



COLUMNISTS

Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg



*Winning Chess
the Easy Way*
by Susan Polgar

2006 Spring Scholastic Championships, Part Two

Our coverage of the National Elementary School Championship and the National High School Championship continues this month. Read below to find out who won the largest upset award for the Elementary Championship, by defeating an opponent rated more than 1,000 points higher, and learn about the ongoing competition between the top two high school teams the past two years.

We also bring you information about an interesting new chess organization. While not oriented specifically toward the scholastic community, it nevertheless appears ready to improve the chess environment for all, which, if it happens, is always a good thing.

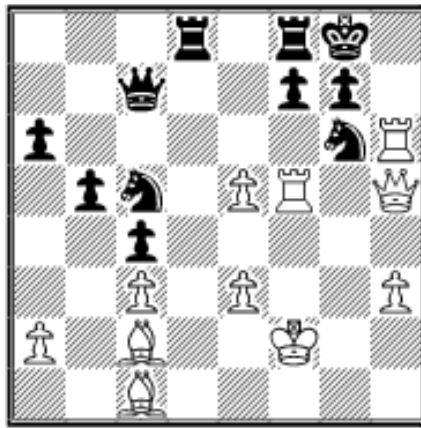
Everyman Quiz of the Month

Each month Everyman Chess Books sponsors our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book to three respondents with correct answers. This month, winners of our quiz will receive *Survival Guide for Chess Parents*. Send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com. Good luck!

Please note – winners within the last three months are ineligible for 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. So please e-mail your responses to me by June 21, 2006.

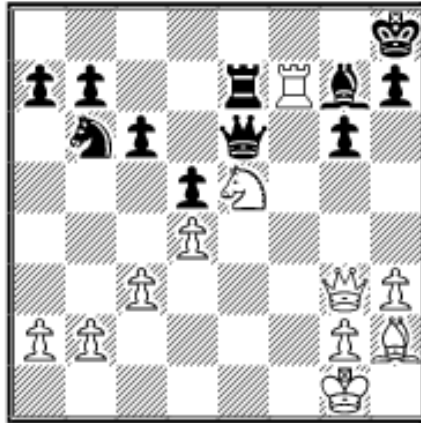




Problem 1:

It is White's turn to move in this position from GM Yasser Seirawan's excellent book *Winning Chess Tactics*.

What do you suggest?



Problem 2:

This is also from *Winning Chess Tactics*. White is about to unleash a crushing move. What is it?

For both problems, send your answers to scholasticchess@chesscafe.com.

2006 National Elementary School Championship, May 12-14, 2006

Nearly 2,000 players converged on Denver last month to compete for the 2006 Elementary School Championship. As the seventh and final round concluded, 6th grader Boris Xu from Georgia stood alone with 6½ points. He also tied for first in the blitz tournament.

MyChessPhotos.com provided a scholarship to the player with the largest upset win. This went to Leo Kamgar, who entered the tournament rated 435 but defeated his seventh-round opponent rated at 1496, a whopping 1,061 point differential!

Readers may recall from last month's [column](#) that David Berman was instrumental in recruiting chess teacher David MacEnulty to South Africa for a lecture and movie tour that garnered rave reviews. Berman's sons Jacob and Joshua played in the Denver tournament, and the proud father pointed out that 2nd grader Jacob finished 4th out of 307 players in the K-3 Under 800 section, and was "ecstatic with his huge trophy!" Joshua played in the K-1 Championship section and also did well, finishing in a large mass of players with 5 points in the 7-round event. I'm sure that Berman echoes the feelings of many players when he beams that his children loved the tournament.

2006 National High School Championship, April 21-23, 2006

A glance at the [crosstable](#) of the championship section shows player after player in grades 10, 11 or 12, as might be expected for a high

school championship tournament. What caught my eye, however, was that amidst all of those names was a competitor roughly half their age. Third grader Brian Luo finished in a tie for 12th-24th places, with 5½ points in the 7-round event, one point beyond top finishers Landon Brownell and Bradley Sawyer.



Brian Luo

Living only about 90 minutes from Milwaukee, the location of the High School Championship, allowed Brian's parents Shen and Yina to bring him to the event without large travel expenses and with minimal interruption of school time. Despite being rated 1928 at the start of the tournament, pairings were such that none of his opponents were rated higher than 1720. Nevertheless, according to his father, Brian felt "sort of lucky" to have won a trophy at the event. Indeed, the championship began inauspiciously for Brian, who suffered a first-round loss to a 1705-rated player. However, he quickly recovered, rattling off five victories and one draw in the next six rounds. Clearly Brian wasn't intimidated by his older and larger opponents. Because of the lack of higher-rated players he was paired with, Brian actually lost five rating points in the tournament.

Luo was previously profiled in this column back in [December 2004](#). With his excellent play and his quick progress (he's only been playing for about three years), we expect to see much more of him at the upper reaches of tournament crosstables for some time to come.

On a team level, Edward R. Murrow High School of New York

captured the team championship title, narrowly edging out Tucson's Catalina Foothills team. These two schools also appeared at the top of the team standings in the 2005 National High School Championship. At that time Edward R. Murrow and Catalina Foothills finished in a tie for first place, with Catalina Foothills receiving the team title on tiebreak points.

The Edward R. Murrow team is led by superstars Alex Lenderman and Salvijus Bercys, both rated well above 2400. Conversely, Catalina Foothills has a bit more depth, with four players above 2000 and a fifth not far behind. When I looked at the tournament crosstable, I asked coach Robby Adamson what kind of cactus juice his players were consuming. Landon Brownell won first place on tie breaks with $6\frac{1}{2}$ points, followed by Vaishnav Aradhyula at $5\frac{1}{2}$, Christopher De Sa and Pavel Savine with 5 points, and Sean Higgins at $4\frac{1}{2}$. Nevertheless, the team from Edward R. Murrow triumphed, on the strength of excellent performances by Lenderman (6 points), Bercys (6 points), Shawn Martinez ($5\frac{1}{2}$ points), Mikhail Furman (5 points) and Dalphe Morantus ($4\frac{1}{2}$ points).

The Catalina Foothills team was a topic of conversation in this column in our [May 2005](#) coverage of the SuperNationals, but I didn't recall them having such strong players at that time, despite their impressive results. Nevertheless, coach Adamson reports that "all the same players are involved," except for one 1550-rated player. Adamson explains that the "kids just continue to work hard, study, and play lots of tournaments. We led the entire tournament [this year] and frankly were a little unlucky not to win. We led by one point going into the last round. The team scored $1\frac{1}{2}$ more than last year! I was proud of them. We have four players over 2000 now (last year we had two over 2000), one 1900 (was 1800 last year), two 1700s (both under 1500 last year) and two 1600s."

U.S. Amateur Championships

The 2006 Amateur West tournament was held May 27-29 in Tucson, Arizona and was dominated by two of the Catalina Foothills players noted above. Vaishnav Aradhyula, won clear first with $5\frac{1}{2}$ points in the six-round event, with teammate Christopher De Sa capturing clear second with 5 points.

The 2006 Amateur East, held concurrently in Parsippany, New Jersey, also produced a number of young winners. Mark Heimann and Alec Getz tied for first, with Heimann being declared the winner on tiebreaks, followed by Alisa Melekhina (who has appeared in this column multiple times) and Vinko Rutar.

North American Chess Association

A new chess organization has come into existence: the North American Chess Association, headed by Sevan Muradian of Chicago, Illinois. Its

[website](#) describes its purpose:

The North American Chess Association (NACA), a for-profit chess association, was founded in 2006 for the purpose of furthering amateur and professional chess across the North American countries of Bermuda, Canada, Mexico, and the United States of America... A key service that NACA will offer to the North American chess community will be the opportunities for chess players to achieve the required 'norms' in order to obtain the titles bestowed by FIDE, the World Chess Federation. The opportunities are very limited to North American chess players but abundant to those in Europe. NACA intends on changing this! ... Effective April 2006 NACA will take over the operations of FIDE Chess in Chicago and offer Grand Master and International Master tournaments. Events will be rebranded as the North American FIDE Invitational tournaments. NACA is scheduled to offer in 2006, 5 tournaments of this nature, and beginning in 2007 to offer 1 tournament per month.

For the remainder of 2006, membership is free to all. Perhaps the most immediate benefit is access to their online magazine, the North American Chess Review. This beautifully-done journal is attractive to the eye and stimulating for the brain! Among other items, it features extensive articles by GM Mark Bluvshtein, GM Pascal Charbonneau, IM Benjamin Finegold and IM Irina Krush. The only drawback I noticed was that solutions to the various problems posed in the magazine do not appear in the journal itself; the reader must visit the discussion forums at the NACA website.

2006 Scholar-Chessplayer Outstanding Achievement Awards

Last month we provided you with the names of the winners of the 2006 Scholar-Chessplayer Outstanding Achievement Awards. Along with each application, the students had to submit an essay explaining how chess has had a positive impact on their lives. Courtesy of Glenn Petersen, Dan Lucas, and Jerry Nash of the U.S. Chess Federation, we present the beautiful essay of this year's top winner, Oleg Zaikov:

Of all the activities that make up my life, chess is by far the most meaningful to me. When I first learned how the pieces moved at age five, I never dreamed that I would come as far as I have playing the royal game. Now, chess provides me with a feeling of accomplishment and fulfillment - the kind that adds meaning to one's life. I don't think I ever felt as happy as when I won the Oregon Closed Championship for the first time - I couldn't help smiling and for a brief moment all my worries seemed to disappear. Whether it was the joy of hard work paying off or just the natural euphoria of victory, I was on cloud nine.

In addition to being extremely entertaining, chess is a game that

is intellectually stimulating and beneficial. The skills that I need in order to play successfully can help me with just about any activity - as one plays the game, he becomes better and better at calculating concrete lines, anticipating an opponent's response, and planning ahead. Accordingly, after I started playing on a regular basis, I noticed a substantial jump in my ability to do math problems and logic related exercises. Consequently, I believe chess to be a great way to develop cognitive skills as well as to have fun.

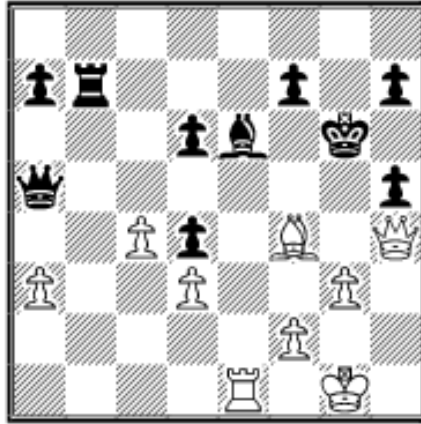
Moreover, chess builds positive personality traits - namely, good sportsmanship. As everyone loses games, it teaches them to accept their loss and strive to win the next game. People with poor manners who get extremely angry and bitter after losing a game are frowned upon, and beginning players learn to reject such belligerent responses. On a side note, I think chess also teaches a very important lesson in proper handshakes. After shaking a limp hand, a player learns how unpleasant it is and makes sure to always give his opponent a proper, firm handshake.

Chess has also given me the opportunity to visit new places and meet interesting people. Wherever I go, I know I can find someone to talk to, for the game connects people regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. Consequently, I believe that chess has provided me with lifelong friendships throughout the world, no matter what the political or social situation is at the time. This is exemplified throughout history, when numerous international tournaments have been held despite the lack of cooperation between certain countries and regimes. Still, the players came and played, even though the aftermath of their participation sometimes brought dire consequences to their personal lives and political identities. Once again, this only proves that the love of the game perseveres against prejudice and enmity.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I have the honor of teaching chess to up-and-coming children at the local chess club. It gives me great personal satisfaction to bestow on them something that I know will prove useful in their lives, something that I know will go above and beyond those sixty-four alternately colored squares.

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

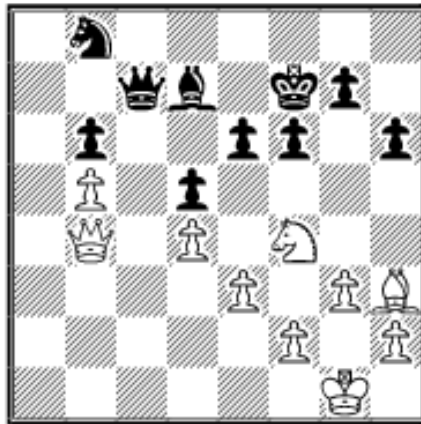
Below are the questions and answers from last month's quiz:



Problem 1:

It is White's turn to move in this position from GM Yasser Seirawan's excellent book *Winning Chess Tactics*. What do you suggest?

Answer: 1.Re5! Rb1+ (if 1... dxe5 2.Qg5#) 2.Kg2 Qxe5 3.Bxe5 dxe5 4.Qe4+ Kf6 5.f4!



Problem 2:

Problem 2 is also from *Winning Chess Tactics*. It is White to move, and he is in position to capture two of Black's pawns. How does he do this?

Answer: 1.Bxe6+! Bxe6 2.Qf8+! Kxf8 3.Nxe6+ Ke7 4.Nxc7 and either the d5- or g7-pawn will also

fall.

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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