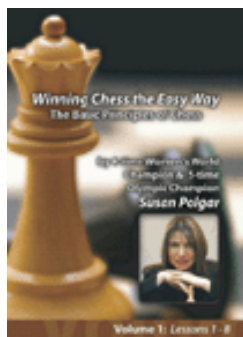




## COLUMNISTS

Scholastic  
Chess

Steve Goldberg



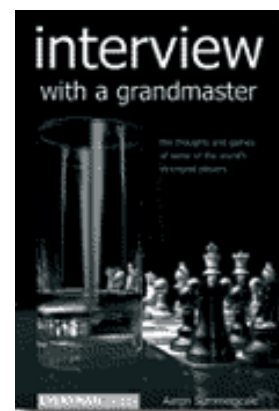
*Winning Chess  
the Easy Way*  
by Susan Polgar

## Teen Titans

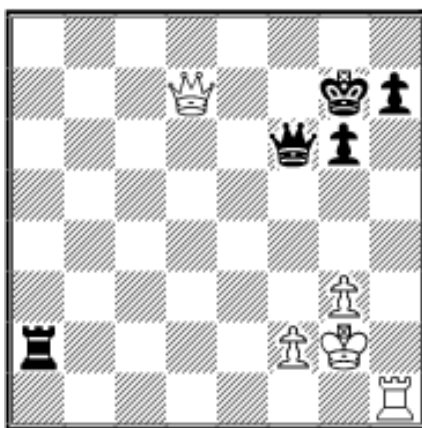
This month we're privileged to hear from three young chess stars. Tyler Hughes is fresh from battling for the top spot at the Denker Tournament of High School Champions; Elliott Liu continues his interview from last month, and is his usual animated self; and WFM Tatev Abrahamyan offers helpful advice to any chess player looking to improve his or her results.

## Everyman Quiz of the Month

Each month Everyman Chess 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 *Interview with a Grandmaster* by GM Aaron Summerscale. Please note – winners within the last three months are ineligible for this month's contest. Send your answers to [scholasticchess@chesscafe.com](mailto:scholasticchess@chesscafe.com). Good luck!



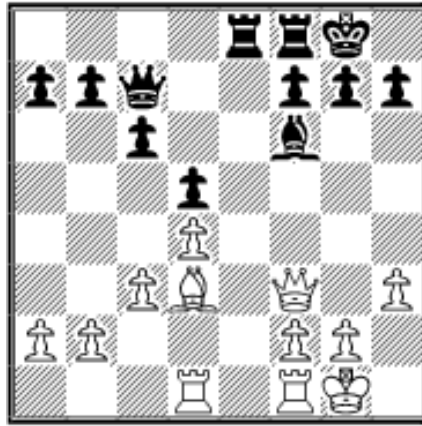
We will accept all contest answers for one week following the appearance of the column, then randomly select our three winners from this group. So please e-mail your responses to me by October 18, 2006.



Problem 1:

Both problems are from GM Yasser Seirawan's [\*Winning Chess Tactics\*](#).

Black is in check and has several possible moves. What is his best move and what is his worst move?



Problem 2:

It is White to move. What do you suggest?

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

### Denker Tournament of High School Champions, August 2006

After four rounds of the six-round 2006 Denker Tournament of High School Champions, 15-year-old Tyler Hughes of suburban Denver, Colorado stood atop the 46-player field with a 4/4 score. The home-schooled youngster also had represented Colorado at the 2005 Denker, where he finished with a total of 4 points, good for a tie for 7th-9th place, a mere point out of first place.

Of course, with Swiss tournaments, the more you win, the tougher your pairings become. In round 5 of the 2006 Denker, Tyler was matched with top-rated Alexander Chua. The game ended in a draw, pushing Tyler into a two-way tie for first with the charging Nelson Lopez II, who won his 5th round game.



Tyler Hughes

Thus, the final and deciding round pitted Tyler against 18-year-old Nelson. Although Lopez entered the tournament with only the 10th-highest rating (2136) in the group, he triumphed over Tyler in a hard-fought game, finishing with a score of 5½/6 and the title of 2006 Denker champion. Alexander Chua finished second with 5/6, leaving

Tyler (4½/6) in a four-way tie with Evan Ju, Corbin Yu and Brian Goldstein.

“Naturally, I was disappointed, to say the least,” explained Hughes. “Although I was pleased with my early results, I became more and more nervous as the tournament progressed. This resulted in a poorly played last round.” Nevertheless, having won his state high school championship two years running and still only 15, Tyler may well have further opportunities to play in additional Denker tournaments.

He learned the game of chess at age 5, but didn’t begin playing in tournaments until he was nine years old. As he remembers, “My interest was sparked when I read my first chess book and realized that I could improve my game through study.”

He began taking lessons from master Brian Wall, who “helped inspire in me a deep love of chess, which I have never lost.” Tyler currently works with GM Petr Kiriakov via the Internet, and credits his improved positional understanding to the grandmaster’s teaching. So how much time does he currently spend studying chess? “It varies, but I’d say on average I spend around three hours a day on chess.” He wisely adds that “I learn the most from studying my losses. It is often painful, but well worth doing, as there are a thousand lessons to be learned from defeat.”

I asked Tyler if he has any favorite chess authors and he responded, “I love all chess books, but my favorite author is [Dvoretsky](#). I find his deep analysis, his ability to penetrate to the heart of a position, very inspiring.”



2006 Denker Tournament players

Photo: Paul Truong

With a post-Denker rating of 2194, Hughes stands at the threshold of master status and has had a number of chess successes. In addition to doing well in his two Denker appearances, he drew with GM Sharavdorj in 2004 and won the Expert section of the 2004 U.S. Class

Championship with a perfect 5/5 score. In the Southern Colorado Open earlier this year, Tyler defeated two masters on his way to achieving a 5½/6 result.

He had an interesting comment when I asked for his suggestions for making chess more inviting for other kids. “Chess has always been interesting to me,” he said. “I do not see a reason to entice scholastic players. Chess needs no ornamentation.”

Tyler hopes to achieve a 2300 rating within the next year and has cautiously set his sights on an international master title within the next five years. He was kind enough to share the following game with us, in which he sacrifices two pawns and sheds his queen on move 21.

***Hughes, T (2081) - Karagianis, P (2138)***

US Class Championship, Des Moines, Iowa (3), 21.08.2004 [C52]

*Analysis by Fritz9*

**1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Ba5 6.d4 exd4 7.0–0 dxc3 8.Qb3 Qf6 9.e5 Qg6 10.Nxc3 Nge7 11.Ba3 Bxc3 12.Qxc3 0–0 13.Bd3 Qh5 14.Rae1**

14.Bxe7 Nxe7 15.Qxc7 Ng6=.

**14...Re8**

14...d6!? should be investigated more closely: 15.exd6 cxd6 16.Bxd6 Re8=.

**15.Re4+/- Ng6**

Can e5 be defended? Black threatens to win material: Ng6xe5.

**16.h4??**

After 16.Rfe1 Re6, White stands slightly better.

**16...d5??**

Better is 16...Ngxe5 17.Nxe5 d5 with Black slightly better (17...Nxe5 18.f4±; 17...Rxe5?? 18.Rxe5 Qxe5 19.Re1+–).

**17.exd6 Bg4?**

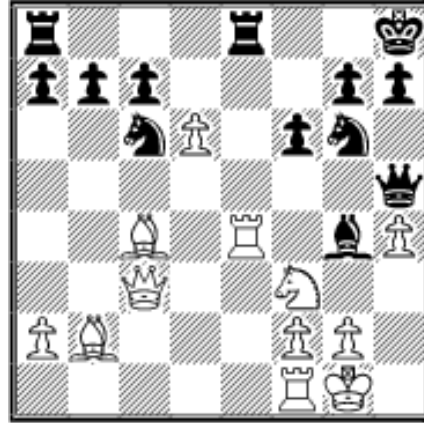
17...Rxe4 18.Bxe4 Be6 19.Bxc6 bxc6 20.dxc7 Rc8±.

**18.Bb2+– f6 19.Bc4+**

19.Qc4+ Kh8 20.Rxg4 cxd6+–.

### 19...Kh8?

19...Kf8 20.Rxe8+ Rxe8 21.dxc7 Bxf3 22.Ba3+ Nge7 23.Qxf3 Qxf3 24.gxf3 Rc8+–.



### 20.Qxf6!+– Nge5??

But not 20...gxf6 21.Bxf6#.

### 21.Nxe5

21.Bxe5 Nxe5 (Again 21...gxf6 22.Bxf6#) 22.Qxe5 Rxe5 23.Nxe5 b5+–.

### 21...gxf6 22.Nxg4 Ne5

22...Re5 what else? 23.Nxf6 Qf5+–.

### 23.Nxf6 Qf5 24.d7 Re7

24...Nxd7 25.Nxd7+ discovered attack.

### 25.Rfe1 Qxf6

25...Kg7 26.Bxe5 Kh6 27.g4+–.

### 26.Bxe5

26.Rxe5 Rxd7 27.Re8+ Kg7 28.R8e7+ Kg6 29.Rxd7 Qf5 30.Bd3 Qxd3 31.Re6+ Kf5 32.Re5+ Kf6 33.Rxd3 h6 34.Rf3+ Kg6 35.h5+ Kh7 36.Re7+ Kg8 37.Rg7+ Kh8 38.Rg6+ Kh7 39.Rf7#.

### 26...Rxe5

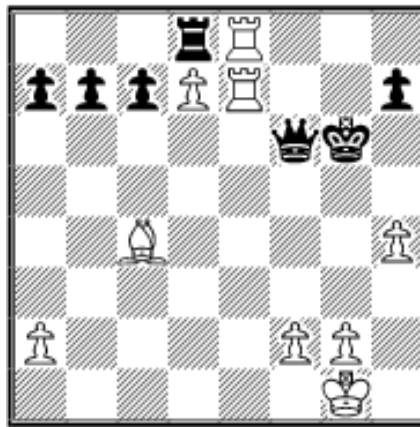
26...Qxe5 27.Rxe5 Rxd7+–.

### 27.Rxe5 Rf8 28.R1e2 Rd8

28...Qd6 29.Re8 Qxd7 30.Rxf8+ Kg7 31.Rg8+ Kf6 32.g4+–.

### 29.Re8+ Kg7 30.R2e7+ Kg6

30...Qxe7 doesn't do any good: 31.Rxe7+ Kf6 32.Rxh7 Ke5+–.



**31.Re6**

31.Bd3+ Qf5 32.Bxf5+ Kf6 33.Rxd8 Kxe7 34.Re8+ Kd6 35.d8Q+ Kc6 36.Re5 Kb6 37.Qd4+ Ka6 38.Qd3+ b5 39.Qxb5#.

**31...Rxd7+- 32.Rxf6+ Kxf6 33.Bb3 c5 34.Rc8 b6 35.g3 Ke5 36.Kf1**

36.Bc2 seems even better.

**36...Kd4 37.Ke2 b5 38.Kd2 a5 39.Bd1 Kc4+ 40.Kc2 Kb4 41.a3+ Kxa3 42.Rxc5 Kb4 43.Re5 a4 44.Be2 Rb7 45.g4 a3 46.Rxb5+ Rxb5 47.Bxb5 Kxb5 48.g5 1-0**

### Elliott Liu, Part Two

In last month's Scholastic Chess [column](#), we covered Elliott Liu's trials and tribulations at the recent Pan-Am Youth Festival. This month, the interview continues with the candid high school junior from San Diego.

"For Christmas of '94, I got a plastic chess set with a picture book. Like any kid, I was interested in things like kings, knights, castles, etc. Something just 'clicked' in my brain." Thus, Elliott's interest in chess was kindled.

He began to play in various scholastic events, but before too long he came to the conclusion that he preferred open tournaments. "I stopped playing in national kid tournaments when I was around 9 because I didn't like them. Unless it is a prestigious invitational like the Cadet, I normally won't play. So I primarily play in adult tourneys. So many people (especially kids) care excessively about ratings. I just cared about getting better – the rating will catch up eventually. So I've played in plenty of national tournaments but only have two national championship scholastic titles besides Cadet: back to back in 1998-1999 (All-America's Cup and the K-3 Nationals)."

Some of the national tournaments Liu speaks of include:

- The 2003 U.S. Open, where he was tied for second after six rounds before running into a slew of grandmasters. He captured the Under 2200 title.
- The 2005 National Cadet (under age 16) championship, which Elliott won.
- The 2006 National Open, where he placed first in the Under 2300 section.
- The 2006 U.S. Championship, which he qualified for by being victorious in a Champion of Champions event between the winners of various national scholastic tournaments.

Elliott has benefited from a number of chess coaches throughout the years and currently utilizes the services of IM Cyrus Lakdawala, with whom he trains up to two hours weekly. Otherwise, “Little to none” was his response when I asked Elliott to describe his training regimen. “I have no regimen and spend very little time on chess. I go on ICC sometimes,” he explained. “School, sports, and social life (i.e. girls) dominate my life, especially in the fall, because of varsity football season.” He plays both wide receiver and safety for his football team, and added, tongue in cheek, “I’m surprised my rating hasn’t plummeted yet.”

As for playing in his hometown at the 2006 U.S. Championship, Elliott said “The experience was amazing. There were both positives and negatives for me playing in my hometown. The big plus was that I got a lot of attention from the media, school friends, etc. and got honored through a proclamation by the city of San Diego for my efforts at the conclusion of the tournament. But of course with that major attention came the major minus which was pressure – lots of it! They put me up on stage just for the heck of it in round 1 against GM Alex Yermolinsky, and somehow I drew.”

His pairing for round 2 was the 2722 USCF-rated GM Gregory Kaidanov, with whom Elliott also managed a draw. Hitting a bump in the road in the middle rounds, he finished the tournament with a score of 3½/9. Nevertheless, he benefited from the experience. “It taught me to play ‘smarter’ chess and completely change my style and openings. I’m not going to go into any more detail about this for obvious reasons. It also kindly informed me that no tourney will ever seem hard after it.”



Elliott Liu

I asked Elliott if he had any suggestions about making chess more interesting to kids and he responded bluntly. “It is flat out hard to ‘spice

up' chess. I mean it is so complex, and if a game is longer than 10 minutes (which still might be too long) then who would tune into ESPN 8 to watch it? Even I wouldn't. In order to make chess interesting to younger kids and a valuable experience, rewards need to be given for a child's participation. For example, everyone gets a trophy or some sort of bribe like that. Honestly, one just has to be passionate for the game and have the right type of problem solving, logical mind to enjoy chess. I do think chess promotes good qualities for one's character. If you don't take it so seriously and loosen up one can make chess fun, and that is what's inviting about it. There's always that mystery of what's going to happen since no game is ever the same. Also, I've found that the ability to think ahead on the chessboard has translated directly to skill on the football gridiron as a safety trying to read the quarterback."

"One last thing I'd like to mention," he adds, "is that Erik Anderson and his [A4FC](#) (America's Foundation For Chess) are doing an excellent job promoting chess into school curricula to get kids cultured and exposed to the intriguing board game. Their goal, if I remember correctly, is to infuse chess into every 2nd and 3rd grade classroom in America. I wish them luck."

He advises other players who would like to improve to "get a coach and [ChessBase](#) as first steps. Play as much as possible (not using me as an example!) since practice makes better (not perfect of course). Study if you don't have too much attention deficit disorder."

Especially in his earlier years, Elliott enjoyed a number of chess authors. "Shirov's a funny guy with his successful [Fire on Board](#) series. Kasparov's [My Great Predecessors](#) series is also good. David Bronstein's tournament book of [Zurich International 1953](#) is good, and Irving Chernev's *Most Instructive Games of Chess* is another classic. I guess you could say [My System](#) by Nimzovitch is another chess masterpiece. But there's lots of good stuff out there, these are just a few of the many ones that I remember reading."

As for his own chess and 2300 rated, Liu hopes to "just keep it up. I can't play again until December anyway because of school and football, so I just hope I don't get too rusty. Chess is just a hobby for me anyway, and hopefully it'll help me get into college. I might play more in college too, but afterwards of course I'll look for a real job and keep chess in the back seat for a hobby. I hope my rating goes up, maybe pick up two more IM norms here and there and see where the wave I ride takes me."

He notes the difficulty a student faces trying to combine schoolwork with major chess tournaments. "Catching up is a nightmare, especially at the school that I go to. That's why I give a lot of credit to my wonderful teachers who understand my situation and have helped me to gradually catch up for the past few years. Have my grades suffered because of it? Yes they have in some areas, so I have to be careful, but

luckily there have been no disasters. Time is precious. For those of you reading this who find that you are similar to me, manage your time well since it will never come back to you. Cherish every experience you get.”

For the [2006 U.S. Championship](#), for example, Elliott said “I attended school until the day of the opening ceremony, slipped on my nice suit, and went. No prep until a few hours before my first game, whereas the majority had been prepping months in advance. Of course this is the clear cut difference between a professional chess player and a 16-year-old adolescent.”

Our hope is that Elliott is able to successfully continue his chess development while not neglecting his other academic responsibilities. As he humorously noted to me, imagine what levels he might attain if he was able to truly devote sufficient time to his chess studies!

### **WFM Tatev Abrahamyan**

In the May 2004 issue of [Chess Life](#) magazine, Daniel Lucas (now editor) described the events of the 2003 National K-12 tournament.

*The individual competitions provided some thrilling finishes, with the ninth grade section featuring the most exciting game of the tournament. Tatev Abrahamyan of Los Angeles, at 2345 the highest rated player in the tournament, played Atlanta’s Kazim Gulamali, Georgia’s highest rated scholastic player at 2131, for the championship in the final round. After 36 moves, the position was roughly equal but dynamic, and complicated by the clocks, which were down to less than five minutes each with a five-second delay in effect.*

*Two days earlier Gulamali, who won the national sixth grade title in 1999, won his second national blitz championship and the bughouse championship with William Stewart of Atlanta (like this year, Stewart was part of an undefeated bughouse team at the 2001 K-12). Kazim had to be feeling confident in this blitz situation. However, Tatev, a recent émigré from Armenia, was herself last year’s eighth grade champion.*

*After a wild time scramble during which Kazim was advancing his b- and e-pawns and Tatev had connected passed g- and h-pawns, Tatev queened after first sacrificing her bishop for Kazim’s e-pawn, and with 17 seconds on both clocks, Kazim tipped his king. The fifteen spectators broke into applause, the only game so honored.*

*Abrahamyan appeared almost bored throughout the tournament, right up to the moment when she sat down across from Gulamali. However, the last-round struggle took everything she*

*had, and during the last few minutes, she was sitting straight up, chin cradled in thumb and forefinger, ankles crossed, and her left foot shaking rapidly. When Gulamali resigned, Abrahamyan appeared overcome with emotion and her face flushed as she held both sides of her head to regain some equilibrium.*

Armenian native Tatev Abrahamyan moved to the U.S. in 2001, and has been making a splash on the American chess scene ever since. Her interest in chess began, she says, “When I found a chess set in my dad’s workplace and asked him to teach me. The Olympiad was in Armenia that year and my dad took me to watch the games a few times and I got interested right away.”



Tatev Abrahamyan

Photo: Paul Truong

It didn’t take long for Tatev to attain an impressive playing strength. She won five Armenian girls championships (two Under 10, two Under 12, one Under 14) and earned a bronze medal in the Girls Under 12 European championship. Once in the U.S., she promptly won the 8th grade section of the National K-12 tournament, followed by topping the 9th grade section the following year, as described above.

In 2004, she was invited to the U.S. Women’s Championship, then qualified for the 2005 U.S. Championship (finishing as the second-highest woman), as well as the [2006 U.S. Championship](#). This past summer she swept the field at the Pan-Am Youth Festival with a 9-0 score to win the Girls Under 18 gold medal.

In last month's Scholastic Chess [column](#), we reported on coach FM Aviv Friedman's intervention to assist Boys Under 18 gold medal winner Elliott Liu. It turns out that he saved the day for Tatev as well. She explains: "Both my coach and I didn't have the required visa to enter Ecuador. We're both Armenian citizens, so in customs we were told that we have to go back to the U.S. But with Aviv's intervention and Martha Fierro's help things worked out, although Aviv had to go from door to door with our passport trying to get a visa while we were waiting at the airport. Without him we definitely would be sent back. He was a great help to everyone in the delegation."

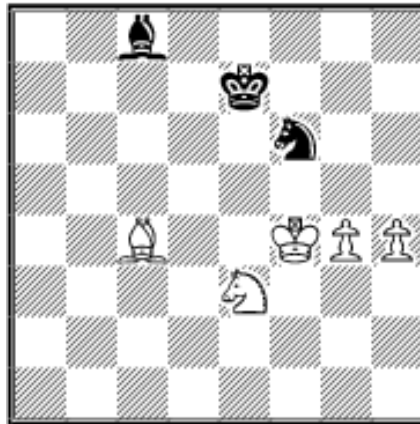
Currently coached by IM Armen Ambartsoumian, she is a freshman psychology major at Cal State University – Long Beach and keeps a somewhat irregular training regimen. "Depends on the day, school work and such," she explained. "But now I have a lot more free time since I only have classes twice a week, so I study more."

For other players looking for ways to improve, she advises "Study and play a lot, especially study. Also I'd recommend them to have a coach, it's not that hard to find a good one and it helps very much. I always had a coach and can't imagine what I'd do without one." When asked to recommend a chess author, she was emphatic. "Definitely [Dvoretsky](#). My coach in Armenia used to give us positions to analyze from his book. The Ra3 maneuver with the idea to bring the rook to the kingside left a big impression on me when I was young."

As this column goes to press, Tatev is in Yerevan, Armenia, competing in the Girls section of the 2006 World Junior Championship, and plans to represent the U.S. at the World Youth Girls Under 18 Championship in Batumi, Georgia at the end of October. It's a busy month for this exceptional young lady!

### Answers to Last Month's Quiz

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

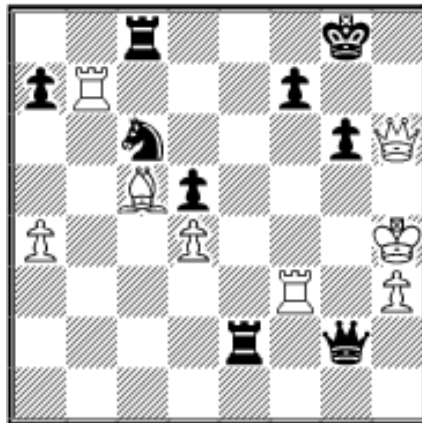


Problem 1:

Both problems are from GM Yasser Seirawan's [Winning Chess Tactics](#).

Black is down two pawns (and White's extra pawns are connected) yet can manage a draw from this position. It is Black to move. What should he do?

*Answer: 1...Nxg4! 2.Nxg4 Bxg4 3.Kxg4 Kf6 followed by ...Kg7 and ...Kg8. The h-pawn will be unable to reach the eighth rank since the white bishop is of the "wrong" color.*



Problem 2:

It is White to move, and White is a young Judit Polgar. How does she bring her opponent down before her own king falls?

*Answer: Seirawan explains, "Seeing that Black threatens 1...Re4+, White realizes that she has no time for quiet moves. Aware of the power of doubled rooks on the 7th, she plays 1.Qg7+! Kxg7 2.Rxf7+ (doubling the rooks on the 7th with tempo) 2...Kg8 3.Rg7+ Kh8 4.Rh7+ Kg8 5.Rbg7#.*

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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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