulty in mind for the position. Ironically, though she didn't know it, David actually had quite a drama background, having worked as a professional actor for ten years. I don't know that he actually ended up teaching any drama, but he was asked to teach critical thinking skills and did so with his chess curriculum.



A couple brief sidelight notes: David notes that he and Bruce Pandolfini have been close friends and associates for a number of years. I asked how this association began, and was told, “Bruce Pandolfini and I are both bright people, but neither of us have any recollection how we initially met!” He did mention, however, that early on Pandolfini had asked him to fill in as a substitute teacher for one of his chess classes. MacEnulty was shocked to be asked since Pandolfini was an accomplished player and MacEnulty frankly was not. But Pandolfini told him, “You know more than the kids,” so he took the position and hasn’t stopped teaching since.



Ted Danson and David MacEnulty at the awards ceremony.  
(Photo credit: L. Pief Weyman)

It also turns out that MacEnulty appears in the film about his career. During an award ceremony in the movie, it is David MacEnulty who is handing the trophy to Ted Danson, playing the part of the chess teacher.

Speaking about Danson, I was curious what MacEnulty had to say about working with the famous actor. As usual, David was not at a loss for words:

“As for working with Ted Danson, yes, we spent quite a bit of time together going over the ideas in the film. He was quite passionate about wanting to get this story told the best way possible. He wanted to hear anything I could tell him about working with the children, how it affected them, how it affected me to work with them, what was involved in teaching and motivating the children, what the path to success really involved. I must say, my respect for him as an actor and as a person is up in the stratosphere. And I should tell you, I was a professional actor for over a decade, so I have pretty high standards in that regard.

We also worked on little physical things that make a subtle difference visually, like how you hold the chess pieces, how you



move from board to board at a simul, and things like that. As you can see in the film, he got all that down perfectly.

Since the filming we have appeared together on a few TV shows (the Today Show, Live at Five here in New York), done several PR tours together, and shared time at the premier screening of the film, where I got an award from A&E for being one of their *Lives that Make a Difference* recipients (a \$10,000 donation to the charity of my choice [my former school in the Bronx, naturally], and a gorgeous engraved Tiffany plate, which I got to keep). He is, quite simply, a great human being. He's very open and honest, very generous with everyone at the premier, posing for photos with many of the real students from the team, and nearly everyone else there as well. He's the sort of person you just want to be around. I can't speak highly enough of him."



Dalton School team.  
(Photo credit: MyChessPhotos.com)

Currently, David is in his third year teaching at the prestigious Dalton school in Manhattan. He still maintains contact with his former students, some of whom are now in college. Interestingly, several of these former students have returned to assist MacEnulty in his new position. David found it ironic that the kids from the rough neighborhoods of the Bronx are now helping the students at privileged Dalton School. Not surprisingly, if you check the team standings from the recently concluded 2005 National K-12 tournament, you'll find the 2nd grade champions hail from ... Dalton School in New York.

### **2005 National K-12/Collegiate Championship**

From all reports it appears that the recently completed 2005 National K-12/Collegiate Championships in Houston were a smashing success. One chess parent who is a veteran of nearly a dozen such events commented, "Insofar as venue, logistics and organization [are concerned], this is perhaps one of the best USCF national scholastic tournaments I have ever attended ... hats off to Diane Reese, the USCF tourney organizer, and the entire tournament staff in Houston for a job well done."



(Photo credit: MyChessPhotos.com)

USCF National Scholastic Director Jerry Nash added:

“Credit for a smoothly-run tournament belongs to a lot of people who worked very hard for months in advance as well as on site. Mike Nolan was instrumental in creating the on-line registration which was a significant tool in making that process more efficient. Alan Kantor and members of the Scholastic Council and Scholastic Committee helped in the testing phase of the program to get the bugs out. Alan also handled the registrations which came by mail and phone. Diane Reese, of course, made the arrangements for the playing site and secured the tournament directing staff. We are very fortunate to have a group of tournament directors who not only have earned the credentials for running national tournaments, but also have a passion for chess! They are committed to helping the players, families, teachers and coaches have the best tournament experience possible. Advance preparation and adequate staff are key components in achieving this level of efficiency at a tournament of this size. I received numerous comments both during the tournament and phone calls and emails afterward that complimented how well things were run. I enjoyed passing these along to the tournament staff. Our goal for the Spring Nationals is not just to maintain that standard but to do even better!”

Congratulations to all involved for making this event involving nearly 1600 players from 40 states the pleasant experience it appears to have been. I also want to personally thank Jerry Nash for his assistance in helping me to contact each of the players we’ll hear from next month. Thanks are also due to Joan DuBois, USCF Director of just about everything, and to Alan Kantor, USCF Scholastic and Events Assistant for their frequent help throughout the year.

Be sure to return next month to read about a number of exceptional players from the National K-12, including a pair of identical twin powerhouses, a player who “blitzed” the competition, and a couple of youngsters who have represented the U.S. in international competition.

### 2006 All-America Chess Team

The United States Chess Federation has announced its 2006 All-America Chess Team. As stated in a recent USCF press release, “The All-American team was created in 1987 to honor the very best players under the age of 19. The team, one of the highest national honors attainable by a young chess player, is selected on the basis of age, rating, and activities during that year, similar to the selection process of ‘all conference’ sports teams. This year’s candidates were selected based on their age as of January 1, 2005 and their peak USCF supplement rating from the October 2004 supplement through the August 2005 supplement.” For the second year in a row, this award is sponsored by Trophies Plus. Congratulations to the following players who have been selected to the 2006 team:

- Age 18: Joshua Friedel, Joaquin B. Banawa, John D. Bartholomew
- Age 17: Hikaru Nakamura, Lev Milman, Dmytro Kedyk, Garush Manukyan, Igor Schneider
- Age 16: Mackenzie S. Molner, Tatev Abrahamyan
- Age 15: Alex Lenderman, Salvijus Bercys, Daniel J. Ludwig, Alexander S. Barnett, Joel Cholo B. Banawa, Nicolas A. Yap, Aleksandr Pelekhaty, Corey B. Acor
- Age 14: (none)
- Age 13: Robert L. Hess, Evan D. Ju
- Age 12: Fabiano Caruana, Marc Tyler Arnold, Michael Thaler, Jeffrey Haskel, Kasun D. Waidyaratne
- Age 11: Mark A. Heimann, Alexander C. Heimann, Michael Lee, Christian T. Tanaka, Alec Getz, Yuan Ling Yuan, Leitianyi Shi, Richard Tuhrim, Ben Gershenov, Victor Shen, Arnold Liao
- Age 10: Ray S. Robson, Parker Bi Guang Zhao, Gregory Young, Michael A. Yee, Michael Yang, Zachary A. Young, Darek L. Johnson, Andrey Oshukov
- Age 9: Christopher Heung, Daniel A. Naroditsky, Andrew C. Wang, Justin D. Karp, Alena Kuzniatsova, Stuart S. Finney, Ryan Joseph R. Moon
- Age 8: Brian J. Luo, Fernando L. Mendez, Lucas Van Beuzekom, Brennen Lee, Fernando Spada, Aleksandr A. Ostrovskiy, Sam A. Schmakel, Eric R. Zhang

### U.S. Chess School

The new U.S. Chess School, brainchild of IM Greg Shahade, opened its doors to the inaugural class of eight students from January 2-7, 2006, with GM Gregory Kaidanov as the primary instructor. The goal is to work with the top young players in the U.S., providing them individualized guidance and training in order to help them achieve their full potential. This initial group consisted of the following:

- IM Lev Milman



- IM Josh Friedel
- FM Salvijus Bercys
- FM Danny Rensch
- IM Robert Hungaski
- FM Igor Shneider
- NM Daniel Ludwig
- NM Joel Banawa

I asked Greg Shahade how the training school began. He responded:

“This has been in the works since the U.S. Open in Phoenix. I simply realized that it was a great idea and then realized it wouldn’t cost that much if the students were able to pay their own airfare and if we got help with lodging the players in Kentucky. It’s important to have some kind of regular group training in place for all the young talent in this country. Gregory Kaidanov is an excellent player and coach, and does a good job of relating to young players, which is a very difficult quality to find in strong players these days. Also the sessions will help form bonds between the players that could go a long way towards forming lifelong friendships and in turn help to spur on each other’s chess progress.”

Kaidanov adds that the school is loosely modeled after the strong training schools of the old Soviet Union, but that they don’t intend to blindly follow the direction of those schools. He says earnestly that the goal is that the U.S. Chess School should be even better. We certainly wish him and Greg Shahade the best in this challenging but very worthwhile endeavor.

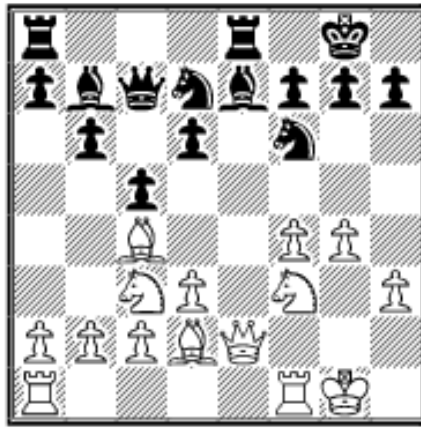
How can we assist the lofty goals of the U.S. Chess School? Shahade suggests:

“Donate money to us! I can’t imagine any chess event that would be more useful to our nation’s youth than this new school. Any \$20 – \$100 donation or more would be extremely useful towards making this a regular feature in the American chess culture. It’s time to start doing what they do in Russia and China if we want to improve the chess culture in America.”

To make a donation or to read more about this excellent program visit the [website](#). Or contact Greg Shahade at [admin@uschessschool.com](mailto:admin@uschessschool.com).

### **Answers to our December Everyman Quiz**

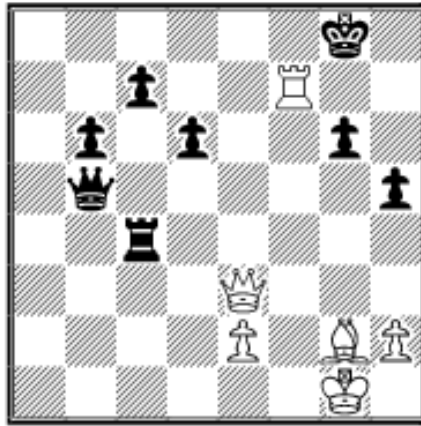
Included below are the questions from our quiz last month, together with the correct answers:



## Problem 1:

It is White's turn to move in this example from GM Yasser Seirawan's instructive book *Winning Chess Tactics*. How should White proceed?

*Answer: 1.Bxf7+! Kxf7 (if Black refuses the sacrifice, he'll lose at least a pawn and the exchange) 2.Qe6+! Kxe6 (if 2... Kf8 3.Ng5 with multiple mating threats, or 2... Kg6 3.f5#) 3.Ng5#*



## Problem 2:

Also from *Winning Chess Tactics*, this position is from one of Seirawan's own games. Again, it is White's turn to move. What move do you suggest?

*Answer: This position is from Seirawan – Henley, U.S. Junior Championship 1976 1.Bd5! Rg4+*

*2.Kf2 Qc5 (prevents 3.Qe8# by pinning the queen) 3.Rxc7+! (if 3... Qxd5 4.Qe8#)*

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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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