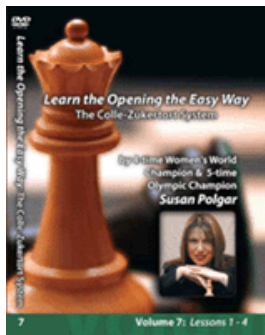




COLUMNISTS

Scholastic Chess

Steve Goldberg



Winning Chess the Easy Way (DVDs)
by Susan Polgar

CHESSTHEATRE
Play through and download the games from **ChessCafe.com** in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).

The Complete DGT Product Line

2008 U.S. Amateur Team Championships

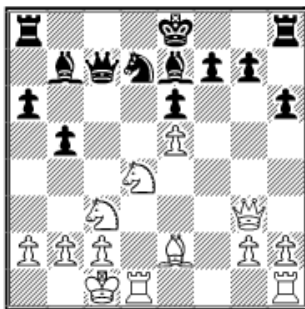
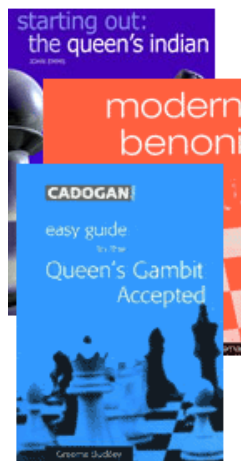
The annual U.S. Amateur Team championship events, scattered across four cities and with wacky team names and costumes, took place in February in New Jersey, Los Angeles, Milwaukee and Florida.

WFM Abby Marshall contributes two games from the U.S. Amateur Team East and explains why she may be in need of psychoanalysis, while Robby Adamson annotates one of his games from the U.S. Amateur West event.

Everyman Quiz of the Month

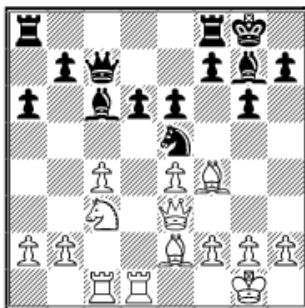
Each month Everyman Chess sponsors our Everyman Quiz of the Month, offering a free chess book to three respondents with correct answers. This month, three different books are offered – one book per winner: *Modern Benoni* by IM Andrew Kinsman, *Starting Out: The Queen's Indian*, by GM John Emms, and *Easy Guide to the Queen's Gambit Accepted*, by IM Graeme Buckley. Please note – winners within the last three months are ineligible for this month's contest. Send your answers to 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 March 19, 2008.



Problem 1

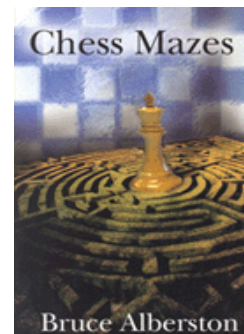
White to move



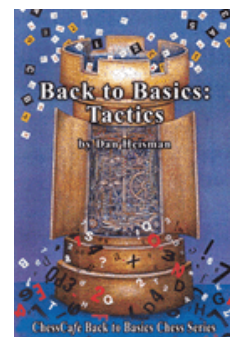
Problem 2

White to move

Check out these bestselling titles from [USCFSales.com](#):



[Chess Mazes](#)
by Bruce Alberston



[Back to Basics: Tactics](#)
by Dan Heisman

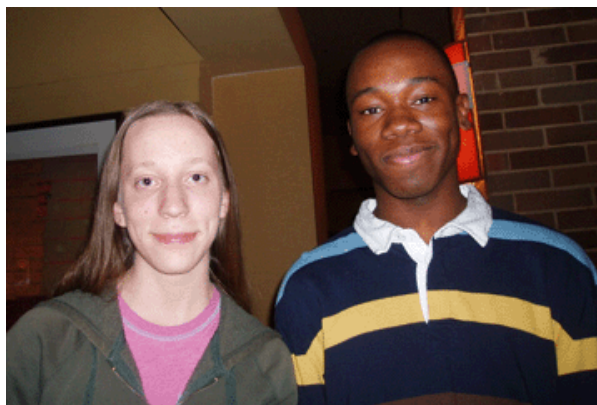


[Mastering Tactical Ideas](#)
by Nikolay Minev

U.S. Amateur Team Championships, February 2008

A record 291 teams showed up for the 2008 U.S. Amateur Team East (USATE) championship, which was won by the controversial "GGGg" team. Three grandmasters and a 178-rated five-year-old made up the "GGGg" squad. This rankled more than a few people, who noted that this is an *amateur* team competition. More information is available from Elizabeth Vicary's [blog](#) and Michael Goeller's [blog](#). It is likely that the second place team "1.d4" will

represent the East in the finals. The best team name award went to “No Longer Searching for Bobby Fischer.”



Abby Marshall and Rilwan Ameen

Photo: Elizabeth Vicary

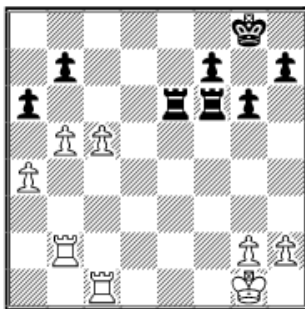
Abby Marshall wrote her typically amusing commentary about her experiences at the 2008 USATE at [Chess Life Online](#) and contributed a couple games for our readers. Her first round game was against Rilwan Ameen, who was her partner in the bughouse side event (they defeated Hikaru Nakamura’s team!) and her final round game was against a player from the strong I.S. 318 team:

Abby Marshall (2085) – Rilwan Ameen (1909)

U.S. Amateur Team East (1), Parsippany, New Jersey, 15.02.2008 [B05]

In the first round I was lucky enough to play Rilwan, who crushed me at blitz a couple years ago at the nationals, but this time I got my revenge.

1.e4 Nf6 2.e5 Nd5 3.d4 d6 4.Nf3 Bg4 5.Be2 Nc6 6.exd6 cxd6 7.0–0 g6 8.c4 Nb6 9.b3 Bg7 10.Be3 0–0 11.Na3 Rc8 12.Nc2 Qd7 13.Qd2 Rfd8 14.Rad1 d5 15.c5 Na8 16.b4 a6 17.a4 e5 18.dxe5 Nxe5 19.Nxe5 Bxe5 20.Bxg4 Qxg4 21.f4 Bg7 22.f5 Nc7 23.Nd4 Re8 24.Qf2 Be5 25.Bf4 Bxd4 26.Rxd4 Qxf5 27.Bxc7 Qxf2+ 28.Kxf2 Rxc7 29.Rxd5 Rce7 30.Rd2 Re4 31.Rb2 R8e5 32.Rc1 Re6 33.b5 Rf6+ 34.Kg1 Ree6



35.c6 bxc6 36.bxa6 Re8 37.a7 Rd6 38.Rb8 Rdd8 39.a8Q Rxb8 40.Qxc6 Kg7 41.h3 1–0

Angelica Berrios (1650) – Abby Marshall (2085)

U.S. Amateur Team East (6), Parsippany, New Jersey, 17.02.2008 [C54]

It’s the last round of the tournament, and as I am walking to my board, I can’t help noticing that my team (“3:10 to Yermo”) is playing a bunch of girls. What a relief, right? Until I quickly put together that “I.S. 318 Queens” is the team that my roommate [Elizabeth Vicary] coaches and they are an absolute powerhouse, part of the New York 318 dynasty. It was especially funny because the day before, I had been hanging out in their room watching these girls hit each other with pillows and fight over chicken fingers, and now I was playing them.

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Nf6 4.d3 Bc5 5.c3 d6 6.Bb3 h6 7.0–0 a6

Two inconspicuous pawn moves on the outermost flank are usually suspicious. In this case, I wanted to sit back and see what she was up to; ...a6 is fairly typical in these positions anyway to drop the bishop back. And if she plays 8. h3, [Black] castling queenside and playing ...g5 is interesting.

8.Nbd2 0–0

I chicken out and decide to castle, rather than pursue plans of a possible ...g5. (8...Bd7 9.Nc4 Qe7 10.Ne3 0–0–0 11.Nd5 White has a slight edge because she can also generate an attack with b4-b5 and she has more space.)

9.h3 Ba7 10.Re1 Ne7

10...Be6 11.Nc4 Qd7 12.Ne3 Rad8 And a slow build-up is also a good plan. I cannot choose this plan, because I always have to play Ne7, f5, and get a knight to f4. It's like a subliminal urge; good material for psychoanalysis.

11.Nf1

11.Nc4 Ng6 12.Ne3 c6 13.Bc2 seems more typical to me. It's about even.

11...Kh8?!

Too slow. White has too much pressure in the center for Black to play ...f5. (11...Ng6 12.Ng3 Be6 is better.)

12.N3h2

I'm suspicious of this. White should be going forward, not backward. (12.Ng3 Ng6 13.d4+/=)

12...Nh7 13.Be3 f5 14.Bxa7 Rxa7 15.d4 Ng6 16.exf5 Bxf5 17.dxe5 Nxe5 18.Ng3 Bd7

After a messy exchange in the center with oddly placed pieces on both sides, we have reached a fairly even position. Although it deserts the king, I like 18...Bd7 because I plan on rerouting it to c6 and creating pressure on the kingside.

19.Bc2 Ra8

I thought forever on this move, rechecking tactics involving Rxe5 and mates along the c2-h7 diagonal. I figured she would play Qd4 next move, so I might as well secure my rook.

20.Qd4 Qg5

I chose this one over 20...Qf6 because I thought it was more active and not blocking the rook. (20...Qf6 21.Ne4 Qf7 It's surprisingly awkward for White. Maybe this was actually the more active choice. 22.Bb3 Qg6=/+)

21.h4?!

Weakening. (21.Qe4 Nf6 22.Qxb7 Qf4 This looked too risky for White, but maybe the best decision.)

21...Qf4 22.Re4

22.h5 is better.

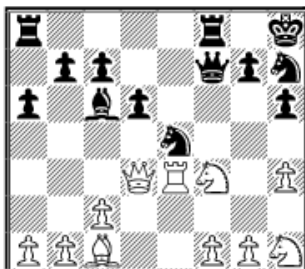
22...Qf6 23.Nh5?

Now White begins to go astray. The last two moves look threatening, but more disrupt the white position. (23.Rae1 Rae8 I still prefer Black, but it's a good game.)

23...Qf7 24.Nf4!?

This would have been really clever. She tricks me and had she found the correct move, it would have succeeded.

24...Bc6?



24...Rae8=/+.

25.Bb3?

25.Nf3! Bxe4 (25...Nxf3+ 26.gxf3 Qf6=)
26.Qxe4 Nxf3+ 27.gxf3 Nf6 28.Ng6+ Kg8
29.Ne7+ Kh8 30.Ng6+/=.



25...Qf5 26.Bd5

26.Nd5 Bxd5 27.Bxd5 c6 28.Bb3 c5 29.
Qe3 Rae8-/+.

26...Nf6 → 27.Rxe5 dxe5 28.Qxe5 Qxe5 29.Ng6+ Kh7 30.Nxf8+ Rxf8 0-1

There has been speculation that Abby was offered a spot in the 2008 U.S. Women's championship, but at least as of press time, this is unverified. Here is what Abby had to say: "For the record, I have not been officially invited yet or even offered the wildcard. How it happened was quite lucky: my father found this tiny postcard in the mail one morning and realized it was from Frank Berry, the organizer. Scrawled on the back, it said, 'If offered, would you be interested in a wildcard to the U.S. Women's Championship?' I was really surprised and thought it was funny that such a prestigious invitation would arrive that way. I'm not sure yet if I can accept it if I am even offered the wildcard; it would mean a week off from school right around the time of exams. I would love to go of course. So I'm still talking it over with my parents and school and we will see."



*Robby Adamson's winning team
Photo: www.westernchess.blogspot.com*

At the U.S. Amateur Team West tournament, Robby Adamson's "We Have Cox" team finished in clear first place. His teams have had different members in previous years, and had never previously won this event. Seeded tenth this year, they had an uphill battle but can now claim the title of "Best in the West." Team members included Robby Adamson, Landon Brownell, Jonathan Cox and Benjamin Marmont.

Adamson is the coach of the national champion Catalina Foothills High School chess team and despite losing some top talent to graduation, is optimistic about his current group of kids. "The team is looking pretty good," he said. "We obviously lost a huge crop of talent, but many of the kids are working hard. I hope we continue to perform well at Nationals."

The top team name, as voted by the players, was the creative "Hillary Says Scratch My Barack." Below, Adamson annotates his round five game for us.

Garush Manukian – Robby Adamson

U.S. Amateur Team West (5), 18.02.2008 [A58]

This match with "Gone Fishing," the only other perfect score in the tournament besides our team, was the key to our victory. Overall, this was the best match our team played.

1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5 4.cxb5 a6 5.bxa6 g6 6.g3 d6 7.Bg2 Bxa6 8.Nc3 Nbd7 9.h4

A move that signaled White's intentions to really come after me; I think White chose this line because they had White on this board and needed to score on this board.

9...Bg7 10.Nh3 0-0 11.Nf4 h5

I believe this is the correct decision because White will be able to open the h-file otherwise.

12.f3

A move that I was very surprised to see – but interestingly, it's not so simple for Black to generate counterplay.

12...Ne5 13.g4 hxg4 14.h5

At this point, there were so many candidate moves that I spent a significant amount of time for the next several moves. First of all, Black can try 14...gxf3; Black can also consider 14...g5 when 15.h6 scared me; I also looked at 14...gxh5 and Nxh5, all of which appear plausible. In the end they all seemed to give White a nice attack so I decided to try for counterplay with the move I played.

14...Qb6

The advantage of this move is that it connects the rooks, which at first does not seem to matter. However, Black has some options that if hxg fxg, that Black can try Kf7, Rh8; also Qb6 could threaten c4 at some point; finally, Black can play Qb4 and swing to the kingside. I am not sure if what I did was correct, but it seemed in the spirit of the position.

15.hxg6

Again here I considered 15...Nxg6 as well as 15...gxf, and 15...g3. Interestingly if 15...Nxg6 16.Nxg6 fxg6 17.f4 keeps the position very complicated.

15...fxg6 16.Qc2

A move I expected. Originally, I wanted to play Kf7 and Rh8 idea, as mentioned earlier; however, Ne6 and Ng5+ was worrisome.

16...gxf3 17.Bh3

I expected 17.Bxf3 here, but the text was a good choice given my ridiculous time pressure – I was down an hour on the clock and had about twenty minutes left.

17...Bc8 18.Bxc8 Raxc8 19.Nxg6

Black has a lot more choices here as well – including 19...f2+, 19...fxe2, 19...Rf7, and 19...c4.

19...Nxg6 20.Qxg6 fxe2

The reason I played this move was so that White cannot castle after a timely Bh6, or Rg1, then Bh6.

21.Qf5

A good move that threatens Qe6+, followed by Qxc8.

21...Rb8!

You have to be active when you defend – this rook helps later in the game.

22.Bd2

White has to try something here.

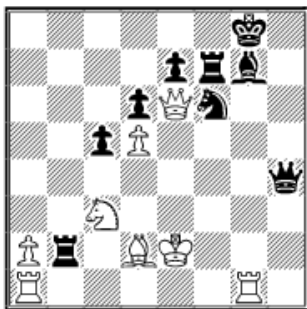
22...Qb4 23.Rg1

Preventing Qg4, which would have traded queens.

23...Qh4+ 24.Kxe2 Rxb2

This move allows a draw with Qe6+, Qc8+; my opponent had an hour on his clock and I had under a minute. He gambled that I would make a mistake.

25.Qe6+ Rf7



26.Rg2

If White does not take the draw here, he loses quickly.

26...Qh5+ 27.Kd3 Qh7+

Missing 27...Qf3+, but I knew I could repeat the position.

28.Ke2 Qh5+ 29.Kf1

This loses in a nice way.

29...Ng4+!

Blocking the rook from pinning my g7-bishop.

30.Ke2

If 30.Kg1 Bd4+ is curtains.

30...Ne5+ 0-1

If 31.Ke1 Nd3 mate.

The U.S. Amateur Team North event was hosted by the Wisconsin Chess Academy, which perhaps was a good omen as the “WI Chess Academy’s Surprise” team took first place in the tournament. Best team name was the cute “Buenos No-Chess.”

In Florida, the U.S. Amateur Team South was won by “The Foreclosure Doctors LLC 305.300.2055” (the name and phone number of the sponsoring company). The team name selected as best was “Barack Rank Mates.”

Greater New York Scholastic Championships, January 26-27, 2008

Approximately 800 K-12 students from throughout the metropolitan New York area competed in the 12-section, five round annual Greater New York Scholastics Team and Individual Championships. The Kasparov Chess Foundation was both sponsor and organizer of the event.

In the High School Varsity section, there was a three-way tie among Edward R. Murrow H.S., Dewitt Clinton H.S. and I.S. 318. The I.S. 318 team, coached by WFM Elizabeth Vicary and composed of eighth grade students, won the team title on tiebreak points. The individual title was captured by current U.S. Junior Champion ninth grader Marc Arnold with his perfect 5-0 score. Marc attends the Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School.



IM Alex Lenderman and friends

Photo: Elizabeth Vicary

The Murrow team lost superstars IM Alex Lenderman and IM Sal Bercys to graduation last year, and such players are not easily replaced. While the team may lack in depth, experience and FIDE titles this year, they are not lacking in desire. “We are off to the 2008 NY State Scholastics on March 15-16, then the nationals,” said coach Eliot Weiss. “I will also be taking a group of 6-8 girls to the all-girls championships in Dallas in April. There are a lot of girls at Murrow who love chess and love to compete. So we are off.” Not all of his players are especially strong, but Weiss describes them as “very devoted.”

In the Junior High Varsity section, Hunter School took clear first place, followed by the strong I.S. 318 team and I.S. 54. Eighth grader Alec Getz of Hunter won the individual title with a perfect 5-0 sweep.

The I.S. 318 elementary team also performed strongly, winning the team title in the Elementary Varsity division, finishing a full point ahead of Horace Mann School and New York City Lower Lab School. Both Christopher Wu and Alex Yang finished with identical 5-0 scores, with Wu winning the playoff to claim the Elementary Varsity individual title.

Susan Polgar National Open and National Challenge, January 19-20, 2008

As part of the Susan Polgar Trifecta, the 2008 Susan Polgar National Open for Girls took place in Brownsville, Texas in late January. The six-round event was composed of four sections – primary, elementary, middle school and high school. A total of 111 kids participated.



Photo: GM Susan Polgar

The high school division was captured by Ananya Roy, with her perfect 6-0 run. Ivana Santos won the middle school section with a score of 5½/6. Claudia Munoz had the same score to win the elementary division, while Hannah Liu swept the field in the primary division to capture first place with her 6-0 result.

The Susan Polgar National Challenge for Boys drew 220 players in four sections – again primary, elementary, middle school and high school. Ivan Santos won the high school section by tiebreak over three other competitors, all of whom scored 5/6, while Jeffrey Hung captured the middle school title. Perry Johnson won the elementary section and Daniel Sarna placed first in the primary division. The primary, elementary and middle school sections were all

won with scores of 5½/6.

Answers to Last Month's Quiz

1) Who was the winner of the first grade section of the 2007 "Grade Nationals" ?

- a) Raymond Sun
- b) Benjamin Moon
- c) Andrew Starr

Answer: (a)

2) How long did it take for Ray Robson to earn all three of his IM norms ?

- a) Six days
- b) Six weeks
- c) Six months

Answer: (b)

3) Which member of the 2008 Trophies Plus All America Team won his section of the 2007 "Grade Nationals"?

- a) Joel Banawa
- b) Ray Robson
- c) Alex Heimann

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.

© 2008 Steve Goldberg. All rights reserved.

 [TOP OF PAGE](#)

 [HOME](#)

 [COLUMNS](#)

 [LINKS](#)

 [ARCHIVES](#)

 [ABOUT THE
CHESS CAFE](#)

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)

[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[The Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)

[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

© 2008 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.
"ChessCafe.com®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.